

UK OFFICE

July 2017 REPORT

**Prepared by: Venessa Alexander
UK Director**

Tour Operators

- **British Airways** – David Downing, Gemma Pascall, Chris Minner, Tampa Airport, Joe Lopano, Tampa airport, Patrick Harrison and Josephine Ando, Tampa Bay, met with the Networking Planning team at British Airways. Ron Vijn, Network Planning Analyst provided an overview of the Tampa route performance. He advised that Q1 has less capacity, however bookings are down across Economy and Premium seats. June as a booking month has improved. 50% of bookings made in their tactical classes, which is comparable to Orlando. UK departures account for 68% of the seats on the TPA route. For Orlando, it's approx. 82% originating from the UK. Of the UK departures, 85% are point to point, 5% from GLA, 4% EDI and 1% DUB. 5% from other. Despite a poor start, July/Aug travel is looking good, but winter 17 is a struggle. Sep/Oct is a concern, but currently on sale and they are pushing these travel months. Easter has not had a good start. TPA share has declined compared to other Florida gateways which have seen growth. Overall TPA capacity is -6% vly and volume is -22%, whereas Florida capacity is +7%, volume +3%. Searches on ba.com for TPA are -12%, however conversion is -5%. Overall looks to ba.com are down. Ron also advised that that TPA and MCO route is common rated, Miami is generally higher, and Fort Lauderdale is lower due to the competition from Norwegian. He will feedback on the price comparisons highlighted by Chris. Florida and California have seen the most growth compared to other worldwide destinations since launching their mutli-centre online booking system.

Will Parker, Network Planning Team Leader and Robbie Campion, Network Planning Manager provided an update on their plans for the reconfiguration on their 777 fleet in S18. This will include larger screens, USB, seat covers/new seats, carpets, LED lighting, and they will have 10 seats across. 6 planes to be completed next year, the remaining 7 still to be confirmed. Tampa should see the new aircraft mid-summer 18. It will mean approx. +50 seats, reducing the Club seats and increasing WT+ and WT.

- **Travelopia (TUI)/Hayes & Jarvis/Jetsave** – A meeting was held with Isla King, USA Destination Executive and Victoria Anderson, USA Commercial Executive. We have been advised that The Jetsave Florida brand is now sitting with American Holidays in Ireland and as such they are now in charge of the brochure production. Marketing of the brand still sits with Isla in Crawley and the on the road team for the product are still based in the UK. They are in the process of repositioning the Hayes & Jarvis brand as their high-end luxury brand which will only feature properties/accommodations of 4* plus. Victoria advised that American Holidays in Ireland will be launching as a direct sell brand in the UK in the coming months. Discussed the new hotel offerings in our area and

sent a full list as well as the New and Now document for their perusal. We were advised that room night stats to our destination were up 176% YOY.

- **Funway Holidays** - An update meeting was held with Nick Talbot, Marketing Director and Malcolm Davies, Commercial Manager to discuss the recent Florida Beaches campaign and to provide details on all that is new in St. Pete/Clearwater. We were advised that 2016 was their most successful trading year ever with over 80million pounds in turnover. The recent Florida's Beaches campaign was a success and the results are as follows:
 - The My America Holiday Microsite had a total of 1232 clicks
 - Our destination page had a total of 1656 views
 - The homepage banner ad on the My America website had a total of 31,789 impressions and 376 click through's
 - The My America Holiday Email had a total of 52,398 impressions and a total of 284 click through's
 - Facebook sponsored social media activity had a total of 79,894 impressions and a total of 2,075 likes, 99 shares and 61 comments
 - PPC activity had 38,073 impressions and 424 click through's
 - The Funway Florida's Beaches brochure had a print run of 20,000 and is currently in circulation
 - Room nights booked for 2017 YTD total 2,943 as of 28th June 2017

Funway now have a marketing staff of seven and over 20 in house reservations and home working staff. We discussed the possibility of training their reservations staff and a date in December has been agreed. Nick advised that they will again be promoting the Florida's Beaches in 2017/2018 and as such will be discussing the next campaign with us in due course.

Meetings/Training/Events

- **Gold Medal/Travel 2 Golf Day** – Ahead of their agent appreciation golf day we sent brochures, maps and giveaways that were be added to goody bags which were distributed to all of the participants on the day. The agent golf day was held at Carden Park Hotel, Chester and was attended by approximately 160 agents. We sponsored the driving range which was located on the main entrance to the hotel, which provided great exposure for our destination as guests arrived at the venue. We met with some of the agents at the driving range and distributed snacks and drinks. Later in the day we had the opportunity to network with all of the agents at the drinks reception and dinner.
- **SeaWorld Parks** – We met with Simon Parry, Head of Sales, and Reka Sznyida, Sales Executive, to discuss the upcoming mega fam trip to Orlando and St. Pete/Clearwater. Simon advised that they have secured rooms for the group at Lake Buena Vista Resort, and have begun planning a draft itinerary for the Orlando section, which would include a day at SeaWorld, Aquatica, Discovery Cove and Busch Gardens. We agreed a list of tour operators to invite and have discussed requirements from both sides regarding information from each participant, waivers, invites, and goody bags.

TRADE LIAISON -

- **Virgin Holidays** – We have now received the final results for the Florida Campaign in partnership with Visit Florida, which was live 1st – 31st May. The activity included; digital escalator panels in London, Glasgow and Manchester, press, digital display adverts and social media.
 - Digital escalator panels - London panels targeted Thursday and Friday PM commuter hours 4-8pm to reach audience who were more likely to search for a holiday (Sun-Mon). Also, targeted Monday AM commuter's hours 6am-10am, to capture the audience ahead of the Monday peak of holiday searches.
Rail D6s (Glasgow and Manchester) - Same strategy as London but targeting audience to support the Orlando route only.
 - Sunday Telegraph Press advertising – one insertion, 359,400 circulation.
 - Digital display – Overall 2,918,573 delivered impressions, 2,337 clicks, 0.08% CTR. Sojern saw the most impressions delivered, 1,213,071 with 993 clicks and 0.08% CTR. TripAdvisor saw the best CTR of 0.11% with 564,441 impressions and 638 clicks.
 - Social media – 641,158 impressions, 3,427 link clicks, 0.53% CTR. 4,180 engagements, 148 likes, 678 post reactions, 50 comments, and 25 shares. Engager lookalikes drove the highest CTR at 0.58% but interest targeting contributed to the greatest volume of clicks at 1,914.
 - Room nights booked during the campaign – 1023 -20% vly. Florida overall performed at +15%.
 - Currently tracking at -17% for 2017 travel and -10% for 2018.
- **Tour America** – We have received a proposal from Veronica Flood, Marketing Manager for a joint campaign with Kissimmee. The activity launches 27th August and runs for 2 weeks, and will include; 2 full page adverts in the Sunday World, digital display, social media, homepage takeover, email newsletter and radio. We have confirmed our participation and provided Veronica with the relevant assets.
- **Icelandair, Denmark** – We had a call with Sigga Sveinsdottir, Sales Manager to discuss joint marketing with some of the Tour Operators. She has recommended Profil Rejser, Spies and Risskov as they produce and promote our destination. She has meetings scheduled for the beginning of August to discuss opportunities with these partners. Sigga advised that they have budget to support our efforts and will ask the operator to match our funds. We will follow up with Sigga following her meetings next month. Ahead of our November sales mission we have scheduled a meeting in September with Icelandair to discuss joint sales agent training events.
- **Nordmann's Rejser, Norway** – We have received a proposal from Elisabeth Stai, Product Manager for activity to support the Icelandair Tampa route. The activity includes; 3 newsletters to their database of 14,000 customers, newsletter to their cruise database of 3,000 customers, Facebook/Instagram/Google campaign and website content. This would be a joint partnership with Icelandair and both parties would match our contribution. We have agreed our participation with Elisabeth and provided her with assets to begin work on the creatives. We have received the landing page and sent amends before we can approve.

- **WTM** – registered booth and sent solicitation out to industry
- **VSPC/British Airways Reservations/Sales FAM** – Work continues on the joint annual fam trip in partnership with British Airways that is due to take place from the 24th – 28th September. Tour Operator Reservations/Sales agents confirmed as joining the trip are: American Holidays (Ireland), American Sky/Tropical Sky (Ireland), Gold Medal Travel, Ocean Florida, Tour America and USAirtours/TravelPlanners. One space is still to be confirmed and we are currently awaiting a response from Funway Holidays/My America Holiday.
- **Irish consumer campaign** – Secured a proposal from Media Agency Group for a consumer ad campaign in Ireland. Forwarded information to Aer Lingus, Tour America and American Holidays to solicit partnership opportunities.
- **Hayes & Jarvis** – We have provided Isla King, Destination Executive with images which will be used for the next edition of their brochure and their website.
- **Feel Unique** – Stuart Gordon, BrandKiss, advised that Feel Unique were working on their social posts, so we have provided all of the social media links for St. Pete/Clearwater as well as Travel Planners. We have now received the proofs for the social activity which have been approved.
- **USAirtours/TravelPlanners** – We have received the Destination on the Month email for approval, which forms part of the joint marketing activity in partnership with Experience Kissimmee.
- **Norwegian September Fam Trip** – We have started working on a draft itinerary for the Fam trip that will be in resort during September, following on from the offers we had previously received from our hotel/attraction partners. We will continue working on this with Michelle to confirm the final itinerary for the group.
- **SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment Mega Fam, October** – Since our meeting we have provided Reka with a video for inclusion on their training website and our agent forms/waivers for completion ahead of the trip by each agent. The invites have been distributed to the tour operator partners and we have started planning a draft itinerary for the group. We will continue to work with Michelle to finalise this over the coming months.
- **Florida Beaches** – Ahead of the trade shows next year, we have provided Freddie at Fort Lauderdale with some new images and copy which will be used on the banners and collateral.
- **Ocean Holidays** – We have confirmed training at their new head office for their sales agents next month. We have also confirmed the commencement of the 2-month internal staff incentive based on winning Love To Shop Vouchers for the top sellers over the months of August and September.

- **America First Coast Travel** – Colin Brodie, Board Advisor, contacted us to ask for destination images for use on their website, ahead of their launch in September/October. We have also provided him with copy, video links and the 360 video.
- **American Holidays** – The recent staff incentive with American Holidays in house staff has now ended and we have now received the results from Terry Sheehan, Reservations Manager. Total number of room nights booked as part of the incentive from March to May 2017 were a total of 114 versus 190 in the same period last year (-40%). The top three sellers were Diane Williams (22 room nights sold), Kristin Skinner (22 room nights sold) and Margaret Campbell (19 room nights sold). Although the room nights are down YOY early indications show that Florida is starting to come back for advanced sales in 2018.
- **October Trip** – started work on scheduling meetings for forthcoming trip to SPC in October
- **Visit USA, Ireland** – Gillian Young provided us with preliminary 2016 end of year visitor stats to the USA from Ireland. Year to date, 441,890 visitors -1.8% compared to the previous year. Dee Burdock advised that Gillian Young is no longer in the role, and would update us in due course once the job has been filled.
- **Cheapflights** – Nicola Diana, Tourist Boards Partnerships Manager contacted us to discuss possible opportunities to work together. She advised they had two focuses; their flight search website and also their deals newsletters with 4m subscribers. They have previously worked with tourist boards in partnership with a tour operator/OTAs which have included emails, blogs, and a microsite which drive bookings to the tour operator/OTA booking platform on their website. They have also offered competitions to win a holiday for 2 and used social media to promote to their followers. Nicola offered to send a proposal for future consideration.

ENQUIRIES:

Telephone/website enquiries for information and/or literature

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MARKET INTELLIGENCE:

1 July 2017, Source Travolution

Number of Brits booking direct doubles in a decade

The number of British holidaymakers booking through hotel websites has almost doubled in a decade as they are lured by special offers for direct bookings and lower prices. Almost two fifths (37%) plan to book their stays through hotel and accommodation provider websites this year, compared to 17% in 2007 and 30% five years ago. This contrasts with international trends where travel agents online and on the high street are the most popular ways for holidaymakers to book their UK breaks – 52% and 22% respectively – the study by Barclays Corporate Banking found. The findings are from a survey of British holiday booking trends

and a Barclays Corporate Banking report, Destination UK: driving growth in the UK hospitality and leisure sector, which reveals the 2017 holiday and leisure preferences of almost 10,000 guests from the UK, continental Europe, the US, Middle East, Asia and Australia. Britons are being drawn to direct bookings by discounts (62%), offers of special benefits (39%), and improvements to the actual booking experience (37%), the report finds. Also effective in encouraging direct bookings is the provision of loyalty bonuses (27%) and access to price comparisons with nearby hotels (23%). The number of people booking their trips online using their mobile phones has also doubled from the three per cent of all bookings made this way five years ago. With six per cent of all UK holidaymakers planning to book their holidays online using by mobile phone this year, this equates to 2.4 million potentially planning their holidays while on the move.

The popularity of smart phone bookings is even more obvious among international travellers, with nearly one in ten (9%) planning to book their holidays this way. Airbnb is a popular option for international holidaymakers, with nearly a quarter (24%) considering this type of accommodation sharing option for UK breaks this year. However, Britons still prefer hotels (49%) and less than one in ten (6%) plan to use an Airbnb for their staycations, with mid-market (25%) and budget (10%) hotels being more popular options. Barclays Corporate Banking head of hospitality and leisure, Mike Saul, said: "Competition in the hospitality and leisure market is fierce and our results show that efforts by hoteliers to lure customers to book directly through their websites are paying off, with Brits now over twice as likely to book via this route than they were ten years ago. "British hoteliers and self-accommodation providers should look to capitalise on this – and the increased trend for international guests to book their holidays using their mobile phones – by offering discounts and special benefits for direct bookers, and by ensuring their websites are mobile-optimised."

4 July 2017, Source TravelMole

Theresa May confirms plans for new holiday protection laws

A Bill to give holidaymakers more protection if a travel company goes bust has been debated in the House of Commons. The Government is promising that from next year, holidaymakers who book trips online will get new protection so they are not left stranded abroad or lose money. Prime Minister Theresa May said: "Technology has transformed the way people book holidays, and this Bill will mean the ATOL scheme can keep pace both now and in the future. "Whether you book a well-earned getaway on the internet or the high Street should not make a difference to knowing you won't be stranded or left out-of-pocket if something goes wrong." She said holidays will be protected when consumers book a flight and are then directed by the airline to a separate company to book accommodation within 24 hours. A statement from the Government said the Bill will also make it easier for UK businesses to sell air holidays across the EU, as they can offer consumers in Europe the same protection they offer in the UK. The new legislation extends ATOL protection to passengers who book flights, hotels or car hire that are not sold as package holidays. But the details of the Bill, which had its second reading in Parliament yesterday, have not been fully outlined. The Government quoted the ABTA Holiday Habits Report 2016 which found that more than 75% of UK consumers booked their holidays online. Transport Minister John Hayes said: "This change will make the law fit for the modern age - and better able to adapt to any future

advances in the technology that people use to book their getaway." It was the first Bill to be debated in the Commons since the Queen's Speech.

5 July 2017, Source TravelMole

BA signs deal with The White Company for Club World cabins

British Airways has signed a partnership with luxury lifestyle brand, The White Company, for its premium cabins. The British retailer will supply bedding and amenity kits in Club World as part of a £400 million investment by the airline. Later this year, customers travelling in Club World between Heathrow and New York JFK will be given a new elegant day cushion which will double up as a lumbar support. Premium passengers will also get bespoke, 'luxuriously soft' large pillows, white cotton pillowcases, super-soft woven blankets with satin trim, specially developed luxury duvets, and padded mattresses. The new bedding from The White Company will then be gradually rolled out across BA's other long-haul routes. Meanwhile Club World amenity kits will have products from The White Company's 'Restore & Relax Spa Collection', as well as a super-soft jersey eye-mask. Alex Cruz, BA chairman and CEO, said: "Our investment in Club World has started and we're kicking off by helping our customers sleep even better in the skies. Partnering with The White Company, another quintessentially British brand renowned for quality and style, is the first step in a multi-million pound investment for our premium customers." The White Company opened its first international flagship store in New York last month. In the autumn a new restaurant-style premium dining service will begin in Club World, with display trolleys allowing customers to select dishes from a choice of freshly prepared starters and desserts served on new table settings. Passengers will also be given breakfast cards to indicate if they wish to be woken for breakfast.

5 July 2017, Source Travolution

Research shows more UK customers intend on using Airbnb this summer

There will be a huge jump in the number of Brits using Airbnb this summer, according to research from financial technology firm Ferratum. Its Summer Barometer found that 19% of UK consumers are planning to use Airbnb's holiday rental platform in 2017, up from just 1% last year. Tony Gundersen, UK Country Manager for Ferratum, said: "Our research shows that British travellers still prefer the home comforts offered by a hotel over living in rented Airbnb accommodation for their summer holidays. Whilst hotels do offer a higher level of service, UK consumers should take stock of the accommodation options available to them this summer, and consider their budget allowances accordingly." The research also suggests that UK households are planning to spend almost a third (30%) of their summer budgets on travelling this summer, both at home and abroad. Instead of opting for Airbnb accommodation, almost half (44%) would be happy to pay for a hotel costing over €100, with an additional 49% spending €45-90 on a hotel during their stay. It also found that the UK is expected to spend the least of all European countries on travel this summer compared to their income, with 34% of households' disposable income going on holiday spending. The

European average is 54% of disposable income. But the research still suggests that one in three UK consumers (32%) intend to spend more than they did last summer.

6 July 2017, Source TravelMole

Barrhead announces dozens more jobs in Scotland

Barrhead Travel is creating 45 new jobs across its Glasgow stores. The travel group is looking for destination specialists - especially those with an in-depth knowledge of cruise and long-haul locations - who will tailor-make bespoke holiday packages for clients. Barrhead said the recruitment drive comes as it continues with a programme of business expansion and invests in new technology across the business. As well as destination specialists, the company also plans to recruit a number of managerial staff to support the growth and development of its specialist teams. Chief executive Sharon Munro said: "This is a great time to join Barrhead Travel as we continue to expand across the country. We are also investing significantly in new technology, so our new recruits will be among the first to work with some cutting-edge artificial intelligence and virtual reality elements. "Our destination specialists will receive competitive salaries and the chance to develop their career in a rapidly-expanding company, where benefits and incentives include discounts on holidays, familiarisation trips all over the world, and uncapped commission. "We also offer bespoke training programmes and personal development plans, supported by our dedicated Training Academy, based in the heart of Glasgow city centre."

7 July 2017, Source TravelMole

Discerning Brits are avoiding US due to Trump, says operator

Holidaymakers are taking a political decision to avoid the US since President Trump took office, according to one operator, which has taken just one booking for 2018. Responsibletravel.com director Tim Williamson said Donald Trump had had a 'hugely' negative effect on business to the US. Talking at a Speakeasy organised by UK advertising agency Designate, Williamson said that responsibletravel.com would have expected US bookings for 2018 to be in double figures by now; instead, it has taken just one. "And that was for Alaska," said Williamson, "which is a bit of a different market." Many responsibletravel.com customers are opting to visit Canada instead, he said. A recent survey estimated that the UK market to the US was down 9% this year, but Williamson said the damage caused by Trump was far worse. "2017 has been distorted by a total eclipse on August 21, which accounts for 70% of our bookings and these people will have booked before Trump was elected," he added. Williamson said most of those attending this week's Speakeasy were 'in denial' about the 'Trump effect'. "Many people have blamed the drop on the weak pound or the strong dollar, but Travelopia said 10% of its US customers were not re-booking for political reasons. "Obviously Trump is not the only factor, but he is having a huge impact."

8 July 2017, Source Travel Weekly

Spain growth outstrips all other destinations for summer 2017

Spain's popularity among British package holidaymakers is showing no signs of abating, the destination's growth more than double that of this summer's next big mover Greece. According to official GfK Leisure Travel Monitor figures for the UK market, Spain was up by 270,000 passengers year-on-year for summer 2017 as of the week to June 24. Trailing by some distance in second spot was Greece which has seen a rebound from the problems associated with the Syrian refugee crisis two summers ago to be up by 95,600 passengers. Other growing destinations include the Caribbean, Croatia, Cyprus and Portugal. Marginal growth has been seen by the Cape Verde Islands, Portugal, Mexico and Italy. In contrast, the GfK data shows Canada, France, Malta, and the United Arab Emirates to be down on last year. Understandably, given the fact that Sharm el Sheikh airport continues to be closed to UK carriers, Egypt has seen the third biggest decline. Turkey, which has been the big loser in recent years due to terrorism fears, remains 70,000 passengers down on last year, despite reports of signs of a recent turn around in fortunes. More surprisingly, the US is suffering the second biggest decline of around 23,000 passengers as it struggles to overcome challenges like sterling's slump against the pound and the unquantifiable "Trump effect". Analysis of US bookings dating back to the US election last November shows bookings were flat and Average Selling Prices (ASP) up £21 in the week before the election on November 8. In the immediate aftermath of the election passenger numbers plummeted 16% although ASP remained marginally up. Cumulatively, season to date, the US is 9% down for passengers and £15 up for ASP. Year-on-year weekly analysis of all bookings monitored by GfK since the beginning of the year reveals nine weeks of consecutive growth in passenger numbers booking summer 2017 holidays. The four weeks from week ending June 24 all saw more than 5% growth, with week ending June 3 seeing the highest rise of the year so far of 17%. High growth rates were seen in March, but April was generally in negative territory with three consecutive weeks of declines. The biggest weekly fall same for the week ending January 7, which was down 8%, indicating the peak selling period got off to a slow start. It was one of two weeks in January that saw a decline. Week on week growth on ASPs has generally declined over the year from January when they were over £30 and up to in the week ending January 14 £63 up. The ASP differential has been positive all year, but dropped to just £3 at the beginning of March but have been over £20 for the last four weeks.

11 July 2017, Source TravelMole

Scottish APD changes boost interest in long-haul flights

Flight search and travel deals platform Cheapflights has seen a surge in searches for long-haul flights from Scotland since the Scottish government announced changes to APD in June. Holyrood voted on June 20 to replace APD with a devolved Air Departure Tax (ADT) from April 2018 with calls for it to be half the UK rate and for the tax to be scrapped altogether in the near future. The change will see passengers using Scottish airports pay less tax than those flying long haul from England and Wales. Between June 20 and July 4 2017, Cheapflights reports the greatest growth in searches for flights from Glasgow to Philadelphia, recording up to a fourfold increase in search demand. Rises of up to 178% and 137% were seen for searches from Glasgow to Las Vegas and Orlando respectively. Searches to New York were up as much as 84% and 75% from Glasgow and Edinburgh respectively. Overall, searches for

long haul destinations served by flights from Scotland more than doubled at times, with increases in searches of up to 109% since the tax change was announced. Cheapflights global head of communications Phil Bloomfield said: "UK travellers have been punished with APD for 23 years and now the tax is even more unfair as it is even more punitive against airports in England and Wales. "Our data shows the potential economic benefits of scrapping APD on all UK long haul flights: scrap the tax and see demand for travel grow, benefiting the entire UK through employment, development and investment. "A passenger tax postcode lottery is indefensible and UK travellers won't tolerate a two-tier system: whilst just 60 miles south of the border, passengers travelling from Newcastle face paying £75-150 more for what is essentially the same flight - something we believe many will find hard to accept."

12 July 2017, Travelbiz

Two in three choose flight purely on price

A survey by On the Beach reveals that when it comes to booking flights, price is more important than any other element, including onboard service and comfort. The survey of 1,200 British holidaymakers revealed two-thirds (64%) are led by price alone when booking flights whilst 23% are more likely to choose flights departing from their local airport, regardless of the cost. The survey revealed that the cost of a flight is far more important than anything else, with just 5% of those polled saying they choose to fly with airlines offering better seat comfort and pitch, no matter how much extra this might cost them when purchasing their flights. Furthermore, just 3% pick service over cost, with these travellers only choosing airlines they believe offer a better-quality customer service. Only 1% said the opportunity to enjoy complimentary food and drink was the most important element when booking their flights. Less than 1% of those surveyed said the ability to connect to WiFi and collect air miles were the most important element when booking their flights. Chief marketing officer Alistair Daly said: "Our survey shows that cost really is king and whilst we all enjoy a few extras such as complimentary meals, refreshments and complimentary WiFi, we will forgo most of these if it means we can get a flight for a better price."

12 July 2017, Source Travolution

Online last-minute travel bookings expected to soar

An analysis of consumer spending patterns in Britain has predicted that August will be the busiest month of the year for online travel agents. Payment processing firm Worldpay anticipates bargain-hunting Brits will be looking to snap up last minute summer deals leading to August bookings being 10% up on the monthly average. Worldpay's research suggests that web sales peak during the first week of the month, when the number of bookings is 23% higher than the last week of July. It also claims the average holiday is 6% cheaper in August compared to the previous three months. Thomas Helldorff, vice president, airlines and travel, at Worldpay said: "As the summer holiday season sets in, thousands of British holidaymakers will be looking to bag themselves a bargain before school starts again in September. With the pound tumbling in value yet again, holidays abroad are becoming more expensive for UK travellers, so it can often pay to wait until the first week of August to book hotels or

accommodation, when the prices are considerably lower.” Worldpay’s analysis also found that bookings through OTAs are increasing by 5% year-on-year, with more than three-quarters of UK travellers now booking their vacations online. Helldorff added: “OTAs are quickly becoming the most popular way to book holidays. And with new legislation set to enhance existing ATOL protections for all online bookings by 2018, we are expecting this number to grow even further. “Savvy travellers love to shop around, research the best deals and book from a travel website that is convenient and easy to use. Offering a slick payment process helps OTAs to create a seamless travel experience to meet the demands of the modern consumer.”

14 July 2017, Source TravelMole

More Brits going abroad, but trips to North America down

The number of UK residents going abroad was up 8% for the first three months of this year, although visits to North America fell by 4%. These visitors spent £8.6 billion during visits abroad in January to March this year, 11.7% more than during the same period of 2016. Spend in Europe rose by 10% but fell 1.5% in North America. According to the ONS, Brits made 14.1 million visits abroad in January to March this year. Visits to Europe were up by 7.8% but visits to 'other countries' - outside Europe and North America - saw the largest rise of 12.4%. Holiday visits continued to be the most common reason for visits abroad - 7.6 million holidays, representing a 5.6% jump. Visits to friends or relatives rose by 13.4% in this quarter, miscellaneous visits also increased by 13.4%, and business visits increased by 6%. UK residents spent 147 million nights abroad, an increase of 9.1%, and the number of nights spent in North America was up 11.6%.

16 July 2017, Source Travel Trade Outbound Scandinavia

Icelandair restructuring Scandinavian sales strategy

Last year Icelandair changed the presence in OSL, STO and HEL by closing the offices and having sales people covering the area from home offices. Now the same will take place at the office in CPH. Gudmundur Óskarsson is Senior vice president marketing & sales Icelandair: “We are restructuring the sales and marketing activity of Icelandair in Scandinavia, with increased digitalization and more centralized administration and strategy planning coming from our main office in Reykjavik. The sales efforts out in the field will now be more effective as the sales staff will work from home offices and be able to reach and contact our partners more often with personal visits to the agents and tour operators.” This change is a natural fit with today’s business environment. “Decisions are made much quicker in the aviation and tourism markets than ever before. We are getting faster and better able to brief and update our clients with a very short advance. We have partners all over the world we need to address and assist selling the Icelandair product, both through digital channels and with the tried and trusted person to person method. Those mobile units in all our markets are supported by global teams in Iceland, 24/7”. “This new approach will be phased-in over a period of time as we want to guarantee our local operations and quality in Scandinavia and elsewhere throughout the transition,” says Óskarsson.

18 July 2017, Source Travelbiz

Experts now believe there could be 'Trump Bump' in tourism in the US

Concerns that the US tourism industry might witness a "Trump slump" in travel due to the new administration's policies appear to be premature, new figures suggest. International arrivals and travel-related spending are up in 2017 compared with the same period in 2016. There might even be a "Trump bump", according to Roger Dow, CEO of the US Travel Association, a non-profit representing the travel industry. A few months ago, some warned that President Donald Trump's travel ban and anti-immigrant rhetoric could hurt tourism. But the latest numbers from the US Travel Association showed a 4% growth in international travel to the US in April and a 5% growth in May compared with the same months last year. Various individual sectors of the travel industry also report no declines so far. The "impending doom hasn't manifested itself", Mr Dow said. "Right now we cannot identify a loss. It's contrary to everything we've heard, but travel is in slightly better shape than it was a year ago. Everyone wants me to tell the story of the sky is falling, but for the travel industry, the sky is not falling." Hotel occupancy for the first five months of 2017 was "higher than it has ever been before", said Jan Freitag, senior vice president with STR, which tracks hotel industry data. Florida's Orlando International Airport, a gateway for theme park visitors, reported growth for domestic and international passengers in the year to date, though Visit Orlando CEO George Aguel said it was "still premature to determine a specific impact" from Trump administration policies. International trips are often planned months in advance, so decisions made this year about travel may not be evident yet. "For us, we already planned before the election," said Alban Michel, waiting with a group of Swiss tourists to see One World Trade's observatory in New York on Monday. Companies that track online behaviour say searches for US.travel are down. Yet tour companies that bring foreigners here are "not only holding year over year, but in many cases they're having a record year", according to Chris Thompson, CEO of Brand USA, which markets the US to the world. Mr Thompson thinks it is "too early to tell" how the industry will fare, adding that the travel industry's ups and downs may have "little or nothing to do" with Mr Trump and more to do with the strong dollar and lacklustre economies elsewhere. Asked if there's a "Trump slump" in travel to the 12 Southern states marketed by Travel South USA, CEO Liz Bittner said: "The truth of the matter is no. I think it was a lot of media hype." Ms Bittner agreed that the challenge for US tourism "isn't so much Trump. It's the strong US dollar against some of the other currencies", which makes the US an expensive destination for foreigners.

18 July 2017, Source TravelMole

Passengers warned of tighter security on US flights from tomorrow

Passengers flying to the US are being advised to arrive at least three hours before their flight as new tighter security measures come into force from tomorrow. Travellers will face more vigorous screening, particularly of large electronic devices. There will also be more security protocols around aircraft and in passenger areas and more sniffer dogs employed. United Airlines has issued its passengers with an alert about the new security procedures, which have been put in place by the US Department of Homeland Security. Announcing the changes last

month, the Homeland Department said the US and the global aviation community face 'an adaptive and agile enemy'. "Terrorist groups continue to target passenger aircraft, and we have seen a 'spider web' of threats to commercial aviation as terrorists pursue new attack methods," it said. Airlines have been told to implement increased explosive trace detection screening by tomorrow (July 19) and have 120 days to comply with other measures. In March, the US banned large electronic devices from cabins on flights from 10 airports - mainly in the Middle East and north Africa. The number of airports in the list has since been reduced. The new US security requirements, mandatory from tomorrow, are aimed at avoiding the expansion of a laptop ban to other airports.

19 July 2017, Source TravelMole

Flight and hotel prices expected to rise sharply next year

Flight and hotel prices are expected to rise sharply in the coming year, according to the 2018 Global Travel Forecast. Global airfares are expected to rise 3.5% in 2018 and hotel prices by 3.7% , says the fourth annual forecast by the GBTA Foundation in partnership with Carlson Wagonlit Travel. "The higher pricing is a reflection of the stronger economy and growing demand," said Kurt Ekert, president and CEO, Carlson Wagonlit Travel. "The global numbers from this forecast should be considered strong leading indicators of what 2018 will mean for global businesses, as we anticipate higher spending." The rise in airfares comes as oil prices rise and despite airlines adding an expected 6% capacity next year. Air travel is anticipated to continue growing, with prices rising 7.1% across Eastern Europe and 5.5% in Western Europe. Meanwhile, Middle East and African countries only expect a 3% rise due to ongoing security threats and an oil industry that is still in recovery. Asia Pacific expects to see a 2.8% rise in 2018 pricing with domestic demand increasing, particularly in China and India. North America prices are forecast to rise 2.3%, while Canadian airlines are expected to aggressively compete given new market entrants and capacity growth of about 11% in 2017 and 12% in 2018. Meanwhile in the hotel sector, European hotels are expected to post strong increases, while other regions are barely keeping up with inflation. Across EMEA, hotel prices are likely to rise 6.6% in Eastern Europe, 6.3% in Western Europe, but only a modest 0.6 percent in the Middle East and Africa. Norway is expected to lead with increases of 14% expected for 2018, while Russian hotel prices will rise 11.9% thanks to increased demand from hosting the 2018 Summer World Cup. Prices are expected to fall in Latin America and the Caribbean. Across Asia Pacific, hotel prices are likely to rise 3.5% overall, but with a large discrepancy as Japanese prices are expected to fall 4.1%, but New Zealand is set to rise a full 9.8%. "North American hoteliers may be banking on economic growth as demand has levelled off since mid-summer 2016, but supply is expected to continue growing steadily through 2018," said the report. "With international travel projected to grow 4% in 2017 and 2018, US hotel growth is expected to be concentrated primarily along with the West Coast and in Washington D.C.

28 July 2017, Source Travolution

Company Profile: Ocean Holidays to focus on Winged Boots growth after investment in tech and new HQ

Essex-based Ocean Holidays has always looked to stay ahead of the technology curve, but now it has the offices to match its ambitions and vision to help luxury travel concierge Winged Boots take off. Lee Hayhurst spoke to co-founders Harry Hastings and Daniel Ox. Ocean Holidays new offices not only offer commanding views of Romford but bring something of Silicon roundabout's pioneering spirit to the Essex London suburb. For sibling co-founders Harry and George Hastings and Daniel and David Ox the travel firm's new HQ underlines not just how successfully the company has established itself but is a statement of intent for the future. Now the largest operator of Florida holidays from Europe that doesn't have its own airline, the firm is poised to turn its attention to doubling the size of upmarket travel concierge brand Winged Boots. It is this brand that best reflects the company's east London heritage with its celebrity 'The Only Way is Essex', football, and City clients and authentic 'made in London' brand affiliations. Ocean Holidays incorporates three divisions: Ocean Florida and Ocean California, outbound destination specialist B2C operators, Ocean Beds, the US-based B2B inbound 'receptive' operator, and Winged Boots. The latter, headed up by David Ox, Daniel's brother and company co-founder, is the firm's fastest-growing brand, to date largely through word of mouth, and accounts for a fifth of the firm's annual turnover. Harry Hastings said the "dream scenario" is this figure growing to 35%: "This isn't about switching or moving revenue, it's part of a strategy of continuing along a growth path for all our brands. "If you keep doing the same things you are going to be down in a challenging market so you have to keep innovating and charging up hill, which is what we are doing." In the financial year to December 31 Ocean Holidays reported profits (EBITDA) of £1.3 million on revenues of £45 million – 10% and 19% year on year growth respectively. The firm is aiming to hit £100 million turnover by 2010, around double its forecast for this year, and is currently tracking at around 25% to 30% up this year. In the first quarter of 2016 Winged Boot's revenue was 46% up on the same period last year. Its core destinations are Las Vegas and Dubai, the latter accounting for a third of bookings. Following a doubling of the sales team to 12 by the end of the year, plans include a bi-annual Winged Boots lifestyle magazine. This will be produced by an in-house editorial team and comprise 30% editorial, including destination and celebrity features, and 70% deals. There will also be a series of special quarterly events for VIP clients with ideas ranging from golf days to a trip to the Monaco Formula One Grand Prix. The magazine and events will build on celebrity and London style brand affiliations forged with the likes of luxury menswear tailor, Thom Sweeney, yacht brokerage Sunseeker London and Pankhurst, the barbers. For the first time Winged Boots will be cross-marketed to the 40,000 Ocean Holidays customers, which is the official travel supplier to West Ham, the Premier League club based at the London Stadium in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford. Along with access to the O2 through a corporate box – the firm believes it can offer the perfect London entertainment experience – the hope is Winged Boots becomes the sort of lifestyle brand its clients look to for more than just holiday inspiration. "We want to be our customers' expert in travel," said Daniel Ox. "We want them to come to our events, to read our editorial, to live and breathe the brand. We want to be close to our clients, be their friends, because that's what we enjoy. "If we get this right, it's a really exciting networking and brand affiliation opportunity. Plus it's scalable and we are not going to be entering any Pay Per Click wars with other classic luxury travel operators." "The average order value of an Ocean Florida customer is £7,000, but when they go to Las Vegas or the Caribbean or Dubai they are not booking with us because they don't know we go to those destinations. "Ocean Florida is now in its 14th year so there's a lot

of equity in those consumers and reputation. They know we do Florida, and California, now they'll know we also do the rest of the world," added Hastings. Ox said the firm's new offices reflect Ocean Holidays' guiding ethos as well as giving it the space to grow – a dedicated Winged Boots client consultation room has been built in the new two-floor HQ. The office move was kept secret from staff until the day they were ready to move in last November when the directors asked them to come to work as normal but to a different address. "Treat your staff well and they will look after your customers," Ox said. "We wanted to surprise them and we watched as everyone walked in through the door. It was so satisfying to see their excitement. "We built the offices primarily for our staff, but you underestimate the external effect a new office can have, so when suppliers visit us they realise we are not just a classic call centre. "We are trying to build a brand and your office environment is one factor that really allows you to be engulfed by the brand. Plus we did it for ourselves because we are really enthusiastic about what we do." Bright, open plan and airy, the offices have something of the ambience you'd expect Google and other modern tech firms to create for their staff. Themed offices and meeting rooms, a break out area and large canteen are designed to appeal to Ocean Holidays' many young employees as well as the apprentices it brings in each year. They were opened in the same week as new mobile-friendly websites went live last year, an investment prompted by Google's algorithm change to favour sites optimised for mobile. This was a first rebuild of Ocean Holidays' customer-facing technology for years, the firm having prioritised focusing on its back-end Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform. But driving its new integrated multi-brand approach is continued investment in the latest CRM technology that allows firms to have a better understanding of what their clients are looking for. Ocean Holidays operates an online customer acquisition, offline conversion model, so it is crucial that its websites drive calls to operatives who are primed to understand the customer and offer them what they want. It uses web optimisation tools supplied by Qubit, but 95% of its technology has been built in-house and this month it went live with Journey CRM, the third version of its technology that has been 12 months in development. The technology will look to give website visitors personalised experiences based on a unique ID built up from all historical customer interactions. "We are all about customer relationships," Ox said, "and we are about to lift the lid of the customer data we have across all our brands. It's the perfect point to go to the next step which is predictive analytics."