

UK OFFICE

September 2018 REPORT

Prepared by: **Venessa Alexander**
UK Director

Tour Operators

- **Kenwood Travel** - We met with Nicola Hollihead, Destination Manager who advised that bookings to the USA were a lot stronger than the previous year. Bookings had slowed down in July and August because of the good weather and football, but September is looking good. They are seeing a lot of enquiries for Orlando, specifically Disney as the free dining promotion is in market. She advised that they will be launching their new website in November, which will contain more inspirational content and will focus on multi-centre itineraries.
- **Gold Medal Travel** – A meeting was held with Ross Sinclair and Harriet Moon to discuss possibly opportunities to work together with regards to trade and consumer co-op marketing campaigns as well as possible in – store retail travel campaigns with their independent travel agents in the new 18/19 fiscal year. We discussed the campaign that we have already agreed in partnership with Visit Florida that starts this month and runs through to November 2018 with regards to creative requirements and this has now been actioned (see below). We discussed the possibility of running a national in-store travel agent promotion just after Easter in 2019 and have agreed to re-visit campaign strategy later on this year. Ross and Harriet advised that Florida is selling well for 2018 and that our area is up 15.2% versus the same period last year. Advance sales for 2019 are currently minus 2% year on year but Ross advised that this will change going in to September as this is a peak and key booking month which will see an increase sales.
- **Thomas Cook** – We met with Jill Townsin, Product Manager, who advised that Florida had been a bit of a struggle for them this year, but they are holding their own. TUI have been very competitive with their pricing which has had an impact on bookings. She advised that 2019 was looking good and was confident that the campaign about to launch would assist. They are definitely seeing a demand for late bookings. She mentioned that she received 2019/20 rates really late from our hotel partners and has had an impact on early sales.

Meetings/Training/Events

- **Brand USA** – We attended their annual workshop held in London which was attended by US destination partners. They provided an overview of what they had done in the past year including their travel trade website, digital campaigns, launching their Go USA TV, Spotify and Shazam partnerships. They also announced that they will be arranging a USA

Travel Week in September 2019, which will consist of business meetings with buyers, seminars, consumer and trade events. Details will follow in due course.

- **Kenwood Travel** – We visited their head office to provide dedicated training to their USA sales agents, many of them had not visited the destination. We provided a detailed overview of the destination, answered questions and distributed brochures, maps and giveaways.
- **Rooster** – We met with our PR team to discuss their recent activity and an initial plan for 2018/19, which they will share with us in due course once agreed. We also advised of our strategic marketing plan to ensure our plans are aligned.
- **Vision 9/Boardmasters** – We met with Lisa-Marie Stock and Sam Saywood to discuss the final results of the activity and to feedback on how the event went.
 - 8th – 12th August 2018, Newquay, Cornwall
 - Fistral Beach site - Attracted up to 150k people over the 5 days. Watergate Bay site – Attracted 217,752 visitors over the festival period.
 - Fistral Beach audience
 - 43% female, 57% male
 - 77% South West, 8% London, 6 % South East, 6% Midlands, 3% North
 - 17% under 17, 36% 18-25, 22% 26-30, 25% 30+
 - PR Activity (audience reach)
 - TV – 20,230,250
 - Radio – 244,028,462
 - Print – 71,932,670
 - Online – 948,738,388
 - Digital Media
 - 1,275,921 – unique website visitors
 - 6,833,032 – total webpage views
 - 95,007 – active newsletter subscribers
 - Social Media
 - 154,373 – Facebook followers. Total reach – 17,516,737
 - 51,002 – Twitter followers
 - 63,005 – Instagram followers
 - 28,326k – Boardmasters App users. 2,178,689 screen views
 - Our agreed 4 pieces of content reached over 100k and engaged with over 4k times.
- **Icelandair, Denmark** – We met with Sigga Sveinsdottir, Sales Manager, who advised that there have been some internal changes for staff. John Rassmussen, will now be supporting and coordinating for each of the Scandinavian markets to assist the existing Sales Managers. This is with immediate effect but will allow them to align what they are doing in each country. She mentioned that the route network has been updated to ensure connections work efficiently, therefore they have reduced their Tampa route from 4 to 3 per week for mid-Nov – mid-Dec. They have also reduced the Orlando service from daily to 6 per week during this period. She said that out of Denmark the sales have been very good for the autumn and that they are doing ok for Q1, but with the increased capacity they will be focusing on Q1 for the coming weeks with reduced airfares. They have a

campaign in market with Walt Disney World, so expecting this to assist with bookings to our area. Overall for 2018, the exchange rate has an impact on bookings, not Trump. The Danish did not travel as much as previous years as the weather has been very good, so people decided to book late or postpone to the following year. Icelandair are performing better than last year due to the many internal changes and network changes.

- **Discover America Sweden** – We attended their annual travel agent workshop in Malmö. The event consisted of timed workshops where each partner provided a short presentation to the agents, and distributed brochures, maps and giveaways. The training sessions were followed by a buffet dinner and networking. The event was attended by 76 participants.
- **Thomas Cook** – We visited their head office to participate in their Florida training day. The training event encouraged sales agents as well as other employees of Thomas Cook to visit each of the stands to learn more about the destinations and to pick up a brochure, map and giveaways. During the day, we met with 69 staff.
- **Tour America Red Cow, Dublin** – We attended their annual Red Cow consumer event in Dublin and were joined by other USA destinations, including Visit Florida, Kissimmee, Fort Myers, Tampa, Universal and SeaWorld. We were positioned next to the Tour America booking desks allowing us to have a constant flow of people to our stand. There was a high proportion of people who were clear in what they were looking to book during the day, but we were able to speak with people who were looking for inspiration for their next holiday. We also met people travelling within the next month who were wanting recommendations for activities, restaurants etc in resort. We distributed brochures and maps during the one day event.
- **Visit St. Pete/Clearwater/ SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment VIP Event** – The annual VIP event held in partnership with SeaWorld Parks on September 20th in London at the Oriole Bar took place and was very well received. The event hosted 74 travel trade partners including tour operators, airlines and attraction ticket suppliers and was an evening of networking with food, drink and dancing supplied. We have received many thank you emails from partners who had joined us and we all agreed we would like to continue the joint partnership to host these kinds of events together in the future.

TRADE LIAISON

- **Visit Florida/Gold Medal** – We have now received proofs for our campaign in partnership with Visit Florida. These have all been approved and the activity will launch this month.
- **Thomas Cook** – We have provided Ella Brighty with our logos, images and video for use during our campaign in partnership with Visit Florida, which will launch in October. We have already approved the banners, landing page and the instore video and will await the email for approval next month.
- **SeaWorld/VSPC Mega Fam** – We have now sent all of the participants an online link, which will allow them to complete all of their personal information so we can finalise the

flights and itinerary. We have also sent the waiver forms for completion ahead of their arrival. We have arranged for some giveaways, brochures and maps to be sent to each participant ahead of their arrival. We have set up a dedicated Facebook page and WhatsApp group so the agents can interact and ask questions before they meet next month. We are working with Michelle to confirm the final itinerary ahead of our arrival next month.

- **VSPC UK/Ireland Product Manager FAM** – Discussions are currently taking place with British Airways to see when this FAM that had to be postponed can possibly be re-scheduled.
- **Boardmasters/Ocean Florida** – We have now selected a winner for the holiday prize we offered during the Boardmasters festival. We have contacted the winner who was absolutely delighted, and have put Ocean Florida in contact with her to make the booking. She has confirmed 10th April 2019 and we have sent Ocean Florida the CMA tickets to distribute ahead of her arrival.
- **WTM** – We have started to arrange appointments to meet with our partners during the 3 days of the show in November. We have updated our profile on the WTM website and have submitted our creative for the stand to Visit Florida. We have also confirmed our attendance at the Visit Florida event. We will continue working on this for the coming months.
- **USAirtours/TravelPlanners/Kissimmee/Brand USA** – We have received a final campaign report and this has duly been sent to the team at Brand USA. We have all information supplied as to campaign statistics and these are as follows:
 - The room night stats booked during the campaign period were a total of 568 versus 546 in the same period last year.
 - TravelPlanners ‘FL Holiday Deals’ email open rate results were 12,629 (11 Apr), 5,495 (14 Apr) with a total of 81 enquiries.
 - TravelPlanners ‘FL From’ email open rate was 16,605 (17 May), 5,985 (21 May) with 51 enquiries.
 - TravelPlanners ‘Holidays’ email had an n open rate of 11,641 (04 Jul), 4,745 (06 July) and generated 46 enquiries.
 - TravelPlanners ‘FL Flash Sale’ email saw an open rate of 12, 591 (12 Aug) and generated 52 enquiries.
 - TravelPlanners social media activity reached a total of 7,182 and had a total of 9,794 impressions.
 - The Cheapflights emails The Travel Hotlist and Great Deals generated 922 clicks and 26 enquiries and 703 clicks and 17 enquiries respectively.
 - TravelPlanners Google online ads generated the following: 01 May – 31 May 14,373 impressions and 17 enquiries, 01 Jun – 30 Jun 12,194 impressions and 14 enquiries and 01 Jul – 31 Jul was a total of 12,229 impressions and 22 enquiries.
 - TravelPlanners Bing online ads generated the following: 01 May – 31 May 5,601 impressions and 8 enquiries, 01 Jun – 30 Jun 7,200 impressions and 6 enquiries and 01 Jul – 31 Jul was a total of 9,360 impressions and 20 enquiries.
 - The USAirtours ‘DOTM USA’ email sent on 19 May had an open rate of 1,882.
 - The USAirtours remail of said email sent on the 22 May had an open rate of 526.

- The USAirtours email sent on the 18 Aug generated an open rate of 1,102
 - USAirtours Social Media reached a total of 864 consumers
- **Ocean Florida** – We have now received the final wrap up document from the recent campaign with Ocean Florida and the results are as follows:
 - Travel to St. Pete/Clearwater was slightly down YOY by 0.98% in room nights but up in passenger numbers by 6.50%.
 - St. Pete Beach room nights booked during June & July were a total of 82 versus 91 in 2017 so a slight decrease.
 - Clearwater Beach room nights booked during June & July were a total of 105 versus 238 in 2017 so again a decrease in room nights booked however, Ocean Florida see a major spike in room nights booked during September and they feel the participation in the campaign in June although slightly down year on year will assist in bookings during this period.
 - The homepage banner had a total of 22,323 sessions.
 - The landing page had a total of 3,418 sessions.
 - Sale page deals sessions totaled 10,366 with the Things to do totalling 38 sessions and the blog post receiving 48 sessions in total.
 - Email marketing on the following releases received a CTR of 2.68% on the educational e-newsletter, 2.95% on the flash email, 2.84% on the reactive newsletter and 4.83% on the sale deals email.
 - Social media had a total of 14,562 Organic post impressions with clicks totaling 103 and the CTR total was 0.71%. Paid posts received 18,532 impressions with 179 clicks and a total CTR of 0.96%.
 - **Virgin Retail Campaign** – The results have now been received from the recent Virgin Retail National in-store campaign and the results are as follows:
 - Passenger numbers booked during the campaign totaled 1458 versus 1396 in 2017, an increase of 4.4% year on year.
 - Room nights booked during the campaign period were 2773 versus 2817 which is a decrease of -1.6%.
 - But units sold in packages were 481 versus 453 in 2017 which is an increase of 6.2%.
 - Virgin Holidays were pleased with the campaign overall and have shown an interest in running a similar campaign in 2019.
 - **Icelandair, Scandinavia** – We have been working with Michelle in our US office and Josephine Ando, Tampa Bay, to arrange the forthcoming Icelandair Fam trip. Key sales members from across Scandinavia will be visiting Tampa and St. Pete/Clearwater with Icelandair this month. We have provided Icelandair with the final itinerary which includes; accommodation at Sheraton Sand Key, cycling on the Pinellas trail, Maggie Mae's, Kelly's Chick a Boom Room, Strachan's Ice-cream, Parkshore Grill, Sundial, and also site visits and meals at Guy Harvey and Don Cesar. We have received the waivers for each participant and sent these to our office ahead of their arrival.

- **Discover America Sweden** – We have confirmed our participation in their annual training event in Stockholm in January. The event consists of timed training sessions and networking, and is usually attended by up to 150 participants.
- **Premier Holidays** – We have tried to arrange training for their sales agents, but unfortunately, they are unable to provide a session this year due to other commitments. We will follow up with Tim Greathead later in the year to arrange training for early next year.
- **Visit USA, Ireland** – We have submitted details on the renovation projects for Sirata, Don Cesar and Fenway Hotel for inclusion in the next edition of their ezine.
- **Scandinavian Sales Mission** – We have been working with Icelandair to find a suitable venue for our event in Copenhagen. It has now been decided that due to clash of events in Copenhagen that week, we will be attending the Discover America event as members instead of having our own event. Key partners will be invited to this event, which will consist of networking and finger food. Most of our meetings and trainings have been finalised and we will continue to work on our schedule next month.
- **Southall Travel** – We have been advised that Charlotte Forrester Product & Contracting Manager at Southall Travel is leaving the company on 24th September and that her colleague Anju will be taking on the role moving forward.
- **America As You Like It** – We provided a selection of current slides to Emily Oswald after a request had been received from her as they are currently updating their website.

ENQUIRIES:

Telephone/website enquiries for information and/or literature

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MARKET INTELLIGENCE:

4 September 2018, Source Travelbiz

Tropical Storm brings hurricane watch to US Gulf Coast

Tropical Storm Gordon has lashed southern Florida with heavy rains and high winds, forcing beach goers to drier ground. Weather forecasters said the storm could strengthen to near-hurricane force by the time it hits the central US Gulf Coast. Gordon formed into a tropical storm near the Florida Keys early on Monday as it moved west-north-west at 16mph. The storm is expected to reach coastal Mississippi and Louisiana by late Tuesday and move inland over the lower Mississippi Valley on Wednesday. The National Hurricane Centre in Miami said the storm was west-south-west of Marco Island, and maximum sustained winds were clocked at 50mph. Miami Beach Police the Labour Day holiday was “not a beach day”, with rough surf and potential rip currents. Red flags flew over Pensacola-area beaches in Florida’s Panhandle, where swimming and wading in the Gulf of Mexico was prohibited. More than 4,000 Florida Power & Light customers lost power due to weather conditions. The National Weather Service said conditions were “somewhat favourable” for tornadoes in

affected parts of south Florida. The storm left many businesses on Florida's Gulf Coast feeling shortchanged by the holiday weekend. The area has already been heavily impacted by this summer's so-called "red tide" — massive algae blooms that have caused waves of dead marine life to wash up along the coast. A hurricane watch — meaning hurricane conditions are possible — was put into effect for the area stretching from the mouth of the Pearl River in Mississippi to the Alabama-Florida border. The Miami-based centre said the storm is also expected to bring "life-threatening" storm surges to portions of the central Gulf Coast. A storm surge warning has been issued for the area stretching from Shell Beach, Louisiana, to the Mississippi-Alabama border. The warning means there is danger of life-threatening inundation. The region could see rising waters of 3ft to 5ft.

5 September 2018, Source Travelbiz

Fly to the US from €99 as winter airfare wars take off

Norwegian, Aer Lingus and Ryanair are all discounting fares as the winter schedules approach, says Pól Ó Conghaile. The winter airfare wars are hotting up in earnest with Norwegian's launch of €99 fares between Ireland and the US. All of the airline's transatlantic routes from Dublin and Shannon are included in the sale, which is available for travel from November 1 to March 31 of next year. Airlines switch from summer to winter schedules at the end of October, and several are anticipating the move with winter sales this week. Aer Lingus has seats to the UK and Europe from €29.99 and to North America from €159 each-way, for instance, valid for travel from November 1 to March 31, 2019. CityJet has 30pc off all flights if booked before September 9 using the code 'AUTUMNBREAK' on cityjet.com. The sale follows news that Aer Lingus will take over its flights to London City Airport from October under a new leasing arrangement. Ryanair is offering autumn city breaks from €19.99 in its latest special offer, while WOW air has flights from Dublin to Reykjavik from €49.99 each-way this autumn, and one-stop (via Iceland) services to the US from €135.99 each-way.

5 September 2018, Source TravelMole

Budget flights to Florida to launch this winter

Icelandic airline WOW air is to launch seasonal flights from the UK to Florida in December with one-way fares starting from under £130. The inaugural flight to Orlando International Airport will depart on December 18 from London Gatwick and Edinburgh. There will be three flights a week, but all of them will operate via Reykjavik, giving a total journey time from London and Edinburgh of just under 14 hours, including the stopover in Reykjavik. The flying time for direct flights from the UK is normally nine hours, or nine hours and 30 minutes. WOW CEO and founder Skuli Mogensen said: "We're thrilled to be adding Orlando to our ever-expanding route network and hope this will mean more budget-conscious travellers will soon be able to experience not only what the city of Orlando has to offer but also the wider Florida State. "As our 16th destination in North America, this is an important marker of our continual mission to push the price point to fly across the Atlantic as low as possible. "As well as being a destination traditionally popular with British families seeking a getaway during the chilly winter months, we're equally excited to welcome business travellers on board to experience our new WOW Premium offering. "In addition to flying in comfort in one of our luxurious 'Big Seats', Premium passengers now get extra checked baggage, free food and drink on board, fast track security when departing or transiting in Iceland and the freedom to change bookings free of charge."

7 September 2018, Source Travolution

Airlines risk Google domination if they don't invest in mobile, says CarTrawler tech chief

Airlines risk being dominated by Google if they continue to underinvest in their mobile platforms, the Aviation Festival in London heard yesterday. Bobby Healey, chief technology officer at Irish car hire aggregator CarTrawler, told delegates that within the next two to three years nearly all air bookings will come from mobile. And yet he said that many airline apps continue to drop customers off onto slow desktop booking engines to complete the transaction. "Fifty percent of customer who transact on desktop actually make the decision on mobile," he claimed. Healey said airlines were driven by last click attribution which means they fail to see the impact of mobile and customer are continually driven back into the Google cookie world. "The biggest threat [to airlines] is Google," he added. "Their products have evolved and they are now the best way to search for flights in the universe. Customers are flocking to Google in droves. "What does that mean for airlines? It means they are going to spend between £0 and £60 for a booking because they lose the digital relationship with customers because of a lack of investment in their mobile stack." Healey said CarTrawler has frozen desktop development and built its own conversational Artificial Intelligence technology called Arthur to exploit the emergence of voice-enabled devices. He said the evolution of conversational commerce provides the answer for airlines wanting to extricate themselves from the Google search monopoly online. CarTrawler is using Arthur to automate its customer support and today 40% of those interactions are dealt with by a machine which deals with email, text and WhatsApp enquiries. "It's very easy to do," Healey said. "We should do better [than 40%] but we would not have the accuracy. "The heavy lifting of supporting customers is done by a robot and more importantly the consumer experience is far better." Healey said the firm receives hundreds of emails praising its agent Arthur from customers who have no idea they weren't dealing with a real human being.

7 September 2018, Source Travolution

Facebook reveals new Flight Ads platform to improve targeting of travelers

Facebook has revealed changes to its Flight Ads platform saying it intends to make them more relevant to users of the social network who are interested in travel. Flight Ads, which was previously known as dynamic ads for travel for flights, will enable airlines to reach more potential travellers based on their visits to other flight-related pages, websites and apps. Previously, airlines could use Flight Ads to re-target customers who had visited their website or app searching for a particular flight. Now, airlines can reach more people who have expressed interest in travel. Announcing the move this morning ahead of an address during the Aviation Festival in London, Facebook gave an example of how the new Flight Ads might be used. The tech giant said: "Let's say people are looking at holiday trips to Mexico by browsing several airline sites and flight pricing apps. "Airline brands can now use Flight Ads to reach those people with tailored ads promoting relevant flight routes. "In addition, travellers that visit a travel-related Facebook page, but have not yet chosen a trip destination may see an ad to visit an airline brand's site." Facebook said users can opt out of any Flight Ad they see by clicking on the upper right-hand corner of an ad. They can also manage their ad settings in their preferences. Facebook added: "And as with all advertising on Facebook, flight advertisers can reach customers without learning personal information about them. "Advertisers are already seeing results from testing this new ad solution. Air France used Flight Ads to acquire new US customers, driving targeted search volume to its site, while lowering cost per search by 66%. "And Hopper, an airfare forecasting app, saw a 20% drop

in its cost per app install using this new prospecting option.” Flight Ads will be available globally to all advertisers in the coming weeks on Facebook, Instagram and Audience Network.

13 September 2018, Source Travelbiz

British Airways is the least fuel-efficient transatlantic airline – and Norwegian the most

Travellers with an environmental conscience would do well to avoid British Airways if booking flights to America, after the airline was ranked bottom for fuel efficiency by a new study. The British flag carrier was at the foot of a table of 20 transatlantic operators, according to research by the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT), burning 63 per cent more fuel per passenger kilometre than the top-ranked airline - low-cost, long-haul stalwart, Norwegian. The report released on Tuesday found that fuel efficiency across the 20 airlines flying the most people across the Atlantic in 2017 had increased by 1 per cent since 2014, but that large, ageing aircraft, such as the 747, were holding the industry average back. Next year the aviation industry will begin monitoring their carbon emissions as part of a landmark agreement to cut air travel pollution by 2050, thought to account for 2 per cent of all global man-made carbon emissions. Eight airlines, including UK carriers Thomas Cook and Virgin Atlantic, boasted better fuel efficiency than the average, both ranking joint fifth. Virgin last year said that fuel efficiency was its number one environmental policy. The ICCT study highlighted the environmental value of new fuel efficient aircraft such as the 787 Dreamliner, the Boeing 777 and 737 MAX and Airbus A350, the former used by Norwegian and Virgin. It also found that Norwegian and second-placed WOW air, another low-cost, long-haul airline, performed well as their planes had fewer premium seats and a higher passenger density. Premium seats, such as business and first class, are on average up to 2.7 times as “carbon-intensive” as economy seats. “Overall, airlines with more fuel-efficient aircraft, less premium seating and higher passenger and freight load factors operated more fuel efficient flights,” the report by the US-based not-for-profit organisation said. “The estimated gap between the most and least fuel-efficient transatlantic airlines widened from 51 per cent in 2014 to 63 per cent last year,” the report said, explaining that Norwegian’s fuel efficiency increased while British Airways’ decreased. “BA flew more than half of its departures on inefficient Boeing 747 and Airbus A380 aircraft, leading to an average aircraft fuel burn eight percentage points higher than the industry average. These aircraft also have a lower seating density compared to the rest of the industry.” The report said of BA’s plans to purchase more A380s, the world’s largest passenger aircraft, with four engines and an upper deck: “Although larger airplanes with more premium seating may conjure up feelings of luxury travel, they do not help the airline’s environmental performance.” Norwegian CEO Bjorn Kjos said: “The most important thing that an airline can do for the environment is to invest in newer aircraft which use the latest technology to be as fuel efficient as possible. “Our strategy to have a modern fleet is paying dividends not only for our business and customers, but also our planet. This recognition from ICCT is truly the highest form of industry praise and is validation that we’re moving in the right direction with more environmentally friendly planes.”

14 September 2018, Source TravelMole

Barrhead opens experiential store in Glasgow

Barrhead Travel has opened its newest experiential store in Port Glasgow Retail Park. The new store will replace its previous store in Greenock's Oak Mall and is twice the size. The relocation is part of a £2.5m expansion project. The store team has also doubled, bringing the

number to 17 travel consultants, led by manager Roseanne Gauge. Barrhead president Sharon Munro said: "We are extremely proud to be not only expanding our stores throughout the UK, but also growing our branches where we already have an established local presence. "We have invested heavily in our team, location and technology to create an experiential store that pushes the boundaries of travel in retail." The store will house a dedicated cruise, long-haul and VIP area as well as a three-person foreign currency unit. In-store technology includes an appointment booking area controlled by Smart TV equipment. In the last year, Barrhead has opened stores in Belfast, the agency's first store in Northern Ireland, Southampton, which marked brand presence in South England and most recently, Fort Kinnaird.

15 September 2018, Source TravelMole

Florida set for another record year of tourism

Florida tourism is on track for yet another record year of arrivals, although international arrivals were flat. While the Red Tide bloom continues to impact many communities reliant on tourism, the first half of the year showed arrivals were up nearly 6% on last year. Preliminary figures show an estimated 65.5 million came to the Sunshine State from January-June this year. "If we have that sort of growth for the rest of the year, we're going to have 125 million tourists," Gov. Rick Scott said. Domestic visitation was up more than 7% in the first six months but international arrivals were flat compared to the same period last year. "Every 65 to 75 tourists is another Florida job," the Governor added. Tourism accounts for 1.26 million jobs in the state as of July, according to data published by the Department of Economic Opportunity. Visit Florida president and CEO Ken Lawson lauded the 'cutting edge marketing programs that highlight the diversity of our state' and no let-up in aggressively marketing tourism in both established and emerging markets. Last month Florida announced special marketing funds for Collier, Lee, Charlotte, Sarasota, Manatee, Hillsborough and Pinellas counties, which are suffering as visitors stay away amid the prolonged outbreak of Red Tide.

17 September 2018, Source Travel Weekly

Brand USA to host first Travel Week in London

Brand USA will hold its first 'Travel Week' in the UK in September 2019, featuring a B2B trade show and consumer activity. The five-day event will take place from September 9-13 in London and was announced on Monday at a workshop held by the marketing organisation for destination marketers and CVBs. Thomas Garzilli, Brand USA chief marketing officer, said: "We believe that Brand USA Travel Week has the potential to change the way that the United States engages with the UK and European markets, promoting more opportunities than ever before for Brits and Europeans to visit the USA to, through, and beyond the gateways." A key component of the Travel Week will be the Brand USA Travel Expo, a B2B event connecting US destinations and suppliers with buyers from major European markets. The Expo will be supported by a speaker series featuring marketers, strategists and industry leaders, with plans also in place for a range of consumer marketing initiatives. "We are sending a strong signal of intent to grow visitation from the UK and Europe by placing a spotlight on the USA's world-leading tourism assets," Garzilli added. "The programme will bring together public and private-sector partners with key business interests in the USA and will be a vehicle to support growth in the US travel sector." Brand USA was formed in 2010 and began operations in 2011. It is jointly funded by the private and public sectors, with a remit to promote the US as a tourism destination and grow international visitation.

18 September 2018, Source TravelMole

TripAdvisor unveils new site set to 'disrupt the travel industry'

TripAdvisor has unveiled a new site and mobile experience which it claims is poised to 'disrupt the travel industry once again'. Due to launch later this year, TripAdvisor said its new site will become the 'most personalised and connected travel community, inspiring and empowering individuals with social assistive tools to plan and book better with relevant advice and information from people and experts they trust'. The new site is expanding its community beyond travellers to also include brands, social media influencers, and publishers. Already more than 500 social media influencers, consumer brands, publishers and travel partners have joined for the beta phase and more are being added daily. They include National Geographic, Travel Channel, Business Insider & Insider Guides, NYC & Company, Smarter Travel, and Cruise Critic. "TripAdvisor is poised to disrupt the travel industry once again as we create a more personalised and connected community," said Stephen Kaufer, TripAdvisor CEO and co-founder. "The new TripAdvisor is the one travel site that brings together social-assistive tools, amazing content and our existing booking capabilities to merge the joy of planning and discovery together into a single experience. We are assisting our members at each step of their journey as we become a more personalised, inspirational and useful TripAdvisor." TripAdvisor members will have the ability to create trips, which can be in-depth travel guides, itineraries or simple wish lists of things to do while travelling. These trips can be made private and saved for personal use or shared with the community to 'inspire and help others'. Powered by what TripAdvisor claims is the world's first 'travel feed', members will be able to discover more relevant information faster when planning travel. TripAdvisor now has more than 661 million reviews and opinions covering around 7.7 million accommodations, airlines, experiences, and restaurants. It also compares prices from more than 200 hotel booking sites.

24 September 2018, Source TravelMole

Thomas Cook issues 'hot weather' profit warning

This summer's heat wave across Europe has led Thomas Cook to downgrade its annual profit forecasts. The operator said the hot weather had hit summer demand, describing trading in June and July as 'tough', adding the slowdown in UK customer bookings extended into August leading to 'higher than normal levels of promotional activity'. "This has exacerbated pressure on margins, on top of an already competitive market for Spanish holidays, as previously highlighted," the operator said. Underlying operating profits for the year to September are now expected to come in at £280m. Previous guidance was £323m. The announcement saw Thomas Cook shares fall almost 24% when trading opened this morning. TUI was the biggest faller on the FTSE 100, down 3%. Full-year results will be published on November 29. Chief executive Peter Fankhauser said: "Summer 2018 has seen a return to popularity of destinations such as Turkey and Tunisia. "However, it has also been marked by a prolonged period of hot weather across Europe. This meant many customers spent June and July enjoying the sunshine at home and put off booking their holidays abroad, leading to even tougher competition and higher than usual levels of discounting in the 'lates' market of August and September. "Our recent trading performance is clearly disappointing. "However, despite the recent challenges, we continue to make good strategic progress which positions us well to drive further performance improvement; this includes the launch of our Expedia alliance in the UK and Scandinavia, signing our first own-brand hotel in China and

lining up a pipeline of 10 new Cook's Clubs in some of our key destinations for summer 2019."

25 September 2018, Source Travelbiz

Heatwave makes it a gloomy year for loss-making Sunway

Ireland's summer's heatwave has made it a gloomy year for one of the country's best-known travel firms, Sunway Travel. The MD of Sunway Travel, Tanya Airey, confirmed yesterday the company is on course to record losses in excess of the €458,976 pre-tax loss that was sustained last year. Ms Airey blamed the heatwave here this summer, along with "huge teething problems" in the introduction of a new computer system, for the company for the losses. Ms Airey said that the 'double whammy' of the heatwave and the computer system glitches has made it the worst performing year for the company since it was established. "The sun came out here and came out early and didn't go back in again. The hot summer was not good for us," she said. "A lot of people just skipped going on sun holidays this summer". She added the poor demand for sun breaks resulted in the company selling 30pc to 40pc of such holidays on flights booked late at a loss. Ms Airey said the company was already trying to play catch-up as glitches in a newly-introduced computer system hampered bookings in traditionally the busiest month of the year, January.

27 September 2018, Source Travel Weekly

Travel 2 and Gold Medal parent puts 50 staff under consultation

Gold Medal and Travel 2 parent dnata has put around 50 staff under consultation. The move affects staff across various departments in dnata's Chester office, which houses finance, sales and IT functions and the Global Travel Group consortium. Staff working for Global are not affected. Staff were informed of the decision today. Around 200 staff are based at the Chester office in total. Dnata has various offices in the UK, including one in Preston where Gold Medal and Netflights are based. It also has a base in Glasgow where Travel 2 is located. A spokeswoman for the company said: "The company is entering into a consultation process with around 50 members of the operations teams in the Chester office. "This does not include anyone working for The Global Travel Group."