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Wednesday 15 June 2016

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Retail Brand Calls For Trade YOUunity

At a time when research shows resurgence in travel agent usage in the US, First Travel Group's gm retail John Willson is calling for a holistic approach to promoting the role of a Kiwi travel agent.

"Never before have I seen such a period of dynamic change at a retail level in terms of brands and management—but regardless, we still all have a common goal and that's to grow awareness of the relevance of the trade distribution as the role of a travel agent continues to evolve with the market," he says.

Willson says First's retail direction (including YOU) is based around its stores' knowledge and skill in delivering 'the highest quality travel products that are unquestionably competitive in this multi-channel arena that we

operate in'. He welcomed House of Travel boss Mark O'Donnell's comments that the new HoT brand campaign, which urges consumers to create their holiday together with a travel agent, is a sentiment that could be adopted by the wider industry.

"Yes, we're competing at the store front, but I believe we can grow the industry together by promoting the overall role of a retail consultant who is ready to help clients make their holiday dreams a reality."

ASTA's recent 'Best of Both Worlds' survey quantifies how agents save consumers time and money, with some interesting results, adds Willson. It found US consumer bookings were at their highest level in three years; millennials lead the way in agent usage, and likely referral; and almost two thirds of users said booking with an agent makes the overall trip experience better.

"These are all really positive findings," says Willson. "We are acutely aware that almost all Kiwi consumers are researching their holidays on-line before they come to a travel agent—but it is up to our industry as a whole to promote the benefits of using a travel agent. Greater access to inventory now means the traditional retail distribution can often match, or better an equivalent on-line offer—and the conclusion of the ASTA survey was, in short, if you want a better travel experience, use your travel agent."

Dive In An A300

Turkey has sunk an A300 in the Aegean Sea to create a diving site and increase tourism to the region. The A300 was sunk from the southwestern resort town Kusadasi, in the hopes it will create an artificial reef to attract divers. Turkey has sunk planes before to create reefs but this is believed to be the largest ever used. Check out a video of the A300 being towed out to sea and sunk [HERE](#)

JQ's On Time In May

Around 81% of Jetstar's domestic flights departed on time in May, and the carrier operated 99% of its scheduled flights over the month. On peak-time domestic flights, on-time performance averaged 90% on Auckland-Christchurch, 82% on Auckland-Wellington and 94% on Wellington-Christchurch.

4 Pages This Issue

VA Capital Review

Virgin Australia has today outlined the results of its capital review, including plans to undertake an AUD852 million capital raising and cost-saving initiatives that will include fleet and network optimisation, operating efficiencies, maintenance and procurement. Fleet plans include reducing ATR aircraft and removing all E190 aircraft over the next three years.

The carrier will raise the AUD852m through a proposed fully underwritten one for one non-renounceable pro-rata entitlement offer to shareholders, at AUD0.21 a share. Air New Zealand, Singapore Airlines, HNA, Virgin and Nanshan Group (which is buying NZ's VA stake) have made binding agreements to take up their pro-rata entitlements. "Our renewed capital structure will strengthen our balance sheet, provide additional liquidity and help fund initiatives to improve earnings and cash flow," says VA boss John Borghetti.

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HAWAIIAN AIRLINES

Disney Security Up

Disney has raised security at its theme parks following the mass shooting in Orlando, as reports emerge that the shooter had scoped out Disney World as a possible target.

“Unfortunately we’ve all been living in a world of uncertainty, and during this time we have increased our security measures across our properties, adding such visible safeguards as magnetometers [metal detectors], additional canine units, and law enforcement officers on site, as well as less visible systems that employ state-of-the-art security technologies,” Disney has said in a widespread statement to media.

EY Boosts Qatar

Etihad is celebrating 10 years of flying to Qatar by launching nine extra weekly flights on the Abu Dhabi-Doha route from 01 Aug.

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Improvements To US Travel Process

The US Travel Association has welcomed new legislation which it says will reduce airport security wait times, which have been making headlines over the peak summer travel period.

The Checkpoint Optimisation and Efficiency Act of 2016, which has just passed in the US House of Representatives, ‘takes a smart, common-sense approach to reducing airport security wait times by ensuring that all TSA checkpoints are properly staffed’, says USTA boss Roger Dow. It also aligns with steps announced by the Department of Homeland Security to better allocate staffing to address the wait time issue, says Dow. “We are especially

LATAM Rio Prep

LATAM Airlines Brazil has put in place more than 100 special operational measures to ensure efficient services for spectators and delegations during the Rio 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The company anticipates it will transport around 25% of the public travelling to and from Rio during the Games; while 30% of the 4500 Paralympic athletes are expected to travel with the company. “LATAM is ready for the Olympic challenge,” says LATAM’s Eduardo Costa. “We began our preparations in Jun last year to speed up services for athletes, provide care for Paralympic athletes, accommodate special air cargo and coordinate large-scale simultaneous arrivals and departures in a single city.” It is investing up to AUD7.7 million for the Games.

pleased by measures requiring TSA to share its staffing models with airports and airlines, and directing the agency to strategically assign administrative personnel and other appropriate staffers to non-security functions.”

The initial scare about wait times at airports generated ‘mass corrective action’ and saw both the TSA and travellers make adjustments which have already improved the situation, adds Dow.

First Travel Roadshows

Regional First Travel Group roadshows are underway across New Zealand, and gm retail John Willson says results from the first two meetings in Wellington and Auckland were ‘very positive’. The roadshows enable the group to ascertain how the new YOU Travel members have blended into the group, offer an update on performance, and get direction from the co-operative for future marketing, says Willson. Another meeting will be held in ROT on Thu and CHC next Tue.

Shanghai Airport Bomb

Four travellers at Shanghai’s Pudong International Airport were injured on Sun (local time) after a man set off a home-made explosive near the airport’s Terminal 2 ticketing area. Reports say the man threw the explosive at the ticketing counter before taking out a knife and cutting his own neck. Three flights in that ticketing area were affected and four people were hospitalised with cuts from glass fragments. The man was also taken to hospital and is in a critical condition.

SkyTeam Ups Its Game

SkyTeam is promising ‘increased customer benefits and more code-share opportunities for members’ this year.

The alliance has launched a new app to seek feedback from its customers, with SkyTeam members able to provide feedback on every step of their journey at more than 1000 airports. The SkyPriority Audit App is free to download and has been tested on 8000 frequent flyers. SkyTeam also has more lounges in the pipeline, with the sixth SkyTeam branded lounge due to open in Beijing later this year, chief executive Perry Cantarutti said at the IATA AGM in Dublin recently.

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TN Signs Amadeus

Air Tahiti Nui has signed an agreement with Amadeus that will see it adopt the Amadeus Altea Suite to enhance its reservations, inventory, check-in and departure control processes, as part of its 'transformative phase'. The airline has also signed for Amadeus Segment Revenue Management, Amadeus Loyalty Management and Amadeus Payment Platform. "Air Tahiti Nui is in a transformative phase right now. We have already taken the decision to replace our entire aircraft fleet, and next we must make sure we have the most advanced technology infrastructure in place to set us up for success," says chief executive officer Michel Monsoisin. "Technology will play a pivotal role not only in driving operational efficiencies for our business but also in providing a seamless, comfortable experience to our customers."



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Travelmarvel's 2017 Canada Highlights

Canadian lodge experiences, rail journeys, cruises, and the chance to spot polar bears and beluga whales are just a few of the highlights in Travelmarvel's latest Canada and Alaska featuring USA Rail Journeys 2017 brochure.

"Once again we are offering the perfect combination of all the highlights with exceptional quality and value for money," says general manager David Cox. "We are confident that agents will reap the rewards from this program. It is already selling at a rapid rate so our advice is to book early in order to secure preferred dates and departures."

New itineraries include the 21-day Canadian Wilderness & Alaska Cruise which introduces Emerald Lake Lodge and Tyax Wilderness Lodge alongside a range of must-see locations; while for those wanting to explore by different means, the new 28-day Canada by Rail with Alaska Cruise combines nine nights in Eastern Canada and eight nights in Western Canada, punctuated by a three-night VIA Rail journey from Montreal to Jasper, a two-day Rocky Mountaineer experience and more.

Solomons On Up

Kiwi travel to the Solomon Islands is up 33.82% as of Jan 2016, compared to Jan 2015, says the Solomon Islands Visitors Bureau, and it is hoped numbers will continue to grow as more wholesalers come onboard. The SIVB says it is working with Our Pacific in a bid to drive awareness and bookings, as well as Pack Ya Bags and Dive Fish Snow in New Zealand, while it is hoping more wholesalers, both niche and mainstream, will come onboard in the coming months. The tourism office adds that it will conduct its second roadshow of the year around Sep, with further details to be released closer to the time. While the year-on-year growth is positive, total Kiwi visitation for Q1 2016 is down 0.7% to 279, however, the SIVB says it is 'very happy with the Jan result'.

Airpoints For Schools

Ten schools across the country have received almost 75,000 in Airpoints dollars donated by members of Air New Zealand's frequent flyers programme. From Apr-May, the schools were eligible to receive up to 10,000 points each to redeem on flights for students or teachers.

Meanwhile, those who can't get enough of Canada's wildlife on their trip can choose to extend their holiday in 2017 with the new Lazy Bear Lodge extension.

Travelmarvel has also released a new 'two for one airfares' earlybird offer across select itineraries, which grants couples with one free return economy airfare with Air New Zealand; while it is also offering a \$1000 solo traveller discount; air credit up to \$600pp; and save \$500pp off your great rail journey. For further details see travelmarvel.co.nz

US Senators Vs LH

A trio of senators in the US have asked the Department of Transportation to investigate Lufthansa boss Carsten Spohr over comments he made about the carrier's GDS surcharge.

The senators say when Spohr announced at a 2015 IATA meeting that LH was planning to impose the surcharge, he said 'it's a first step and I believe others will follow'. They've called the comments potentially anti-competitive and accused him of encouraging competitors to follow LH's lead in raising prices.

However LH has said the IATA meeting has already been reviewed by the DoT, which concluded that no violation of US antitrust laws had occurred.



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Starwood Update

Starwood Hotels & Resorts has closed on the sale of The St Regis Florence and The Westin Excelsior Florence to Nozul Hotels & Resorts. Starwood will continue to operate the hotels under the St Regis and Westin brand flags under new long-term management agreements.

**Industry
Diary**

JUNE

Starwood Expo

Auckland: Mon 20, The Maritime Room, 1500-1930.

Tourism Philippines 'More fun in the Philippines' Roadshow

Auckland: Tue 21, The Maritime Room, Princes Wharf, 1800.

Wellington: Wed 22, Amora 1 & 3, Amora Hotel, 1800.

Christchurch: Thu 23, Rakaia/Crossings Lounge Novotel, 1800.

Globus family of brands, Rocky Mountaineer 2017 'The Americas' Season

Auckland, Central: Mon 27, Novotel Hotel, 1745.

Auckland, North: Tue 28, Takapuna Boating Club, 1745.

Wellington: Tue 28, Lone Star Café, 1745.

Nelson: Wed 29, Lone Star Café 1745.

Blenheim: Thu 30, Ten Pin Bowling, 1745.

Spain Leisure Product Update

Auckland: Mon 27, Rydges Hotel (Hobson Room), 1730-2000.

JULY

Globus family of brands, Rocky Mountaineer, 2017 'The Americas' Season

Invercargill: Mon 04, Kelvin Hotel, 1745. **Dunedin:** Tue 05, Lone Star Café, 1745.

Christchurch: Wed 06, Lone Star Café, 1745. **Hamilton:** Mon 18, Hamilton Gardens Café, 1745.

Tauranga: Tue 19, Macau, 1745. **Napier:** The Crown Hotel, 1745.

Hong Kong Airlines 'Fresh + very Hong Kong' Agent seminars

Auckland Central: Tue 05 Novotel Hotel Ellerslie, 1800.

Auckland North: Wed 06, Spencer on Bryon Takapuna, 1800.

For more see Monday's TRAVEL TODAY

Tangos And Vinos In Buenos Aires



Adventure World, Air New Zealand and Accor hosted a trade group to Buenos Aires over Queen's Birthday weekend, where they took in a cuisine walking tour of San Telmo, and an evening wine tasting at La Cava del Querandi followed by dinner and the famous tango show.

"The highlight for me was a visit to La Bamba, an exclusive ranch built nearly 200 years ago as an outpost on the royal road. We had an amazing Argentinian BBQ lunch and got to see a Gaucho at work all whilst sampling a few glasses of Malbec," says Adventure World gm Dave Nicholson.

Pictured in BUE is: **1** BUE Group pic: Back: Mandy Veale, You Travel & First Travel; Eden Stevenson, World Travellers; Jane Reese, Accor; Louise Sutton, Flight Centre; and (front) Karl Bradford, Air NZ; Dave Nicholson, Adventure World; Kim Foster, House of Travel; Doug Gordon, helloworld; and

Korea Roadshow

Korea Tourism Organisation's Kiwi roadshow, held in Auckland last Fri, was a success, with a number of retail agents having the chance to meet with a range of tour operators, such as the Visit Korea Committee, Incheon International Airport Corporation, Korean Air and Fathom Asia. The tourism organisation says Kiwi travellers are particularly intrigued by the destination's history, culture and national parks, with a broad range of visitors from across all age groups. A total 28,426 New Zealanders travelled to Korea in 2015, and the numbers are growing, adds KTO. From Jan-Apr this year alone, 8830 Kiwis visited. Tandem Travel's Stephen Hilton took home the major prize of air tickets to Korea, a K-Travel bus pass and two nights' accommodation in Seoul.

Thomas Gentz, Air NZ. **2** Mandy Veale, You Travel & First Travel and Louise Sutton, Flight Centre at the famous La Recoleta Cemetery. **3** Celebrating the first night in Buenos Aires: Thomas Gentz, Air NZ; Mandy Veale, You Travel & First Travel; Doug Gordon, helloworld; Louise Sutton, Flight Centre; Dave Nicholson, Adventure World; and Karl Bradford, Air NZ. **4** Mandy Veale, You Travel & First Travel wanders the colourful streets of BUE.

Volvo's Now Competition

The latest competition to Kiwi travel agents has come from an unlikely source—Volvo New Zealand.

The company has announced it's putting together travel packages tailored specifically to Kiwi travellers, as part of a new service where they can travel to Sweden to pick up their car straight from the factory.

The Factory Delivery Experience includes the option to take the new car for a spin in Europe before it's shipped home to New Zealand.

It's been introduced here following requests from customers, says the car manufacturer.

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