

Insight



Data and Design Can Keep Mobile Travellers Engaged

Databank



A Recipe for Business Travel Success:
Reduce Friction, Add Tech, Serve Up Satisfaction

Leaders in Trade



When the "Italy on the Sea" Encounters Chinese-style Mobile Life
—— Interview with Mario Zanetti,
Costa's Asian President

City



Dakar Is Urban Vibrancy



European Tourism: Most Countries Show Positive Results

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European tourism sector is booming. According to the European Tourism Commission's latest report "European Tourism 2017 - Trends & Prospects", 28 out of the 30 destinations registered growth in the arrivals of foreign tourists in the first half of 2017 - some even in the double-digit range.

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On the top of the ranking is Iceland which reported 56 % more tourism arrivals. Significant growth is also reported by Montenegro (+ 25%), Malta (+ 23%) and Cyprus (+ 18%). These countries all show that they can also score increasingly in the off-season.

Finland (+ 18%) and Bulgaria (+ 17%) also

belong to the countries boosting European tourism sector. Portugal, Serbia and Croatia (+ 15% each) reported significant increase as well.

Spain (+ 12%), Great Britain and Hungary (+ 11%) are also satisfied. Germany (+ 4.8%), Switzerland (+ 4.9%) and Austria (+ 2.5%), on the other hand, are at the lower end of the table.

(read more please turn to page 3)



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In the first half of 2017, only two destinations registered declining arrivals. Turkey lost a further 8.1% of its guests compared to the already catastrophic year 2016, and Norway reported a drop of 7.2%. Italy and Greece did not provide any numbers.

Practically all European destinations profit from the positive economic situation in the euro zone, which has led to a significant increase in the number of tourists from Germany, France and Italy. Most countries also recorded a marked growth from the UK, in particular Croatia (+ 40%) and Bulgaria (+ 26%).

In the case of tourists from Russia, the downturn in the past few years has not yet been fully absorbed, but the trend is clearly positive again – and the forecasts for the next few years as well.

In the US, economic growth and favorable flight conditions also led to more trips abroad, boosting European tourism sector as well. By 2021 an average growth of 6% per year is predicted.

Lower increments were recorded among tourists from China and Japan, which is likely to be due to Europe-wide security concerns. Nonetheless, for both markets, growth of 14% and 5% is expected in the first half of 2017.

London And Vienna Are The Most Popular Business Destinations In Europe

Business trips are a possible indicator of economic growth. If the volume of business travel increases or falls in certain regions, it is possible to draw conclusions about the economy there.

London and Vienna are the most popular business destinations in Europe. Outside Europe, European business travelers travel most frequently to New York and Shanghai.

BC Travel analyzed data connected to business travel and published the results in the latest issue of "Cities & Trends Report". The report is based on flight booking data from eight major business travel markets in Europe: Belgium, Germany, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

Compared to 2015, there were only minor changes in the ranking of the most popular business destinations in Europe. Top performers in terms of cities are London, Vienna and Amsterdam.

Thanks to an increase of 7.1% in air travel

to Barcelona, the city climbed from 9th to 6th place. Madrid is the second Spanish city in the ranking with an increase – 14.9%. It is the number one jumper and has moved to 8th place.

The increase in flights to the two Spanish cities is linked to the recovery of the Spanish economy, which grew by 3.2% in 2016.

In terms of countries, the U.K. is on top, with Germany and Spain in second and third, respectively.

Intercontinental trips from Europe are on the rise. New York and Shanghai remain the first and second in terms of intercontinental business destinations for European business travelers. In 2016, Dubai has overtaken Beijing and Singapore with an increase of 7.5% compared to the previous year.

One of the reason for this is the fact that Dubai is preparing for the World Expo 2020. Many affordable hotels are opening, making it a less expensive place to hold meetings and events.

Country-wise, the United States remain on top of business travel preferences. Developing countries China and India come second and third, respectively.

Most business trips take place after the



summer holidays in September (9.5%). Due to the holidays, December is the least frequented month (5.6%).

Tourism In Luxembourg: Leisure And Business Sector Growing

Tourism in Luxembourg stabilized last year. Despite diverging rates of success depending on the sector and region, the tourism sector reported positive numbers for the year 2016, according to State Secretary for Economic Affairs, Francine Closener.

In terms of visitation, it is the fifth consecutive record season of the hotel industry, with a total of 1.74 million overnight stays.

In comparison to 2015, this represents an overall increase of 0.2%, with traditional business tourism progressing by +3.1% and leisure tourism up by +2.9%.

However, the MICE sector – convention tourism in Luxembourg – decreased by 14.8%, after having reached a record high a year earlier (especially in the context of the Luxembourg's presidency of the EU Council).

In comparison to the 2014 levels, the

growth rate of the MICE sector – a developing tourism sector – is still positive by 4%.

Regarding the number of the overnight stays in hotels, they increased especially in the Moselle region (+11.2%) as well as the Mullerthal region (+5.8), while they remained stable in the central regions (+0.1%) and went down in the southern regions as well as the Ardennes region (-2.6% and -3.7% respectively).

The occupancy rate of hotels was 72.2%, down by 0.3% when compared to 2015 numbers.

In terms of camping – an activity which is highly dependent on favorable weather conditions – the number of recorded nights spent (984 000 in total) dropped last year by 1.5% but has remained at a high level for the last five years.

This is also true for youth hostels, whose visitation – 35.2% by residents – has increased by 1% in the last twelve months.

Last year, tourism in Luxembourg benefited the most from leisure sites which attracted the most visitors, compared to museums and guided tours of castles.

In terms of tourist attractions, the most appealing options to tourists remain guided tours of the capital (273 480 last year), which surpass the Parc merveilleux de Bettembourg (222 839), the château de Vianden (171 722), the Casemates du Bock (129 682) and the Mullerthal Trail (105 757).

Summer Tourism Season in Paris Was Successful

In July, the occupancy in “Grand Paris” hotels increased by 7% to 72.3% relative to the same period in 2016 – still far below 2015 levels. However the tourism season in Paris has been more or less successful.

The summer tourism season in the city received a “passing grade”. “After a very difficult year for Parisian tourism professionals in 2016, preliminary results for 2017 – especially those for the summer season – attest to a renewed interest in Paris as a destination and make it possible for us to envisage a satisfactory end to the fiscal year,” Pierre Schapira, President of Paris's Conventions and Tourism Bureau stated.



On a cumulative basis, in July and August, the occupancy rate in “Grand Paris” hotels did indeed reach 72.3% - an increase of 7 percentage points compared to the same period in 2016, but down by 6.5 points relative to 2015. The reason for this was the more limited than expected performance during the month of August – occupancy rate of 65% – as well as a decrease in the average duration of stays (2.2 nights on average in July) in addition to the “still partial” recovery of the leisure tourism sector – the primary cause of the worse than expected results in August.

A Record Number of Arrivals

Nevertheless, performance during the summer tourism season in Paris remains high with the highest number of arrivals in the last ten years – 2.2 million (+12.2% relative to 2016). This record-breaking number is explained by the return of French clientele (+13.6%) as well as by the return of North American clients (USA) which, as in the first half of the year, were “at the forefront of the recovery of foreign tourism,” the Office for the City of Paris remarked.

And the autumn season looks promising. Revitalized by major exhibits and trade shows (Batimat, Milipol Paris, “le Salon des maires et des collectivités locales”, etc.) as well as by a significant cultural resurgence (opening of the Yves Saint Laurent museum, reopening of the “Monnaie de Paris”, large-scale autumn exhibits, etc), the autumn season is “offering encouraging attendance prospects for the end of the year”.

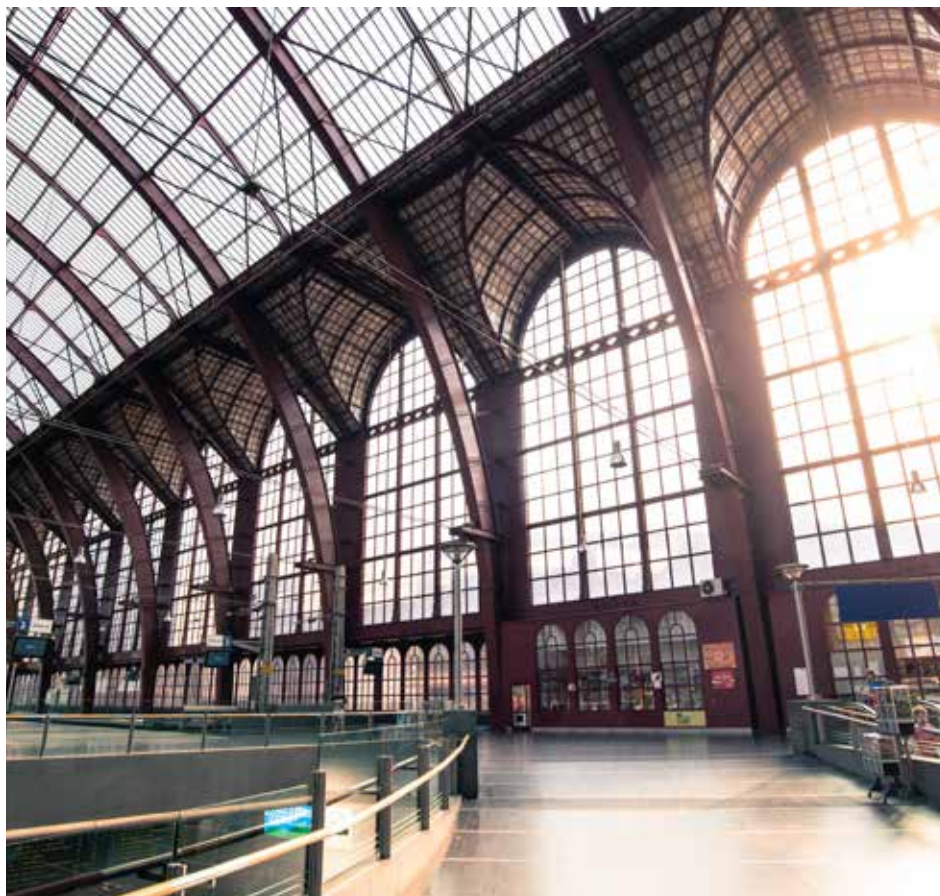
Portugal Welcomed More Than 21 Million Tourists in 2017

Tourism in Portugal is ready to celebrate its best year ever. By the end of the year, the country should welcome more than 21 million tourists, above the last year's hallmark of 19.1 million.

According to the registers of the Secretary of State for Tourism, Ana Mendes Godinho, the goal is to grow 10% in comparison to 2016, and, right now, the number is steadily growing above the threshold established in the plan Estratégia Turismo 2027, in which the annual growth of 8% had been set.

The estimates for the hotel industry are also positive. According to the Hotel Industry Association of Portugal, 2017 “will be the third year of growth, something that will consolidate the results”. This increase in demand in hotels was also tailed by the prices paid for hotel units, another element that has registered a significant growth.

The numbers speak for themselves: the number of tourist stays in Portugal has, for



the first time ever, surpassed the 30 million in the first seven months of the year, even though the growth of overnight stays, number of guests, and revenue has registered a downturn.

Between January and July, Portugal's hotel industry registered 32.13 million tourist stays, above the 29.6 million amassed last year.

During the same period. In the same timeframe, the country welcomed 11.6 million guests, above the 10.6 million during the same period of 2016.

All in all, tourism in Portugal now represents 7% of the gross domestic product (GDP).

The Capital Keeps Rising

Lisbon is one of the key markets accountable for this spike.

In July, the hotels reached new records in terms of occupation and revenue. The data published by the National Statistical Institute of Portugal show that, in all regions, the tourist accommodation had more revenue per guest in July than it did a year ago, with Lisbon's Metropolitan Area having the second strongest growth after Oporto and the Northern Region, with +9.9% or 15.5 million euros.

Actually, the capital's hotels had the best July since, at least, 2007, both in terms of occupation and revenue, with the only

exception being the 5-star sector, which fell 1.4% against last year's mark.

According to the City Mayor, Fernando Medina, the sector represents about 80 thousand direct jobs and an economic value of about 6300 million euros, in terms of sales.

In other words, it is three times higher than the value amassed by Autoeuropa and four times higher than the whole footwear industry.

Tourist Tax

As Lisbon's tourism keeps growing, the revenue from the tourist tax already accounts for 15.7 million euros for the capital.

On average, it represents 1.1 million euros per month. This amount – of one euro per night – is charged not only by traditional hotel units, but also by local accommodation places. The latter alone contributed with 4.5 million euros in favor of the City Hall, due to the tourist tax.

The amount gathered by the City Hall is targeted to serve as financing means for several projects in the city. All in all, seven projects have already green light to proceed until 2019, accounting for investments of 33.7 million euros, from which 18.2 million will be directly supported by the Tourism Development Fund of Lisbon, and 15.5 million euros by other entities.

(Source: tourism-review)

The 6th Global Tourism Economy Forum Held

WTCF Hosts "Region and City Collaboration" Panel Discussion



The 6th Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF) was held from Oct 16-17, in Macao. The Global Tourism Economy Forum • Macao 2017 was hosted by the Secretariat for Social Affairs and Culture of the Macao SAR Government in collaboration with the United Nations World Tourism Organization, co-organized by the China Chamber of Tourism, and coordinated by the Global Tourism Economy Research Centre. The Forum gathered together many ministerial officials, leaders of globally renowned corporations, experts and scholars from around the world to explore how tourism collaboration characterized by shared interests and mutual respect is conducive to the building of a better future among nations and regions, and creation of opportunities and synergies.

Since the signing of the agreement between WTCF and the Global Tourism Economic Forum in 2015, the two parties established good cooperative relations in academic research and business exchanges, and have supported each other in a variety of ways. This not only promotes the growth of the two organizations, but it also jointly boosts the development of the world tourism. During the forum, WTCF hosted one of the sub-forums of the World Tourism Economy Forum. This helped to further enhance both parties' involvement in establishing comprehensive strategic partnerships.

The two-day forum attracted participants from various countries and regions from around the world, including delegations

from the 16 Central and Eastern European countries and from Guizhou province, the partner guest. The Forum's program presents thought-provoking keynotes and discussion panels, starting with its signature Face to Face, Ministers and Private Sector CEOs session with the largest speaker lineup ever. This collaboration with UNWTO brought together ministerial officials and global industry leaders to engage in a direct dialogue under the topic "Embracing Regional Collaboration for Collective Growth", and to explore how regional and inter-regional collaboration

can create positive developments beyond geographic borders.

The next day, the United Nations World Tourism Organization and Global Tourism Economy Research Centre released the 2017 UNWTO/GTERC Asia Tourism Trends Report, and with it presenting tourism trends and outlook of the region. Meanwhile, there were six panel discussions that focused on the topics about Greater Bay Area, region and city collaboration, and Consumption upgrade. In addition, events such as business communication and matching trading were also held.



On behalf of WTCF, Deputy Secretary-General of WTCF Yan Han, was an honored VIP Guest of the forum and he attended the event “16+1 Central and Eastern Europe Tourism Exchange with China”. As a strategic partner, WTCF hosted the panel discussion “Regional Collaboration—World Cities Perspective” during the forum.

The world urbanization rate has exceeded 54%. UN's department of Economic and Social Affairs forecasts that by 2050, 66% of the world's population is projected to be living in urban areas. WTCF's report shows that cities inspire innovation have been playing an increasingly important role in global social, economic, and tourism development since they are the main destinations and tourist-source market. In the context of regional collaboration and sustainable development, cities are expected to contribute more through collaboration.

Dr. Song Rui, Director of the Tourism Research Centre, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and member of WTCF Expert Committee, was invited to host the panel discussion, and delivered keynote speeches along with Deputy Secretary-General Yan Han. Li Yunpeng Associate Professor of Tourism Management, The College of Business Administration; Director of Internet Plus

Institute, Capital University of Economics and Business; Hila Oren, Chief Executive Officer of Tel Aviv Foundation; Aigars Smiltans, Director of MEET RIGA; Dániel Szabó, Market Manager of Budapest Festival and Tourism Centre; Masato Takamatsu, Managing Director and Chief Research Officer of JTB Tourism Research & Consulting Co., were invited to joined the

discussion. During the session, panelists spoke about several topics including, “City cluster and tourism development, The ‘Belt and Road’ Initiative and cities collaboration, Tourism collaboration in the world's famous bay areas, Cities' collaboration for sustainable tourism, etc”. The guests expressed their views on the above questions.



WTCF Deputy Secretary - General Yan Han Attends China (Guilin) International Leisure Tourism Forum 2017 and Delivers Keynote Speech



On October 11, the 2017 China-ASEAN Expo Tourism Exhibition: China (Guilin) International Leisure Tourism Forum 2017, was held at Lijiang Waterfall Hotel, Guilin. The forum was hosted by the China-ASEAN Expo Tourism Exhibition secretariat, and undertaken by Xiamen C&D International Travel Service Group Co., Ltd (C&D ITS).

The forum was co-hosted by WTCF city member Guilin and institutional member Xiamen C&D International Travel Service Group Co., Ltd, and is also a cooperative venture between the two WTCF members.

Those who attended the forum include

VIP guests from both Chinese and overseas tourism bureaus, representatives from China's major leisure and resort cities, representatives of the leisure and tourism industries, and Chinese and overseas tourism experts.

With the theme of “Leisure Tourism Promoting International Exchange and City Co-prosperity”, and through the keynote speech and round-table dialogue, attendees shared their experiences on brand interaction, tourist source mutual-promotion, and industry win-win situations between leisure tourism cities and industries.

WTCF Deputy Secretary-General Yan Han representing WTCF attended the forum, and delivered the keynote speech “Strengthen Tourism City Exchanges, Promote Leisure Tourism Development.”

WTCF Deputy Secretary-General Yan Han also gave a general introduction about WTCF and the WTCF Los Angeles Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit 2017. He analyzed the tourists' features, tourists' concerns and growth point based on statistics, which guide the way for tourism development.

During the forum, experts and scholars from Los Angeles Tourism & Convention Board Chinese Office, Xinwen Capital, Beijing Lvweiwenlv Holding Group Co., Ltd., Tujia.com, CYTS, School of Management of Xiamen University, Guilin Yuzi Paradise Club Med Resort, China Federation of Camping and Caravanning and Guilin National Health Tourism Demonstration Base also delivered speeches. They shared the experience of industry integration and tourism destination marketing and put forward the new idea and new direction for the All-for-one tourism development of Guilin Province.



WTCF Secretary-General Song Yu and Delegation Visits the UN and NYC & Company

On September 22, WTCF Secretary-General Song Yu and his delegation visited the Headquarters of the United Nations, and met with Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, and conversed with Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin on the issue of WTCF striving to obtain the Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

First, Secretary-General Song Yu introduced the development of WTCF since its foundation, saying, "After undergoing five years of development, WTCF now has 128 city members and 65 institutional members since the beginning of its foundation when it only had 58 members, and so it is regarded as the fastest-growing one among the international tourism organizations launched by China." He said that, since its foundation, WTCF has been caring about issues like diversification and sustainable development, sharing economy, globalization, the development of the world tourism cities, and so on.

This orientation is in accordance with the UN's development objectives of eliminating poverty, striving to make equality possible in different areas, protecting the earth, and setting up a sustainable and inclusive society. WTCF continually releases all kinds of research results and city development cases to lead the

new trend and direction of the global tourism development.

Under-Secretary-General Liu Zhenmin said he knew of WTCF, an international organization launched and founded by Beijing, and its contributions to reducing poverty and helping grow employment, and discussed sustainable development, increasing the benefits of the people, and other areas, by utilizing industrial advantages to serve international communities and tourism economic development. He was pleased about what WTCF has done. He hopes that WTCF can learn from the developing experiences of other international organizations, and combine its own advantages to seek the symmetrical international status with the development of Chinese tourism industry. When applying for the Consultative Status, WTCF needs to submit related materials according to the required procedure, cooperate with the non-governmental department of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, strengthen information communication, and perfect its work on applying for the Consultative Status.

Secretary-General Song Yu with his delegation also visited NYC & Company, and conversed with Daniel Rogan Kadishson, Director of Economic Development and Mayor's Office for International Affairs; and Dena Libner, Senior

Director, External Affairs and Public Partnerships of NYC & Company. Secretary-General Song Yu sincerely invited New York City to join WTCF, saying, "New York is a special city in the world and also a very influential tourism city. The 128 WTCF city members are from 51 nations. As an international organization with tourism cities as its main special focus, WTCF hopes New York will become one of its members, and work together to boost the development of the world tourism cities."

Dena Libner expressed her gratitude to the visit of Secretary-General Song Yu, saying that in recent years, the number of tourists visiting New York has the tendency of declining, but more Chinese visitors keep visiting the city. Although the immigration policy of the U.S. has been tightened, the number of Chinese tourists keeps increasing, and they have higher consumption habits. Therefore, NYC & Company pays close attention to the related situations of the international tourism organizations founded in China and Chinese tourists, and expressed its wish of deep cooperation with WTCF on academic research, case analysis, information sharing, event participation and other aspects. She also said that they will continuously submit materials to the city government and actively push forward for New York City to join WTCF.

UNWTO-WTCF "Study of World Tourism Cities Performance" Seminar was Held in Buenos Aires



Performance" Seminar, organized by UNWTO and Buenos Aires City Tourist Board, was held in Buenos Aires. More than 100 representatives from UNWTO, WTCF, Argentina Tourism Bureau, Buenos Aires City Tourist Board, Brazil Tourism Bureau, and Spanish Tourism Bureau attend the seminar.

Song Rui, special advisor with WTCF, and Director of the Tourism Research Centre, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, was invited to attend the seminar. She introduced the background and general situation of the project on behalf of WTCF and she also shared the research result of the Beijing case in the discussion session as the chief expert.

UNWTO-WTCF "Study of World Tourism Cities Performance" project was co-sponsored by UNWTO and WTCF. 16 cities from around the world were involved in the project. The study aimed to establish the common analytical framework for the development of world tourism cities, based on which, allowed

them to share the experience and promote the sustainable development of city tourism industry.



September 26, Buenos Aires - The UNWTO-WTCF "Study of World Tourism Cities



Data and Design Can Keep Mobile Travellers Engaged

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A Google survey found that 90% mobile travelers will switch to a different website or app if their needs aren't quickly met, leaving travel companies to shift their digital strategy with targeting and personalization features.

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Our lives have become increasingly mobile, with research showing that US consumers spend more than five hours each day interacting with on-the-go devices.

Today's connected travellers aren't just spending more time on mobile, their expectations for this channel are growing at the same time. A recent Google survey found that 90% of consumers booking or researching travel through mobile devices – such as smartphones or tablets – will switch to a different website or app if their needs aren't quickly met. It's clear that today's travellers have instant, mobile-first requirements for the brands they choose to do business with and they will not hesitate to move on to another travel company if the experience isn't right.

For travel and hospitality businesses looking to more effectively engage and build long-term relationships with current and prospective customers, they'll need to do more than simply offer mobile options. Rather, travel companies will need to shift their digital strategy by optimizing customer experiences with targeting and personalization features

to meet these new on-the-go consumer preferences for interacting online.

Getting Travel Companies Started on Their Mobile Optimization Journeys

For travel companies looking to create fluid and effective mobile experiences, the first step is understanding how to develop and design digital content that keeps customers engaged. While brands were previously forced to build entirely new websites to meet the varying dimensions of mobile devices and the evolving needs of users, innovative technologies have allowed brands to forego this lengthy process. Aside from these established mobile website technologies, travel brands should also consider developing native applications for their loyal customers. These apps can be designed and optimized for any operating system, ensuring a fluid experience for travelers on any mobile device. While these technologies allow travel companies to improve mobile experiences, optimization doesn't simply stop at the device; rather, these businesses must also think about how they can tailor the entire customer experience.

Connected Travelers Demand Personalized Attention

Today's travellers expect companies to know what they're looking for and, in turn, proactively provide the most valuable information at the right time. This process starts with digging into broad data pools pulled from customer engagements on a mobile application or website. Analyzing this data allows these businesses to get to know the different customer segments that are meaningful to the company, and gain insight on how these people interact online. Discovering these groups of customers will allow a travel company to begin collecting behavioral information and examining trends within each segment. Once the company has a handle on its key customers, the next step is conducting targeted experiments to learn what influences them. Leveraging machine learning capabilities, the travel company can launch campaigns focused on the different groups of customers and take in individualized data on how they react to these experiments.

The goal here is to analyze the data to gain a deeper understanding on what drives customers to convert – be it going through the process of booking a flight, or taking the steps to sign up for a loyalty program. Throughout these experiments, travel businesses start to build customer profiles – information that paints a holistic picture of who each customer is and what drives them down the path to purchase. Equipped with this comprehensive information, travel companies can go beyond simply optimizing content for mobile display, and start creating entirely personalized experiences to meet individual travelers' needs. There's no doubt that mobile is an increasingly critical aspect of any travel company's digital strategy – with major brands such as Hilton allowing customers to leverage its mobile app as a “digital key,” and numerous airlines enabling travelers to use their smartphones as a boarding pass.

However, simply plugging-and-playing these features into the mobile experience isn't enough to entice the connected traveller in 2017. With so many options for researching and booking travel, consumers are willing to leave a brand's mobile app or website if they don't feel as though their needs are being met, plaguing the travel industry with low customer loyalty.

But if travel and hospitality businesses can develop a mobile-first strategy that incorporates personalized elements, they can bolster customer experiences to drive conversions and create lifelong, happy customers. ➤

(Source: tnooz)



A Recipe for Business Travel Success: Reduce Friction, Add Tech, Serve Up Satisfaction

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Travel is a vital driver of job satisfaction, and employer's travel program and policy are important when job applicants are deciding on new jobs.

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Corporate travel programs should prioritize total trip convenience for travelers over cost savings for the business, says a new global study from Sabre and GBTA.

This is one of the key findings in a new report – Creating a Frictionless Travel Experience – released this week.

According to the report: “For companies around the world, enhancing the travel experience for employees instead of cutting corners on costs promotes workplace satisfaction, organizational loyalty and operating efficiencies.”

The best way to enhance the travel

experience is to make it frictionless. Satisfaction, loyalty and efficiency are key parts of an employee's mindset when he or she takes to the road on behalf of their company. The evidence that travel can positively impact these three states of mind is clear from the study, providing the trip is frictionless from start to finish.

The experience matters

The connection between frictionless travel and a loyal and satisfied workforce applies around the world. The report not only provides a global overview, but also drills down into four regions – EMEA, North America, Asia-Pacific

and Latin America. And while there are differences in some areas, the fact is that 80% of travelers believe their trip experience affects how well they do their job.

By region -79% of travelers in Asia-Pacific are generally satisfied with traveling for work at their current job. Sabre found that APAC travelers want automated information, itinerary-management apps, and mobile payment capabilities.

Similarly, 93% of Latin American travelers say they are satisfied with their business travel. Convenient, comfortable hotels are key to a frictionless experience for Latin American

business travellers. For EMEA travellers, travel safety and efficiency are top priorities. “High-performing organizations realize that less traveler friction equates to more productive journeys,” the study says.

Pain relief

Having established that frictionless travel is a prerequisite for a loyal and productive workforce, the study identifies the pain points felt by travelers and suggests ways in which technology can alleviate the annoyances.

The pain points are relatively consistent across the regions and tend to fall into the “work-life balance” category. Business travelers expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of time spent traveling, a pain point which, other than ensuring direct flights or high-speed trains with convenient departure times are available, is hard to eliminate.

But tech-based solutions can be applied before, during and after the trip to make the experience as frictionless as possible. Travelers from Latin America said that improving communication can help eliminate many of the pain points – good news for corporations as it is a relatively low-cost service to implement. Travelers in EMEA and North America identified the filing of post-trip expenses as a headache and wanted to be able to do this via their smartphones; the

APAC responses are around convenience and comfort, such as the ability to change a flight or hotel booking on the go via mobile, which was also identified as a high priority.

The proof is in the policy

Travel programs serve two masters – the corporation and the traveler. From the former’s perspective, negotiated rates and preferred supplier contracts can deliver significant and easily measurable cost savings. The benefits of a traveler-centric program that boosts employee well-being and job satisfaction are more abstract.

For travelers, the situation is unequivocal – 100% of the sample said travel is an important driver of job satisfaction and the majority said that a potential employer’s travel program and policy is important when deciding on a new job.

This is most evident in Latin America where 67% agreed, whereas EMEA respondents were the least concerned with 50% of potential recruits factoring travel policy into their decision-making process.

From the findings above, it is clear that corporations with a frictionless travel policy have the edge over those that focus on cost savings when it comes to bringing in new staff. Having also established travel as a key driver of job satisfaction, an argument can also be

made that travel can be a determining factor in staff retention.

Corporations most heavily impacted are those that focus primarily on cost-saving travel programs rather than traveler-centric experiences. According to external research, the cost of replacing senior employees can be more than 200% of their annual salary. Having a frictionless travel policy is not necessarily a guarantee that staff will stay – people change jobs for a variety of reasons – but it clearly helps if employees feel the corporation is doing everything it can to make the business travel experience as stress-free as possible.

The big picture

Creating a frictionless travel experience for travelers has been part of the corporate conversation for some time. Technology tools and solutions are available to address most of the pain points felt by travelers, while the investment required can be justified by the benefits of having a more productive, loyal and satisfied workforce.

The report concludes: “By prioritizing the business traveler’s experience, companies can foster organizational loyalty, a dedicated team, and a positive work environment while offsetting the loss of productivity and revenue that can occur when the travel experience is poor.”

(Source: tnouz)





When the "Italy on the Sea" Encounters Chinese-style Mobile Life

Interview with Mario Zanetti, Costa's Asian President

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Mario Zanetti, from Italy, was less than six months as the President of the Costa group, but he still clearly remembered the first time embarrassment when he bought coffee in Shanghai using "mobile phone scan". Now he has gradually adapted to the 'Chinese-style mobile life', and he has been increasingly aware of the importance of digital experience for Chinese consumers. Costa Cruise and WeChat APP recently reached a strategic cooperation is the proof, and Costa's future will be committed to the Chinese tourists to build digital 'One stop' cruise experience.

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Q: The Costa cruise ship recently reached a series of deep cooperation with the WeChat. From the digital demand and trends point of view, do you think the Chinese market and foreign markets are different? Do you feel this difference personally in China?

A: The next morning when after arriving Shanghai, I went out to Starbucks to buy a cup of coffee. I also specifically took some cash

on ATM machine with my European credit card. When it came to my pay, the staff took out a "big guy", like a gun, and ready to scan. I had to say "I'm sorry, I only have cash." This little thing let me personally feel the mobile digital payment means for Chinese consumers is now happening daily and is very important to Chinese. Compared to Europe, in China, the application of digital technology is more common, and mobile experience is much



Mario Zanetti, Costa's Asian President

more important than the Western world. Data show that Chinese consumers using digital shopping and consumption has been ranked first in the world, far more than Europe.

By taking advantage of China's digital trend, we decided to strategically join the WeChat for "one-stop" digital services, for Costa cruise ship passengers from home to the port, from cruise experience to shore sightseeing.

At present, we have been on the line of two WeChat small programs: the first is to meet the cruise travel booking needs of tourists; another is to be able to support more onboard experience: visitors can browse through our free cruise LAN and booking special restaurants, SPA Center, duty free shops and other cruise services.

For example, visitors will be able to purchase tax-free goods on board and enjoy the services of "door to door" (designated cabin) for direct delivery. Now third small program: digital "Today" "Today Mail" – is also on the agenda. It will help visitors arrange all day cruises experience by knowing the interest of each visitor and recommending their favorite boat to them. This small program was presented at the TechCrunch Disrupt Technology Conference in San Francisco in

September and will be officially launched in November.

In the future, the micro-program will be a mobile steward for visitors to the cruise ship, providing visitors with excellent travel experience, including: port boarding, onboard experience, cabin automation, customer service communication, restaurant ordering and experience sharing, shore sightseeing, loyalty programs and so on.

Q: How do you see the role of technology in optimizing the customer experience? In addition to technology, from what aspects the Costa will try to improve the passenger experience?

A: In my opinion, technology is only a means of facilitation, in essence, or serves the customer experience, but it is not the only way to enhance the customer experience. Our onboard and shore professional service teams are the core pillars of customer service. Recently, we have just announced with the Italian top football club Juventus to achieve mileage card cooperation. As the official designated cruise of the Juventus Asia, the Costa Asia and the Chinese fleet will bring visitors 360 degree authentic Italian football experience. For example: without stepping

out of cabin, visitors at any time can watch Juventus wonderful TV program, Juventus theme elements surrounded by Juventus children's club to relax, 5-14 year old children can also participate in Juventus football school Training programs, etc., which are in line with our "maritime Italy" cruise holiday positioning. In addition, we are also catering, entertainment, shopping and other aspects of the force, for the guests to bring a richer experience and surprise. In all of these processes, the technology is actually the role of support and security, to ensure that our guests want to enjoy some kind of activities or services when they can have a seamless convergence experience.

Q: It is understood that you are an expert in route planning and management. So how do you see the challenges that China is likely to face in today's geopolitical risks?

A: I have also encountered in Europe from the geopolitical risks of the challenge, on this issue, both for the route design and customer experience, we must change a way to consider the situation, that is: what is cruise tourism experience? In my opinion, it is not just about the destination of the tour,





but should be on board the resort experience and shore combination. As mentioned earlier, the ship experience is currently the focus of our attention. Moreover, from the Chinese cruise ship departure route, in fact, there are still many options, in addition to Japan, from the port of call in South China going to more destinations in Southeast Asia, such as the Philippines, Vietnam and so on.

Q: Overall, for the future of China's cruise market, the Costa cruise ship will focus on what kind of development strategy ?

A: Costa Cruises Group Asia has two strategic priorities in China. One is to continually optimize and upgrade the customer experience. We had a strategic partnership with Microsoft to make this strategic focus.

The future, we hope for Chinese consumers continue to provide beyond their expectations, pure "maritime Italy" cruise holiday to enjoy, so that their experience in the ship more smoothly seamless, and immediately follow the trend of the times. The second largest strategic focus is cooperation with the tourism industry. Only to maintain close cooperation with the travel partners,

with their knowledge of the source market and a broad distribution network, to reach more consumers, but also to existing and potential customers on our brand concept and product details, plus having more in-depth understanding of the market. In addition, we are developing a strategy called "Costa New Generation" Program, which means on the one hand, we will continue to strengthen the Costa cruise ship "Italy On the Sea" brand and product positioning; and on the other hand, the cruise ship Costa Allegra introduced the opening of the Chinese cruise market development first "golden decade", and in the next decade, we will continue to be committed to become China's cruise industry leader.

This will be the focus of mine and my team's work in the Chinese market. To this end, we must first understand the needs of the guests, to create a better holiday experience for them and to ensure that in the promotion of this holiday concept, as much as possible we want to convey the information that become more simple and easy to understand, that is a more value for money holiday solution.

Q: Carnival Group in China has been very stressed that the cruise industry

"ecosystem". In your opinion, where is the relatively weak link inside this "ecosystem"?

A: China's cruise market is still in the early stages of development, and the market has great potential. With the increased income and China's growing number of middle class, leisure and entertainment industry will have developed by leaps and bounds.

At this stage, China's cruise market penetration is less than 0.2%, while the North American market penetration is more than 3.5%, so the market's development potential is amazing. In order to have a promising future, what we need to do now is to push the entire Chinese cruise industry to another height, that is, the entire ecosystem should be both force, self-renewal, and constantly open up the market and jointly build a sustainable Chinese cruise ecosystem.

Specifically, we believe that the main should be from the tourists experience, market education, infrastructure and other aspects of the start. Cruise companies are committed to the upgrading of products and services on board to meet and exceed the expectations of tourists, and with the Government, Tourism Bureau and the media work together to

enhance the Chinese consumers on the cruise tour awareness, stimulate their interest, so that a new resort approach can be more deeply rooted.

We are also committed to expanding our business to first-tier cities and coastal cities in order to further penetrate the market, so that more consumers understand cruise tourism. In addition, the future with the Chinese cruise consumer market expansion.

The introduction of the wheel will become inevitable, and the current global cruise construction capacity is limited. Therefore, Carnival Group's joint venture in China and China Shipbuilding Group has signed a memorandum of agreement, will order the first batch of local cruise ships.

Q: In the past two years, the travel agency charter model has gradually shifted to a more diversified distribution model. In the process, what happens to the cruise

company to encourage or respond to this change?

A: Over the past decade, travel agencies have greatly promoted the rise and rapid development of China's cruise industry. Since 2006, China officially entered the domestic port cruise market so far, Costa cruise along the way, with industry partners laid a solid foundation for cooperation. Although in the past decade, the Chinese market has undergone ever-changing changes and development, but for the song of the cruise, the travel agency distribution is still an important channel to attract tourists.

We hope that through good cooperation with industry partners, so that potential customers will have a better understanding of the poetry of the cruise brand concept, more willing to buy our products. In the future, we will continue with the travel partners to maintain close communication and cooperation, and through various forms of continuous support

and assistance from travel partners in the marketing efforts.

Q: What is the plan for the deployment of 2018 in the Chinese market? Can you tell us about the introduction of new ships in the next few years?

A: China has a vast territory, and its market consumption potential is not limited to the port and its surrounding cities. In 2018, the Costa cruise ship in Asia will continue to multi-parent port deployment strategy. Costa Cruise Asia fleet in China will jointly force, continue to deepen China's domestic port cruise market.

At the same time, we will be committed to upgrading the ship products and services, continue to consolidate industry leadership. We will also introduce two Vista-rated cruises tailored for the Chinese market in 2019 and 2020. In the next few months we will announce more details about the new boat. ➤

(Source: Travelweekly)





Dakar Is Urban Vibrancy

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Dakar is a city of extremes, where horse-cart drivers chug over swish highways and gleaming SUVs squeeze through tiny sand roads; where elegant ladies dig skinny heels into dusty walkways and suit-clad businessmen kneel down for prayer in the middle of the street. Once a tiny settlement in the south of the Cap Vert peninsula, Dakar now spreads almost across its entire triangle, and keeps growing.

”

For the traveller, there's much to discover, from peaceful islands just off-shore to vertiginous nightlife dancing to mbalax beats. You can spend your days browsing frenetic markets and taking in the sights of bustling downtown, followed by sunset drinks overlooking the crashing waves. At once both intimidating and deeply alluring, Dakar is a fascinating introduction to Senegal.

At the westernmost point of the African continent, Dakar stands as a multicultural, diverse city full of vibrant arts and traditions. Residents from various ethnic groups present assorted crafts, foods, jewelry, fabrics and wood and metal goods at bustling markets such as Marche Sandaga or Marche HLM. The city is home to museums and mosques, cliff

walks and beaches, and makes a convenient jumping point for excursions to any of Senegal's national parks and nature reserves.

The Senegalese are very proud of their reputation for "teranga" — hospitality. Locals are extremely friendly and helpful; but as anywhere else, watch out for scams and pickpockets. Petty crime here is relatively high, be cautious. While some locals are friendly, be careful, because local shop owners are very persistent.

See

African Renaissance Monument. Opening its doors in December 2010, this colossal monument is dedicated to Africa's emergence

from the oppressive European regimes that once ruled the continent and the end of slavery. It is also meant as a display of African pride to shirk foreign perceptions of Africans as lesser people. The monument is rather controversial, with some Africans feeling the sense of pride it is meant to evoke while others criticizing it as a foreign (it was made by North Korea), completely un-African Stalinist statue. From base to the top, it reaches taller than the Statue of Liberty.

IFAN Museum of African Arts (Musée Théodore Monod d'Art Africain).

Ile de Goree. Goree Island in English, it was named by the Dutch after taking over the island from the Portuguese in the late 1600s.

Goree was a minor location used for the transport of slaves headed to the Americas, though its prominence is often overplayed. The island has interesting colonial architecture, mostly in ruins, including the landmark "House of Slaves" museum. Ferries can be taken from the terminal north of Place de l'Indépendance and cost 5000 CFA. The trip takes 10-20 minutes.

There are many small restaurants and a handful of places offering lodging. This is a place with a great atmosphere, because it gives you kind of an pirate-island (with friendly folks all-over kind of feeling). Just walk around and explore. It's a small island, so you can easily stroll around it in an hour. You can buy cheap beer and lounge on the beach when you're done, or stroll some more and buy art-work from the locals.

Les Almadies (Les pointes des Almadies). The Western tip of the African continent where plenty of seafood restaurants are located.

Dakar Grand Mosque. Built in 1964.

Dakar Cathedral.

Hann Park and Zoo, The public gardens were built in 1903 and the arboretum was built in 1947. The gardens feature a wide variety of Senegalese plantlife and the zoo contains over 130 animals.

Dining in Dakar

With their generous servings of fresh grilled fish with Creole sauce, or sophisticated French or Lebanese-influenced dishes, Dakar's restaurants will definitely tickle your taste buds. The dishes are often a feast for the eyes, as are the views offered of the Atlantic Ocean and its sweeping, surf-pounded coastline. Here are ten of the best spots in the city to dine in scenic surroundings.

Rooftop views at La Madeleine

Those in the know head to the Clinique de la Madeleine for more than medical appointments, they do so to enjoy the sun on its seventh floor rooftop café set.

It's one of the few, if not the only place to take in both views of the ocean and the old town's colonial buildings from high above. Try a mixed salad with ingredients of your choice, or the daily lunch special, which varies from rich lasagna to Senegalese dishes such as yassa poulet (marinated and grilled chicken with an onion sauce, served with rice).

Beach life at Le Relais Sportif

On the Corniche West beachfront – where people run or do calisthenics in the sand, in what is a daily display of Senegal's sports-loving craze – lies one of Dakar's great

eateries. Popular with the Dakarois, Le Relais Sportif (au-senegal.com) is one of the few non-hotel restaurants in the area. With tables looking over the ocean it's the perfect spot for a succulent monkfish skewer with a Gazelle (Senegalese beer), and for taking in the bustling beach life unfolding in front of you.

Boat dining at Le Lagon I

Built on stilts and reminiscent of a luxury boat, Le Lagon I (lelagondakar.com) offers stunning views of Gorée Island and the ocean. There is a wide choice of seafood, from king prawns to langoustines, and a large cocktail menu including some delicious non-alcoholic options. Chose an outdoor table if you'd like to dine to the soothing sounds of crashing waves beneath your feet and to enjoy a refreshing breeze even on the hottest days. In the evening, Le Lagon I and its surroundings boast a spectacle of lights.

Garden Oasis at Le Bideew

Le Bideew is a vibrant oasis and a welcome respite from the hustle and bustle of the old town's crowded, dusty streets. Nestled in the garden of the Institut Français Léopold Sédar Senghor, with views of a big canopy tree in which colourful lizards are always busily doing push-ups, the restaurant offers both Senegalese and French-influenced food. The menu ranges from grilled fish to chicken burgers, or tempura veggies with guacamole. Come after enjoying a movie in the centre's cinema or on a Friday or Saturday evening, when there is often a concert.

Art meets food at La Calebasse

La Calebasse (facebook.com/Restaurant-La-Calebasse) is an art gallery-cum-restaurant in Mamelles. Wander past collections of West African paintings, masks and life-size metal statues, and around a sweeping chandelier made out of countless calabashes (a gourd-like fruit) as you walk up the staircase to this top floor restaurant. Sit on the roofed terrace to sample some local dishes such as Senegal's national favourite, the thieboudienne (seasoned fish served with rice in a tomato-based sauce, mixed with carrots, cabbage and eggplant).

Island vibe at Noflaye Beach

Not far from Le Ngor, Noflaye Beach restaurant (facebook.com/Noflaye-Beach) is an unpretentious place with an island vibe about it – think upgraded surfers' shack set right on the beach.

Here, a leisurely weekend lunch can easily stretch into late afternoon as you move from your table to the chaises longues on the restaurant's

little private beach. Take a dip, bask in the sun with a good book, and continue to indulge in some fresh seafood, savory galletes or light crepes, all with your feet still in the sand.

Ocean views and cocktails at Sokhamon Hotel

Walk a few minutes towards the waterfront from the IFAN Museum of African Arts and you'll find Hotel Sokhamon (hotelsokhamon.com), a bright building in Gaudí-esque style, with a Moroccan-meets-Mediterranean infused decor.

On its terrace, lean back on the chunky but comfortable leather armchairs to enjoy a cocktail, nems (spring rolls) and fish skewers. Come in the evening to take in splendid views of the sun gliding into the glistening waters of the Atlantic behind the Îles des Madeleines.

A taste of the Caribbean and salsa

Set in the outer suburb of Sacre Coeur, New Africa restaurant (facebook.com/newafricarestaurant) is not the easiest place to find, but it's well worth the effort. The cuisine is a mix of Caribbean, French and Moroccan influences.

The decor includes a white piano, African drums and an intimate garden patio, which gets lively on Friday evenings with a salsa loving crowd. To avoid getting lost, instruct the taxi driver to head towards the nearby 'Boulangerie Jaune'.

Sea-inspired wonderland at Le Ngor

Set on a beach road in Dakar's expat haven of Almadies, where new bars and restaurants mushroom at a dizzying speed, Le Ngor is an old-time favourite. Here quirky, animal-shaped metal sculptures, shell adorned pillars, and blue and green walls offer a cozy backdrop. When you manage to take your eyes off the ocean stretching out in front of you and are ready to order, you're met with a wide range of dishes, from seafood and big mixed salads topped with chicken skewers to fresh mango milkshakes and ice cream.

Poolside wine at Radisson Blue

Part of the Radisson Blue Hotel (radissonblu.com), this poolside restaurant and bar offers views of the ocean, live music at night and a decent choice of international food: pizzas, salads, hamburgers, as well as a variety of seafood dishes and an extensive list of wines. The cozy sofas on the edge of the pool are great for a pre- or post-meal glass of wine. In the evening, marvel at the bluest shades of the pool stretched out above the ocean, amidst a dance of lights. 🌟

(Source: Lonely Planet; Wiki Travel)

Belfast is Hot and It's the Place to Be in 2018



Belfast and the Causeway Coast in Northern Ireland has been named the number one region in the world for travellers in 2018. The region receives the accolade in Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2018 – the collection of the world's hottest trends, destinations and experiences for the coming year. Belfast is described as, "full of hip neighbourhoods that burst with bars, restaurants and venues to suit all tastes. The rustling old docklands are now the vibrant Titanic Quarter, home to fancy apartments and a sensational museum."

Belfast shares the Lonely Planet Top Region accolade with the Causeway Coast, an coastal touring route, "whose timeless beauty and high-grade distractions – golf, whiskey and some of the world's most famous rocks – are more popular now than ever."

Northern Ireland is home to more filming locations for the hit TV series Game of Thrones than anywhere else in the world and the publication highlights Ballintoy – which fans will recognise as the real-life Iron Island port – as a must-see on the Causeway Coast.

Top ten regions in Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2018 are:

1. Belfast & the Causeway Coast, Northern Ireland
2. Alaska, USA
3. Julian Alps, Slovenia
4. Languedoc-Roussillon, France
5. Kii Peninsula, Japan
6. Aeolian Islands, Italy
7. The Deep South, USA
8. Lahaul & Spiti, India
9. Bahia, Brazil
10. Los Haitises National Park, Dominican Republic

Amsterdam Bans New Tourist Shops of the City to Limit "Disneyfication"

Amsterdam, the city full of night life in the Kingdom of Netherlands has announced a ban on any new shops aimed at the international and national tourists, which is effectively limiting the abundance of the places hiring bikes and selling the souvenirs, tour tickets and the omnipresent waffles, after

the several protests done by the local people to the Mayor of Amsterdam.

The protest against the "Disneyfication" of the city center came a year ago and now the civil administration bans the tourist shops.

Kajsa Ollongren, the Deputy Mayor of Amsterdam said that nowhere else in the world has such a decision been made. The balance is missing. They are only getting more of the same, and that is not good for the quality of life. According to the data, it is estimated that there are about 280 such shops in the center of the city, while the tourist numbers have increased to 17 million visitors a year in the latest estimates.

But while some are making money, not everyone is happy. In May, the Chief Executive of Amsterdam Marketing Frans van der Avert told at a tourism conference that the city was aiming to increase the quality of visitors.

The city of Amsterdam has put up the tourist taxes, and on October 1, a new licensing system was imposed for anyone wanting to rent out their house short term along with the fines of at least €6,000 for failure to comply, and a limit of 60 days annually.



New Degree in Theme Park Design to be Launched as SATE Kicks Off in Los Angeles

A new degree dedicated to experience design and themed entertainment is being launched today to coincide with the latest SATE (storytelling, architecture, technology and experience) conference in Los Angeles, California.

Created by the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), the specialised degree will help to address demand from theme parks in the US and further afield to create new, immersive attractions that utilise the latest technologies.

The bachelor of fine arts degree is to be taught primarily by either former or current members of the theme park industry, including experts such as Michael Jung, creative executive for Walt Disney Imagineering; Jonathan Casson, director for live and location-based entertainment for 20th Century Fox film, television and new media; and Jason McManus, art director at Thinkwell Group.



Run by the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA), more than 400 delegates are set to attend the latest SATE conference, which will explore the future of immersive realities, as well as coming trends in the entertainment industry.

This year's keynote speaker will be Jung – a CalArts alumnus and faculty member. In his role as executive creative director in charge of theatrical development for Walt Disney Imagineering, Jung will discuss the future of experience design with Travis Preston, dean of the CalArts School of Theater.

"CalArts provides students with an ever-expanding set of opportunities in new and future pathways for performance and design," said Preston. "This future-directed vision of entertainment is reflected by the TEA and we are thrilled to host SATE as it explores the newest developments in entertainment and looks ahead to the theatre of tomorrow."

The two-day event kicks off today (5 October), and is the second SATE event this year, after SATE Europe, which took place in Beaulieu, England, in May. SATE LA will be followed by SATE Asia, which takes place 3-5 November in Beijing.

Melbourne Takes Yoga to New Heights

Melbourne is taking yoga to new heights with classes on-board the city's Star Observation Wheel. The 60-minute Vinyasa Flow Yoga classes incorporate meditative breaks so participants can stop and take in the 360-degree cityscape views of Melbourne and beyond.

The wheel will rotate twice throughout the sessions, hosted by Melbourne Docklands-based Roar Spirit Yoga. Classes can be modified for yogis of all levels, including beginners.



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