

Outlook for Travel to Britain

- Consumer spending in South Africa are still fairly low after the recession, but tour operators reported good sales for December 2009. This trend is expected to continue in first part of 2010 due to low availability and high cost of flights during FIFA World Cup in June 2010.

Britain in the News

- The introduction of visas remains topical in the media. Most of the negative sentiment is focussed towards the South African Department for Home Affairs for their failure in address corrupt practices within the department.
- The newly increased Air Passenger Duty, which adds an additional £50 per person has received some negative press especially in the travel trade media with headlines such as 'taxed out of the UK!'
- H1N1 (swine) flu pandemic as well as recent floods in England have received some attention but no reports of this influencing travelling behaviour as yet.

General Market Mood

- FIFA World Cup fever has hit South Africa, especially after the draw early December 09. The general feeling amongst operators are that they do not expect high volumes of traffic to UK and Europe during June 2010, mainly due to cost and availability of flights as well as people wanting to stay in the country at the time. Operators expect the Jan – May sales to increase due to people not wanting to travel over the June period.

Consumer Behaviour

- A recent survey conducted by a travel publication showed that South Africans don't consider green issues when making travel plans yet. When asked to what extend South Africans are concerned about green travel 87% said hardly ever or never and 13% most of the time or occasionally.
- Results from a recent poll showed that 13% of travel agents use social networking tools such as Facebook and twitter as part of their jobs.
- More than 67% of the South African population owns a mobile phone (SAARF AMPS & TNS research).
- Internet access through mobile phones is increasing rapidly and is now at 37% and further growth is expected. 40% access through broadband and 23% through dial up (SAARF AMPS data 2009).

Media Matters

- The SAARF AMPS data shows the following average changes in readership from 2008 to 2009:
 - Subscriber magazines +42%
 - Monthly magazines +23%
 - Daily newspapers -8.3%
 - Weekly newspapers (most have travel supplements) +0.24%
 - Main reason for decline in daily newspapers is the increase in getting news online.

Routes and Fares

- Emirates and Virgin Blue have teamed up to provide travellers a single-ticket option when flying to regional points in Australia.
- Virgin is scheduled to launch its twice-weekly Johannesburg-Melbourne service in March 2010.

- Emirates has launched another flight from October, with London being its biggest draw card;
- Olympic Airlines has ended its services to South Africa in September 2009;
- Air France has released its schedule for its A380 flights to Johannesburg in 2010.

Business Tourism

- Business tourism from South Africa has improved from the -34.46% in quarter 1 to -12.05% in quarter 2 according to IPS. Operators and airlines agree that quarter 3 should show better results as this market proved to be least affected by the implementation of the Visa.

Leisure Travel Trade

- In a recent poll amongst travel agents, the majority of respondents (57%) said incentives influenced their decision to book one product over another (TNW 9/9).
- Two top tour-operators reported lesser sales in the leisure sector to Britain by up to 25%, year on year, which was mostly contributed to the introduction of Visas' as well as Air Passenger Duty.

Competitor Activity

- Canada and South Africa sign first bilateral agreement, which allows scheduled air services between the two countries. Canada has been flagged as one of the fastest growers of outbound tourism from South Africa.
- Thai airways are appointing a new GSA in South Africa to promote its five flights a week to commence in March. This move is to accommodate growing demand to Thailand, South Korea and China.
- Mauritius tourism board has significantly increased their consumer spending in South Africa over the past year; this has resulted in a massive increase in sales, with forward bookings in October up by 20% year on year.

VisitBritain Activity Update

- VisitBritain exhibited at the Mini Cooper festival in October 2009. This three day festival was held in Clarens South Africa to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Mini Cooper. Our interactive stand attracted more than a thousand entries in our competition. The data gathered will be used to promote self-drive holidays throughout Britain.
- VisitBritain in partnership with Insight Travel exhibited at the Whiskey Live festival promoting luxury pan-Britain tours. Insight travel reported that directly after the show their sales for the "best of Britain" package went up 158% year on year as a direct result.
- VisitBritain hosted a corporate sail day on behalf of Welcome to Yorkshire on the Humber and Hull yacht while in Cape Town in November. Twelve of the most senior industry members as well as media attended the event.

Upcoming activity

- VisitBritain, Virgin Atlantic, STA travel and Warner Bros will be promoting the Sherlock Holmes film as part of the global campaign. The campaign elements include: CRM (seed base of over 400,000), Online, Radio broadcasting, in store promotions STA and banners in 65 Nu-Metro cinemas throughout South Africa.
- 'We want you' is a follow on of our very successful youth campaign in partnership with STA travel in the beginning of the year and will promote youth travel as well as study visas in Britain. The campaign elements include: online, CRM, social networking, campus activation and radio; and
- As part of our classic Britain campaign, VisitBritain and the Travel Corporation will be promoting garden tours in Britain. The campaign elements include: Online, CRM, Radio, Magazine editorial, press trips as well as an exhibition at the Gardenex show in March 2010.

Who's in Town?

- Many UK celebrities, football players and wives including top business men and FIFA delegates were in Cape Town early December for the FIFA world cup draw.