

Tuesday, October 4, 2011

## **Passport Online Travel Agency Advisory Board Reports**

### **Significant Upswing for 2012 Bookings**

Beaverton, OR -- During a quarterly advisory board meeting, a select group of Passport Online users reported significant increases in business on the books for 2012. Though all agreed that there was a bit of a dip in 4th quarter activity as compared to the first three quarters of 2011, all were seeing strong support from their customers for 2012.

The activity to their websites, responses to email communication and customer interaction through all of their Passport Online supported electronic communication channels were showing significant growth for the coming year.

Consumer searches are showing spikes for product categories including luxury cruising and all inclusive land vacations.

Jerry Vaughn, President of World Voyager Vacations (<http://worldvoyagervacations.com>), reports a spike in inquiries and bookings coming directly from web based business for 2012 bookings. Vaughn operates eight unique websites through the Passport system. "We have done exceptionally well on the directories in the search engines. Our repeat and referral and meeting and incentive business is also up significantly for 2012."

Across the board, luxury seems to be the best of the market segments. For Dan Ilves, of TravelStore ([www.travelstoreusa.com](http://www.travelstoreusa.com)), this may bode well for the coming election year, when there's a tendency on the part of consumers to have a 'wait and see' attitude. "Our business for 2012 indicates the upscale American traveler is not going to be deterred by an election year. The affluent market isn't as influenced by what is happening in the marketplace or political arena. In particular luxury cruises are ahead for us next year. We are also seeing FIT clients turn into first time luxury cruisers and loving it."

Colleen Gillette, owner of New Paltz Travel ([www.newpaltztravel.com](http://www.newpaltztravel.com)) in New York, reports the upscale traveler is her success story for 2012 as well. "I have on the books or I am working on big money stuff for 2012 right now. I have large luxury cruise bookings, very nice Tauck bookings, a large Israel group and the best news is I have deposits on everything."

And for Sharon Bernhardt, of Westside International Travel Inc in Assoc. with Altour (<http://westsideintltravel.com>), it is the younger, 30-something consumer who is coming to her

website and buying from her agents in strong numbers for 2012. “The most exciting thing about 2011 has been the growth of the consumer group we are reaching, the younger crowd in their 30s & 40s. These are people who have never used an agent. They are realizing what they don’t know when they come to our site. In fact, for 2012 we are focusing on that market and have hired an online advertising executive who is charged with really making our site search engine friendly. We want to provide more information online and make it friendlier and open to the younger market,” she said. “Interestingly enough, though our site is heavily weighted to cruise, our agents are closing about even land sales to cruise sales once they work with the customers.”

“It is our goal to provide as much supplier content as possible to our agency customers, so they can provide a fulfilling shopping experience for their travel consumers,” said Marilyn Macallair, vice president of business development for Passport Online Inc. “We are seeing increased usage of and success rates with the new technology tools and programs we have designed and enhanced to meet the changing needs of our agencies and their customers. This includes products such as our Tandem cruise booking engine, our Agent Socialink social media database, and our ongoing enhancements to NexCite and VacationPort website products.”

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#### About Passport Online

Passport Online is a leading supplier of Internet tools that help the leisure travel industry reach the travel agency consumer. Millions of unique travel agency consumers use Passport Online's shopping engine on travel agency websites to search for their next vacation experience. Each day, unique consumers are on those sites, seeking the product advice and opportunities offered by their trusted travel agent. Passport Online's key products are VacationPort and NexCite. Passport Online also offers complete email design and delivery services that integrate with the VacationPort and NexCite systems.

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