

American Travel Patterns Bode Well For Online Travel

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Trend Toward Shorter Trips Means More Dollars Spent Online

According to a new report from PhoCusWright Inc., Americans are working too hard--so hard in fact, that many don't find time for long periods away from the office. But they still need to relax, and the lure of a vacation always beckons. This means leisure travel is defined less by a prescribed number of weeks off, and more by the opportunity to carve out chunks of available time. The result is that travelers are taking a series of smaller vacations, and buying record amounts of travel products and services on the Internet, according to The PhoCusWright Consumer Travel Trends Survey Ninth Edition published this week.

According to PhoCusWright, long weekend trips (defined as a three-night stay away from home) are now the most popular type of leisure travel. Leisure travelers take more than twice as many long weekend trips than they do week-long vacations in a year.

"Long weekend trips represent an important opportunity in leisure travel and the online leisure marketplace," according to Susan Steinbrink, PhoCusWright's market research analyst. "And while long weekend trips potentially offer travel providers lower margins, they do offer more frequent travelers and trips to target."

The smaller the financial investment and distance traveled for a trip, the more inclined travelers are to purchase their travel online. In fact, six out of every 10 dollars spent on weekend travel was purchased online versus less than three out of every 10 dollars for week-long vacation travel.

Other key findings from The PhoCusWright Consumer Travel Trends Survey Ninth Edition:

œ The lack of available time to vacation also extends to vacation planning as well. Almost two thirds of online travelers report that general search engines, like Google and Yahoo!, not only influence where they purchase their travel, but what travel they purchase.

œ The lack of designated leisure time is forcing business travelers to be more creative at when and how they vacation, as almost four in 10 business travelers extend their business trips to include a leisure component.

A Web site's visual features are important in influencing where leisure travel is purchased. More than seven in 10 online travelers indicated that it is a Web site's use of video, pictures and online maps that most influence the method of purchase for leisure travel.

The PhoCusWright Consumer Travel Trends Survey Ninth Edition investigates the leisure online traveler in the U.S. In addition to understanding the dynamics of leisure travelers who purchase online, this report probes the travel buying behavior of frequent business travelers.

About PhoCusWright

PhoCusWright is the travel industry research authority on the evolving dynamics that influence how travelers, suppliers and intermediaries connect. Independent, rigorous and unbiased, PhoCusWright enables companies to make smart, profitable decisions.

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