

# Angella Bennett

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# Letter from the publisher



## A time to reflect

How would you rate 2019? Was it super? Good? Average? Or even bad?

At the end of December, I always take a few hours to reflect on the year as it comes to an end, in order to remind myself of my most important achievements, the difficult moments I have overcome, and the challenges I have faced.

I also take an opportunity to set goals for myself for the near future.

It's a ritual that's dear to me and it's also a practice that allows me to better balance my efforts so that I may continue to focus on the growth of PAX Global Media.

In my case, 2019 has been a year of developments. As you know, the PAX team has been very busy for the past 12 months!

The year has been a fruitful one: after launching the PAX Travel Jobs employment platform, we started the year by recruiting Antoine Stab, a French journalist who specializes in travel, based in Montreal.

Our reorganization plan also saw the addition of an IT engineer, Francener Alézy, to our team in order to optimize our existing products and develop new platforms.

Shortly thereafter, we also acquired Tourism Plus' assets after the company announced it was ceasing operations, a move that took the entire industry by surprise. In doing so, we hired one of the most talented journalists in the field, Serge Abel-Normandin, to complete our editorial team in Montreal.

This acquisition confirms PAX's already impressive list of products and allows us to hold our position as a pioneering media company.

I am immensely proud of the work done by my team. PAX Global Media is brimming with energy, ready to face 2020 with its challenges, surprises and developments.

Inside the issue you hold in your hands, you'll find our special feature on four travel agencies, where we asked them to voice their opinion on the issue of client ownership. I'm very curious to know your opinion on the subject!

Then come our accounts of fabulous trips to Varadero, Puerto Rico and Norway, and on board the Celebrity Edge.

I conclude by sincerely thanking the members of my team and the clients who, year after year, work with us for a common purpose, which is to continue this beautiful travel industry.

I'd also like to thank you, our dear readers.

Since this is a combined issue (December and January), I wish you a happy holiday season and an excellent 2020!

Happy reading! Your PAX magazine will be back on February 1, 2020.

President & CEO,  
PAX Global Media

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**Angella Bennett,**  
Regional Director Canada - Jamaica Tourist Board

# From *Jamaica,* with love

Whether representing one hotel or an entire destination, the Jamaica Tourist Board's Angella Bennett has been driven by a singular vision: bringing the charms of Jamaica to the rest of the world.

Story by Blake Wolfe / Photos by Geoff Fitzgerald

**W**hile the two may occupy very different climate regions, there's more ties between Canada and Jamaica than differences.

The holiday season is a perfect example: while turkey and mistletoe may be hallmarks of a classic Canadian Christmas, the holiday spirit is just as strong in Jamaica, where sorrel and black cake are found in every home during the month of December.

And just as a large Jamaican diaspora has made parts of Canada home, Canadian travellers each year look to the south for their winter escapes, an increasingly competitive market where destinations – Jamaica included – are continually reinventing themselves to stay relevant.

Standing at the junction is the Jamaica Tourist Board's Angella Bennett. Recently named the board's Regional Director for Canada, Bennett brings a lifetime of travel and hospitality experience to the role from all sides of the travel world, in what she describes as the fulfillment of her travel career "end game."

"I am a child of the industry," Bennett says. "Every inch of my body speaks to tourism and travel and how that all supports the destination. To now join the Jamaica Tourist Board is where it all comes full circle."

### **A different approach**

Before she took on her first hospitality role, Bennett was heading down a much different career path, fueled by a childhood love of all creatures great and small.

"Tourism was not the original plan for me," Bennett tells *PAX*. "I wanted to be a veterinarian; I studied agricultural science in high school and wanted to pursue that field. It was my love for animals; I've always had a dog or a cat, a rabbit - even a goat! I always loved to care for them and understand them, so it piqued my interest in that area."

While she studied in Jamaica's Manchester Parish, Bennett recalls that upon returning to her hometown of Montego Bay, "we were surrounded by banks and hotels." Opting to stay put rather than move away again, it was then – helped along with a little advice from her father – that she considered taking on a role in Jamaica's vibrant hospitality sector, beginning with an entry-level position at Half Moon resort. →

“My father was a musician and he always encouraged me to look at hotels as a possible career area,” Bennett says, adding that he helped introduce her to “one of my greatest mentors,” Half Moon’s Director of Sales and Marketing Myrtle Dwyer. “That was a great experience, because they positioned you for hospitality at a very high level. It was a very solid foundation; I fell in love with the business from a tender age and from that day forward, I’ve never looked back.”

With a solid industry education in the resort’s front-of-house operations, Bennett was eager to take on new challenges, in the form of Montego Bay-based tour operator Caribic Vacations. With a growing European inbound market, particularly from Germany, it was here that Bennett got her first taste of product development.

### Returning home

However, it wasn’t long before Bennett returned to the hotel sector: after extensively growing the Caribic Vacations portfolio over several years, she would join RIU, in a role that not only saw her eventually managing five of the company’s Jamaica properties, but provided ample opportunity to work with Canadian travel partners – experience that would prove vital down the road.

“I stayed there for 13 years and it was a great transition because as an international brand,” Bennett says, “they worked with many partners from Europe, the U.S. and Canada, which brought all markets together under one umbrella. I was fortunate enough to work with the Canadian partners in an extensive way, because the business out of Canada was the second-largest source market.”



**The Canadian travel agents have been key to the success of Jamaica in Canada. They’ve expressed their loyalty by continuously selling Jamaica and we salute them.**

“For me, that experience has remained one of my strongest relationships over my career,” she continues. “I consider them partners and friends and colleagues because of how committed they were to the Jamaican market, especially the number of flights. We saw a phenomenal growth from the Canadian market into these hotels.”

With a well-rounded travel industry experience, Bennett was now ready to bring Jamaica to the world. While raising a young family meant that she had to turn down a 2011 offer from Tourism Minister Edmund Bartlett to work with the JTB, she nonetheless set her sights on one day fulfilling that dream, joining the JTB in April 2019.

“Now I get the privilege of working with all of the Jamaica partners, not just one hotel brand, and enjoy the honour of positioning them in the Canadian market,” she says.

### Experience, authenticity are key

With hundreds of thousands of Canadians travelling to the Caribbean every winter, each destination within the region is vying for a piece of a very lucrative market.

While Jamaica has historically enjoyed a strong brand recognition in Canada, Bennett says that her main challenge is the re-introduction of the destination to Canadian sun-seekers, with a focus on Jamaica’s authentic and experiential side.

“Jamaica’s strength is in its experiences and its people, its culture and cuisine – it’s what makes us different from the other destinations,” she explains. “The Canadian traveller now, particularly the upper Millennial generation, is having an appetite for this experiential concept that we’re offering. A lot of them will still buy into a traditional all-inclusive hotel but will eagerly go out for an excursion; for example, they’re gravitating toward local cuisine and will go out to enjoy jerk chicken at a traditional jerk shack, or even going off the beaten path to cities such as Port Antonio.”

But with Jamaica on the grow – exemplified by a plan to add 15,000 hotel rooms over five years, plus an additional 21,000 air seats from Canada this winter, Bennett says – can the destination maintain an authentic vibe? Bennett says there’s room for both.

“The diversity of the destination allows the Canadian traveller to experience a solid hotel accommodation, but it also encourages them to go out and experience Jamaica. There’s a perfect balance – you want a great bed and great food, but you also want to experience the destination; we’ve got our attraction partners like



Chukka and Mystic Mountain, that are expanding on the authenticity on the attractions in Jamaica, which sets us apart from other Caribbean destinations.

“Jamaica has a strong brand presence and will never be the cheapest destination offered, but we know that the value component will never be matched. This is what differentiates us from the other destinations; we have a wide variety of attractions that bring the travellers into full immersion of our culture.”

#### **Getting the message out**

Sharing that message of authenticity requires a number of approaches, Bennett says, with the JTB eager to explore a wide range of options.

**It's a dedication from us to the agents to say 'we want to reinvest in you'.**

In the Toronto market, for example, the Jamaica brand has been front and centre with potential travellers this winter through a partnership with Maple Leaf Sports Entertainment, engaging with Toronto hockey fans through the team's Leafs Nation mobile app and bringing travel pros to games – complete with performances by reggae bands.

And with a strong Jamaican community here in Canada, Bennett says that the JTB is continually looking at better ways of engaging the local diaspora to “spend vacation at home,” a concept which Bennett says has seen strong growth in recent years.

However, it's Canada's travel agent community that remains the focus of the JTB's marketing efforts, Bennett says. In Canada, that strategy will see not only variations on the traditional trade presentation (including upcoming events incorporating cooking and ‘sip and paint’ classes) but upgrades to the Jamaica Travel Specialist program, specifically the addition of a French language version to capture more of the Quebec market. →



“The Canadian travel agents have been key to the success of Jamaica in Canada. They’ve expressed their loyalty by continuously selling Jamaica and we salute them,” Bennett says. “They are such a significant part of our success and the way they’re engaging us is transforming – they’re appealing to their clientele via their social media platforms and we’re speaking to them on these platforms as well; the engagement is expanding their boundaries. There’s nothing like having a live video from the destination or having an experience shared through their social platforms to their customers, who are following them.

“It’s a dedication from us to the agents to say ‘we want to reinvest in you - we want to re-educate you on Jamaica and to showcase the new brand positioning of the destination.’ They’re completely aligned – this is what they want to see. They want to be updated on the new developments and their interest has been to have the new experience of Jamaica so that they can promote us.”

*Special thanks to Canada’s Wonderland for hosting this month’s cover photo shoot. Learn more at [canadaswonderland.com](http://canadaswonderland.com).*

**Jamaica’s strength is in its experiences and its people, its culture and cuisine - it’s what makes us different from the other destinations.**

And with a team Bennett describes as “well-experienced in this market,” it’s this engagement that is the ultimate vision for the JTB’s Canadian office, no matter what time of year it is.

“It’s all about the commitment of the team,” she says, “to finding new and innovative ways of reaching their travel agent community and engaging with them in new ways, improving on what we’ve already established.” ●



## The *impact* of travel

Working in travel can have a number of unintended educational benefits. For Bennett, her role at Half Moon helped expand her knowledge of Japanese:

“We had a strong market there, to the point that we started to have lessons in Japanese!” she recalls. “I can still say ‘you’re welcome’ (*‘Dou itashimashite’*), ‘good morning’ (*‘Ohayou gozaimasu’*) and ‘hello’ (*‘moshi moshi’*).

“That engagement of just interacting with people from all walks of life was, for me, a huge cultural development: I learned to appreciate other peoples’ cultures, where they were from, what they liked – it was fascinating to have this experience. That really propelled me to go further into tourism.”

And while working at Caribic Vacations, Bennett picked up a bit of Italian.

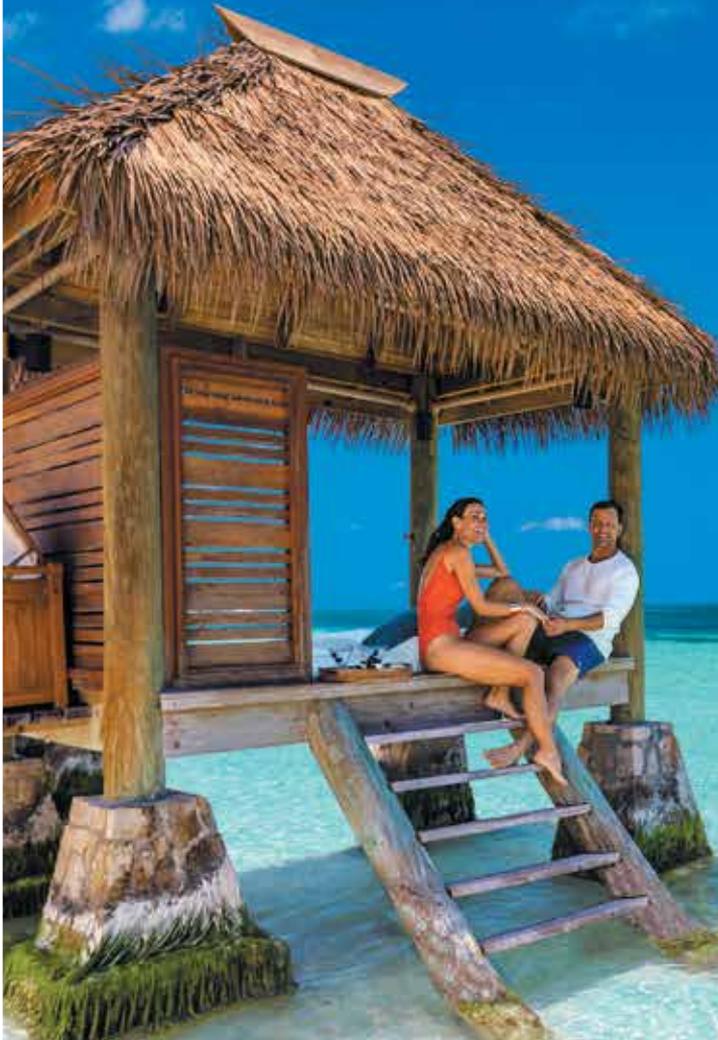
“I was engaged by an Italian company called Viagiadea who had an office in the Caribic Vacations portfolio and my first trip out of Jamaica was to Italy to learn all about their organization. To me, that was again piquing my interest in experiencing new countries and learning about how they connected to Jamaica, learning a little bit of Italian to welcome those people.

“I also remember ‘*quale hotel stai alloggiando*’ – ‘which hotel are you staying?’ I claim no proficiency but once again, it added to my appreciation of culture.”

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# How to: **SUCCESSFUL**

# *first hires*

By Jean-François Venne



**“Learn to communicate your expectations to a worker while understanding that he or she will not necessarily share the same level of commitment to your company”**

- Nathalie Dion

**W**hen a new business begins to find its footing, hiring is the first step. And if the entrepreneur is looking to find the best employees that will, in time, advance the company's operations, there's no time for improvisation.

"It's usually a surplus of work that convinces the entrepreneur of the need to hire the first employees," said Nathalie Dion, regional director at the Montreal campus of the School of Entrepreneurs of Quebec.

Entrepreneurs quickly realize that this is a process that requires time and some knowledge of administration.

"You have to open accounts with the provincial Revenue Agency as well as the Canada Revenue Agency and understand your tax obligations from the start," said Dion.

### Procedures

But before you get there, you have to find the right people to form your team.

Isabelle Bédard, CEO of CIB Organizational Development, a human resources management consulting firm, proposes a ten-step approach to achieve this:

### Take your time

Entrepreneurs who don't take their time with selecting the best candidate often end up wasting their time with less-qualified individuals in the long run as they invest more time in training and management procedures.

"You have to learn to communicate your expectations to a worker and to mobilize, while understanding that he or she will not necessarily have the same level of commitment to the company as the entrepreneur," said Dion.

The employer must also take time to decide what tasks he or she wants to assign to the worker and to plan them. Some entrepreneurs fall into the trap of doing certain tasks themselves, claiming that it takes less time compared to explaining to others how to do them.

Yet it is by taking the time to pass on knowledge to an employee that the latter can take on more responsibilities in the company. The entrepreneur will then be free to focus on what really matters to drive growth.

"We must expect that the first months require a lot of training time, but we must take it while remembering that we build for the future," concludes Dion. ●

# 10 things to know

- 1 Write a clear list of tasks and responsibilities.
- 2 Establish the degree of autonomy of the employee.
- 3 Establish the degree of knowledge and experience that the employee will need to do their job.
- 4 Evaluate what salary corresponds to this profile, based on what is offered in the current market.
- 5 Identify other benefits that you would like to offer the future employee, such as the ability to work from home, time off, flexible hours, etc.
- 6 Think carefully about the job title. "Do not hesitate to think outside the box and imagine a title that piques the candidate's curiosity," advises Bédard.
- 7 Write a job offer that clearly states items one to six.
- 8 Spread the offer. "You have to make sure you disseminate it as widely as you can and on different channels, be it social media, your website, bulletin boards or local job centres, first taking advantage of free distribution," Bédard said.
- 9 Communicate quickly with candidates. "There is such a scarcity of manpower right now that candidates are not available for a long time, so we have to react quickly when one of them shows interest in our company," Bédard said.
- 10 Conduct the interview. The Internet is full of examples of questions that will help you build an effective and interesting interview.

Source: Statistics Canada

In 2017, nearly 8.3 million Canadians worked for a small business (99 employees or less), according to Statistics Canada. This represented 69.7 per cent of private sector jobs.

Prince Edward Island (78.5 per cent), Saskatchewan (76.9 per cent) and Newfoundland and Labrador (76.3 per cent) are the most common high proportions of private workers hired by small firms.

The average annual growth rate of employment in small businesses is 1.1 per cent.

# Winter escapes

**2.8 million**

The approximate number of passengers estimated to have passed through Toronto Pearson International Airport last year during the holiday season, with a peak volume of more than 135,000 passengers on Dec. 21, 2018. However, last year's daily record was recorded in the summer, when YYZ saw more than 165,000 passengers arrive and depart.

**35 %**

The percentage of Canadians surveyed by Ipsos Reid who said their winter vacation was for a relaxing retreat. Other reasons included visiting family or friends (25 per cent), exploring new places (20 per cent), escaping the cold (15 per cent), or taking part in a sport/adventure trip (three per cent).

**1,000 to 3,000**

The average amount in dollars spent on a winter vacation by nearly half (48 per cent) of Canadian travellers, according to a 2018 report by the Conference Board of Canada. By comparison, 13 per cent of respondents spent just \$500-\$1,000 on their winter escapes.

**2.25 million**

The number of Canadians visiting Mexico in 2016, making it the most popular travel destination for Canadians. Cuba and the Dominican Republic come in at second and third place respectively.

**47 %**

The percentage of Canadians surveyed in Allianz Global Assistance's 2018 Canadian Winter Vacation Confidence Index who planned to take a winter vacation, up six per cent from 2017. Confidence was highest among Albertans (53 per cent) and lowest in B.C. (41 per cent). ●



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# Digital travel in the era of

# #selfie

By Frédéric Gonzalo

**C**an we still talk about solo travel in an era where we can be connected anywhere, anytime and with almost anyone, via social media?

The question deserves to be asked within the context of digital and sociological frameworks.

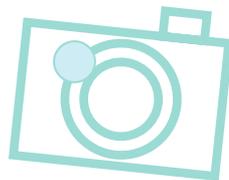
One thing is certain: travellers, whether alone or accompanied, now immortalize their experiences through images taken in the destinations they're visiting.

Hence the expression "selfie," which made its official entry in the Webster and Larousse dictionaries in 2014.

## A heavy trend

Search Instagram for the #selfie hashtag and how many results will you find?

The results reveal more than 400 million images and videos, and that's not including content that fits this style, but leaves the hashtag in question off the post. It also doesn't take into consideration results from other platforms, like Facebook, Pinterest, Snapchat, YouTube, TikTok, and so on.



The staging of the trip, or the "Instagramability" of a destination, therefore, becomes problematic.

In other words, travellers want to come home from their vacations, not only with good memories, but with snapshots that will cleverly nourish their Facebook and Instagram feeds, becoming the envy of friends, family and work colleagues.

It might sound funny, but some destinations have become disillusioned by the excesses of the selfie phenomenon.

**53 per cent of millennial British travellers have confessed that they choose their next travel destination based on their Instagram potential.**

There are, of course, iconic locations, such as the Grand Canyon, the Eiffel Tower or the Rialto Bridge in Venice. But there's also Joffre Lakes Provincial Park in British Columbia, where people line up to take a picture of the tree lying in the lake, with the mountains as a backdrop.

It's the same situation in Trolltunga, in Norway, where visitors queue for hours just to take that famous selfie that gives the illusion of being alone on a rock over the fjord.

**Individual responsibility**

The selfie phenomenon has some observers and media grouping it together with the problems caused by overtourism that continues to afflict more and more destinations. It's true, though, that both travellers and travel advisors have a responsibility towards the phenomenon.

Here are two tips to keep in mind:

- **Optional geolocation:** It is not always necessary to identify where a photo was taken, especially when it comes to a hidden gem. More and more social media users are turning off geo-location when taking selfies or beautiful landscapes.
- **Respect for the place:** A selfie near a lake, in the heart of an urban center, or from a delicious meal? Sure, why not. But at the Holocaust Museum, in a concentration camp or near a place that has recently experienced a mass killing? It's not suggested! Unfortunately, sometimes people who don't care about this aspect need to be reminded of this.

Of course, not everything about the selfie is bad.

If you have a smartphone that takes incredible pictures, you won't have to rely on other travellers to capture those amazing travel memories! ●

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# A SENSE OF belonging

Does the client belong to the travel agent or their agency?

By Blake Wolfe



**All clients belong to the agent: the reason for that is because TTAND didn't go out and find that client.**

- Flemming Friisdahl, TTAND

**L**ike the proverbial chicken and egg, the matter of client ownership can appear to be an unsolvable riddle: do the rights to a client's business belong to the travel agent, who put in the time and effort to grow the relationship; or are they solely in the domain of the agency itself, which provided the advisor with the resources and materials to acquire the client in the first place?

While the jury's still out on the matter of chicken versus egg, there's strong consensus amongst four of Canada's largest agencies regarding ownership of clients.

### Location, location, location

In the case of a home-based agent or outside contractor, the industry generally supports the idea that with effort, comes reward: if an agent brings in a client's business, any future business from said client should go to that same agent as well.

"I think it's relevant to who brought the client to you," says Flemming Friisdahl, founder of The Travel Agent Next Door. "Within TTAND, all clients belong to the agent: the reason for that is because TTAND didn't go out and find that client."

"If it's a host environment, they belong to the agent 100 per cent. I may have given them the tools, but that agent had to go out and find the client before they could even use the tools," Friisdahl continues. "Some host agencies or those with outside sales reps will say that clients belong to them. But that's completely wrong to me, because if an agent went and found that client and are commissioned and not part of the storefront, they should belong to the agent." →



**Strong relationships are impossible at a supplier or wholesaler level – there’s just too many people.**

- Gregory Luciani, president and CEO, TravelOnly

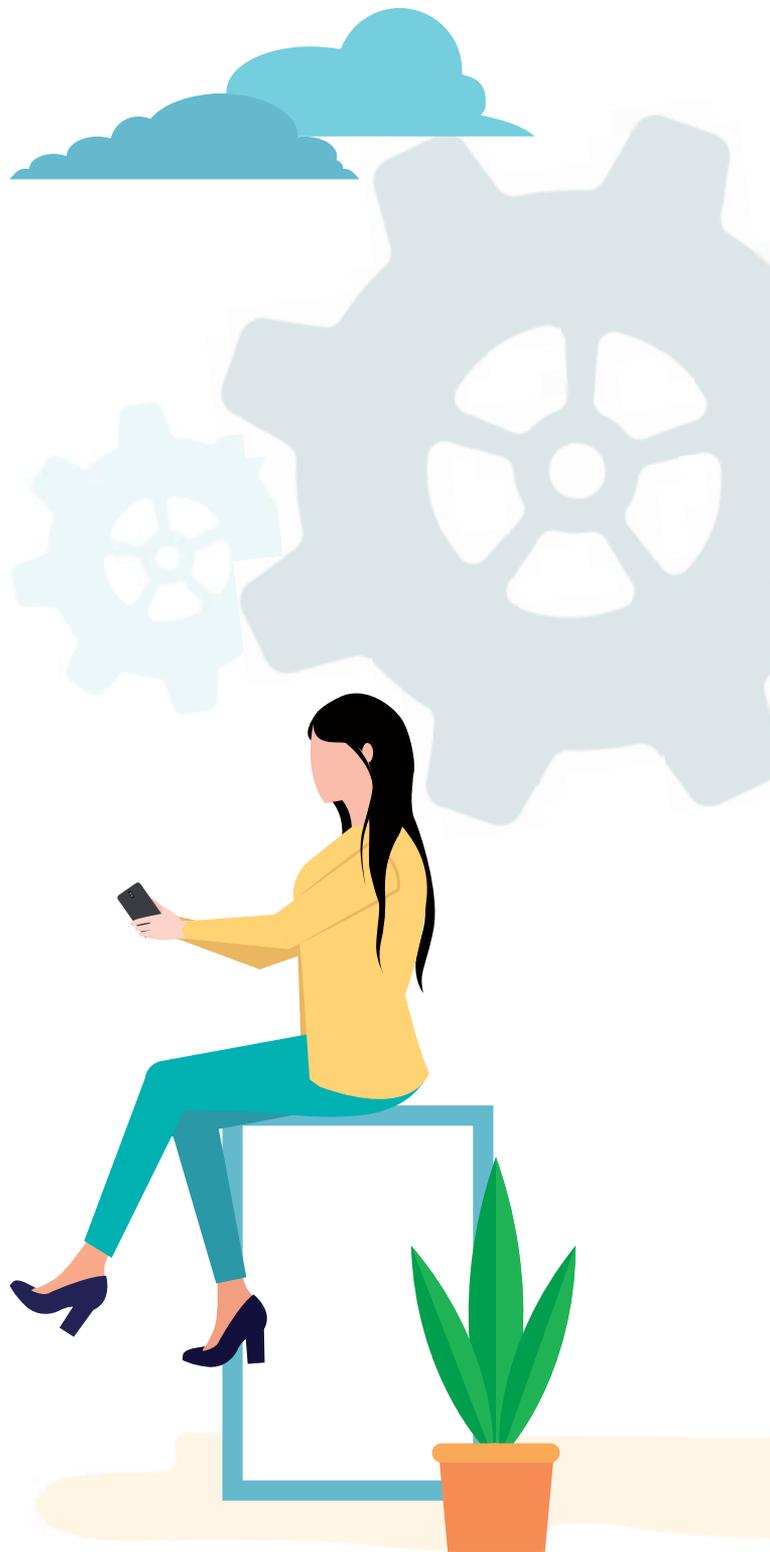
While this approach holds true for home-based agents or out-side contractors, storefront agencies are a different matter, where agents are typically dealing with more walk-in business.

“When you pay the lease and all the business expenses, the client list is important,” says Louise Fecteau, general manager of Transat Distribution Canada. “Often the reality is that a client wants to come and deal with a specific agent – that’s the nature of the business. When you’re losing an agent, sometimes they leave with a client. But the vast majority of the time you can retain that client. It’s written in our contractual agreements; if someone leaves one of our storefronts, they’re told that the client list belongs to us.”

“When we talk to agents looking to join TTAND,” Friisdahl adds, “and they’re coming from a storefront, we explain to them that they can’t legally send a note to their clients and say ‘hey, I’m on my own now.’ Legally, those clients belong to the agency; the agency has expenses such as salary, monthly rent, hydro, marketing, internet and phone.”

The age of social media presents another challenge to agencies, Fecteau says.

“Agents and clients are Facebook friends and we can’t tell our agents that they can’t share the fact that they changed agencies,” she says. “Everyone follows each other. We’ve been very lucky with our agents; when it’s in writing, people are more careful with that.” →







**At the end of the day, it's up to us to ensure that the client stays with us.**

- Louise Fecteau, general manager,  
Transat Distribution Canada

### Relationship maintenance

For the hosted agent, their ownership of the client also helps the host agency itself in living up to a high level of service that can only be provided on a direct level.

"If I have the relationship and I'm nurturing it," says TravelOnly President and CEO Gregory Luciani, "you'll always be my client because you like and trust me and you know I'm going to get the job done for you, whereas the company I'm working with isn't as important to you as the level of service and the relationship that I'm providing on an individual level.

"Even if I wanted to go after that customer," he continues, "if I'm not the one who's been nurturing and supporting that customer with phone calls, emails, coffee meetings – putting in the time – there's no way that customer is going to stay with me. Not in today's travel industry, where another agent or agency is just a click away.

"That's why we go back to relationships being the most critical piece of the puzzle. Strong relationships are impossible at a supplier or wholesaler level – there's just too many people."

### A helping hand

While host agencies are generally hands-off when it comes to their advisors' clients, there's one area where their direct interaction with customers is increasingly welcomed.

According to Zeina Gedeon, CEO of Travel Professionals International, a new direct-to-consumer marketing plan by TPI has been well received by the company's advisors, who previously were handling marketing duties on their own – time which could be better spent making bookings and bringing in new clients.

"Many advisors asked us 'what took you so long?'" Gedeon explains. "By us doing the marketing, it alleviates a lot of the pressure on the advisors trying to figure out how, or what information, to communicate to clients. By us taking that on for them, it's one less thing they have to worry about and they can focus on selling, rather than every week having to put out a new promotion.

"We have a dedicated director of marketing based at head office and now we're able to do a lot more marketing for our advisors," she continues. "Marketing used to be just up to the individual advisor – now, based on feedback, they want us to help them market to their customers."

### Follow the leader

Returning to the importance of relationships, the destiny of the client is ultimately up to themselves, a path which will largely be determined by the quality of service they received.

"When an agent leaves, it's up to us to do a good job of retaining their clients, by having another team member contact that client," Fecteau says. "But if that client wants to follow that agent – provided the agent never directly solicited them – there's not much you can do; people follow each other on social media so we can't prevent that. At the end of the day, it's up to us to ensure that the client stays with us."

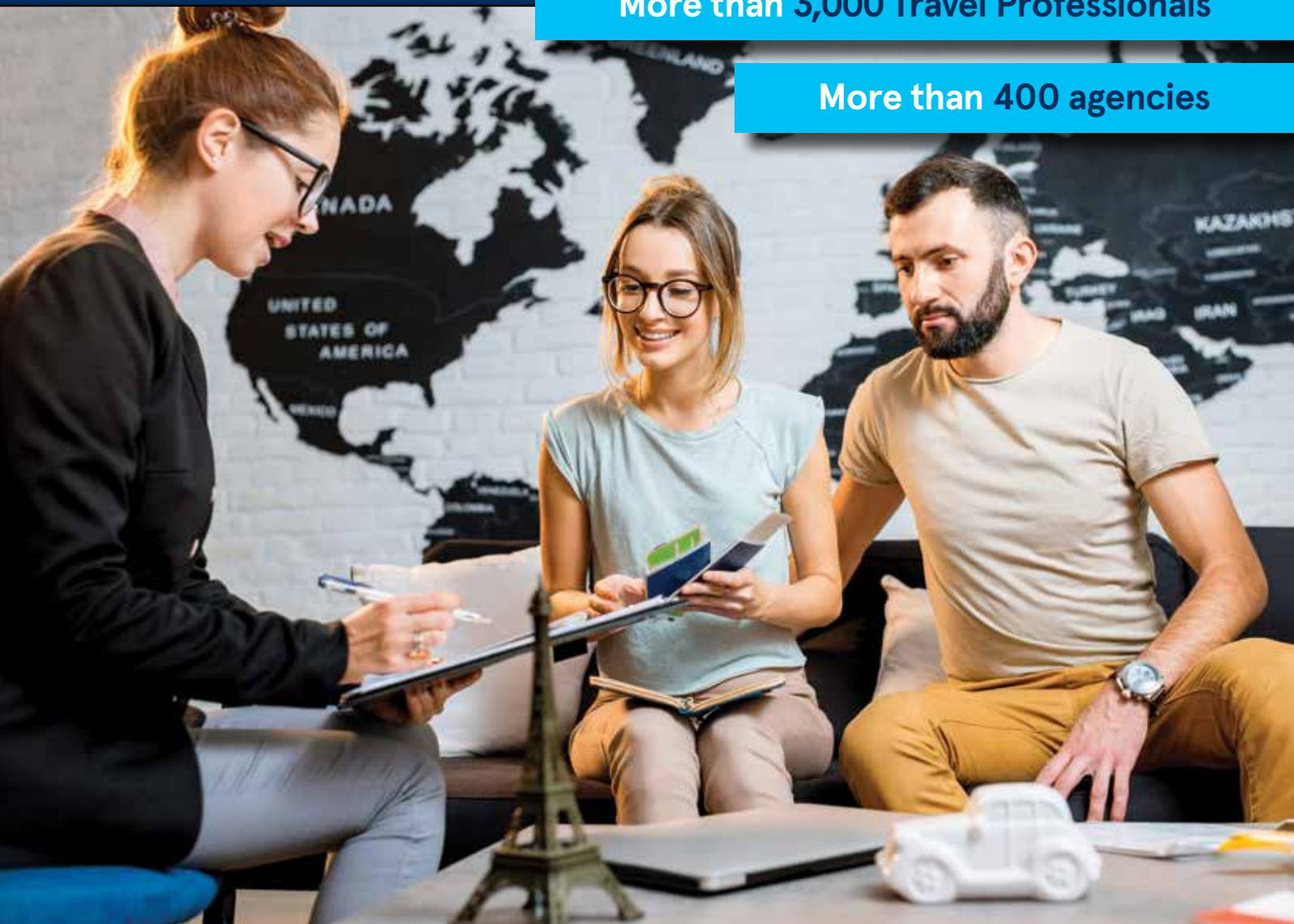
Adds Luciani:

"That's the essence of ownership – people follow because they value the service and have a lot of respect for what the agent has been able to do for them." ●

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# DIFFERENT *worlds*

A look at some of the world's most unique theme parks

The world's top theme parks are more than just midway rides and cotton candy, transporting guests to different worlds entirely. Buy a ticket, step through the gate and enjoy the ride at these four unique parks!

By Blake Wolfe



Photo courtesy of PortAventura World



Photo: Joshua Sadebeck/Disney Parks



Photo courtesy of Sanrio Puroland

## PortAventura World – Costa Dorada, Spain

Combining an amusement park, a water park and a celebration of high-end automobiles along Spain's Mediterranean coast, there's truly something for everyone at PortAventura World.

One of the largest holiday destinations in Europe, the development features PortAventura Park, PortAventura Caribe Aquatic Park and Ferrari Land, one of two theme parks centred around the Italian luxury auto maker (the other is in Abu Dhabi) complete with themed rides and virtual reality racing experiences.

In addition, guests can stay close to the fun at five 4-star and one 5-star themed hotels (PortAventura Hotels) with more than 2,200 rooms, and enjoy three golf courses (two of which were designed by Greg Norman) plus a Beach Club with direct access to the beach.

## Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge – Disneyland and Walt Disney World Resort

A dream come true for Star Wars fans of all ages, Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge opened earlier this spring to record crowds in Disneyland (where the attraction welcomed its one millionth visitor within its first six weeks of operation) and in Orlando's Walt Disney World Resort this past August.

Featuring full-scale and movie-quality replicas of the franchise's most popular locations and vehicles—including a full-size *Millennium Falcon* which houses the Smuggler's Run attraction—the park also features familiar characters from the Star Wars world bringing that 'galaxy far, far away' to life for visitors, who will quickly find themselves caught up in the story and enjoy a unique experience based on their interactions.

## Sanrio Puroland – Tokyo, Japan

Home to Hello Kitty and all of her friends, Tokyo's Sanrio Puroland is a celebration of all things *kawaii*, Japan's culture of cuteness.

The park, which has grown to become one of the country's top tourist destinations, features rides, restaurants and attractions (and of course, merchandise) all themed around the popular Sanrio characters, who are also on hand to meet and greet guests and appear in shows and musicals held throughout the year.

Sanrio Puroland is entirely indoors, allowing the cuteness to continue rain or shine.



### Sun World Ba Na Hills – Da Nang, Vietnam

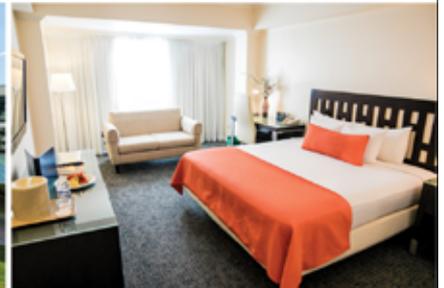
Taking a cable car high into Vietnam’s Truong Son Mountains, an historic French village may be the last sight one would expect to see – then again, Sun World Ba Na Hills is far from ordinary!

Originally built by French colonists in 1919 as a mountain retreat, few of the original structures remain, replaced by a replica medieval village which houses restaurants and rides like a mountain coaster and indoor drop tower. The cable car to the park is also an attraction in and of itself, holding the Guinness World Record for longest non-stop single track cable car at 5,801 metres.

Sun World Ba Na Hills is also home to the famed Golden Bridge, a 150-metre long structure seemingly held in place some 3,280 feet above sea level by two gigantic hands sprouting from the mountainside. ●

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# CELEBRITY

## Revolution

Taking modern luxury  
to the Edge

By Ming Tappin  
Photos: Celebrity Cruises

*“You say you want a revolution, well, you know, we all want to change the world”*  
~ John Lennon

**T**hat’s the aim of Celebrity Cruises – at least in the world of cruising – when it announced a \$500 million modernization of its fleet of nine ships. Riding the wave of its newest game-changing ship *Celebrity Edge*, Celebrity Cruises is raising the bar on what is already a premium cruise experience to a whole new level.

“We launched the Celebrity Revolution to do one thing – transform the way our guests experience the world. It began with the introduction of the industry-changing

*Celebrity Edge*, and continued with the stunning *Celebrity Flora* (Celebrity’s Galapagos expedition ship launched this past May),” said Lisa Lutoff-Perlo, Celebrity Cruises’ President and CEO. “Our dedication to improving the way guests experience the world knows no bounds. We are taking our entire award-winning fleet to the edge and giving people the vacation they truly deserve.”

Here is a look at how Celebrity Cruises is upping the game with the Celebrity Revolution. →



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**Visionary design team**

With the belief that the journey is as important as the destination, Celebrity sourced more than 500 leading architects, designers, and engineers to bring its Millennium-class (*Celebrity Millennium, Infinity, Constellation and Summit*) and Solstice-class (*Celebrity Solstice, Equinox, Silhouette and Reflection*) ships to the same calibre in design as their newest sister, *Celebrity Edge*. Gone are the cherrywood paneling and autumn-coloured palette – they’re being replaced by calming monotonues of cool grey, beige, and light green, with a pop of colour in the throw cushions and artwork. As shown in before-and-after photos, the ships’ interiors will be lighter and brighter with the new colour scheme.

**Stunning accommodation upgrades**

Celebrity has partnered with international design firm Hirsch Bedner Associates to transform the staterooms to further enhance the concept of modern luxury. Reflecting a stylish but timeless décor, every stateroom will be upgraded with eXhale bedding featuring luxurious cashmere mattresses, new carpeting, upholstery, and furnishings. Millennium-class ships will also receive new bathroom designs in every stateroom category.



Before



Before

**Taking Suite Class through the roof**

The pinnacle of the luxurious transformation will be best showcased in the suite category. To that end, Celebrity handpicked award-winning London designer Kelly Hoppen, MBE, who was responsible for designing the suites onboard *Celebrity Edge*.

Hoppen will also design the Retreat Lounge (formerly Michael’s Club) and Retreat Sundeck, two inviting relaxation spaces exclusively for suite guests. The elegant Retreat Lounge – furnished with comfortable seating – will offer complimentary beverages and snacks, along with the services of a concierge. Up on deck, the Retreat Sundeck evokes a private beach club, with plush loungers, canopied sunbeds and whirlpool. Suite guests also dine at the exclusive Luminae restaurant, with menus crafted by Michelin-starred chefs. →



On the entertainment front, Celebrity will welcome the American Ballet Theatre, the U.S.' national ballet company established in 1940, on board select sailings. Not only will guests be treated to classical ballet performances, there will also be enrichment lectures, Barre classes and ballet classes for children, all complimentary.

### Inviting public spaces

Onboard Millennium-class ships, a number of areas will be completely transformed into bright and airy spaces, with modern, clean lines and sleek furniture; these include the main dining room, the Oceanview Café buffet restaurant, Rendezvous Lounge, Sunset Bar, the casino, shops and the spa.

Solstice-class ships will receive new public lounges such as Craft Social and the Passport Bar, while the whimsical specialty restaurant Qsine, featuring the virtual Le Petit Chef experience, will be added fleetwide.

### New Partnerships

The Celebrity Revolution will also bring two new partnerships to the cruise line, including New York-based Chef Daniel Boulud, who will become Celebrity's Culinary Brand Ambassador. Suite guests will indulge in Chef Boulud's award-winning cuisine in a three-course menu at Luminae and a five-course Chef's Table wine-pairing dinner, which includes a full galley tour.

### The Celebrity Revolution timeline

The revolution has begun, with three ships already 'Revolutionized' to rave reviews. The following timeline is provided by Celebrity Cruises, as of July 9, 2019. Completion dates are subject to change. ●

Ship	Completion Date
Celebrity Millennium	Revolutionized
Celebrity Summit	Revolutionized
Celebrity Equinox	Revolutionized
Celebrity Silhouette	Feb. 14, 2020
Celebrity Constellation	May 26, 2020
Celebrity Infinity	Nov. 16, 2020
Celebrity Eclipse	Nov. 25, 2020
Celebrity Solstice	Oct. 29, 2021
Celebrity Reflection	Feb. 3, 2023

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Lapland in its nordic glory

# Northern Norway

## for winter lovers

Story and photos by Marie-Eve Vallières

**W**hile the majority of Canadian travellers prefer to escape to the warmth of the Caribbean once the temperature drops, some of your clients may be seeking out cold-weather destinations during the winter months.

If they've already explored Western Canada, Switzerland or Japan, why not offer them the splendor of northern Norway and the gems of underrated Lapland?

Here, at the crossroads of Russia, the North Pole and Finland, the sun sets at 3 p.m. and rises at 9 a.m., and daylight retains the unmistakable bluish tint of the winter dawn.

### Settle in Tromsø

The capital of the Norwegian Arctic, the town of Tromsø charms visitors with its historic shores, snow-capped mountains and colourful houses. Here, winter sport meets the Nordic way of life thanks to the numerous traditional cafés and the sleek design shops. →



Dog sledding in Alta

After all, the origins of the Danish concept of *hygge* (a distinctly Scandinavian notion of comfort) are not geographically far away.

With the activities offered by local tour operator Tromsø Outdoor, your clients can practice snowshoeing or cross-country skiing with experienced guides and even local residents. It's also possible to organize a highly-scenic dog sled tour with Tromsø Villmarks-senter, a package which also includes a Norwegian lunch.

Once night falls (and in this northern region, it falls early), it's time to go hunting for the Northern Lights. Fleeting and ethereal, this heavenly spectacle as imagined by Mother Nature will illuminate the darkness of the night with violet, red and green – usually after several hours of waiting spent sipping hot chocolate, while sheltered from the cold in a teepee! There are two options for your clients: a very structured bus tour with Tromsø Friluftsentner ([tromso-friluftsentner.no](http://tromso-friluftsentner.no)) or an intimate small-group discovery with local guide Gunnar Hildonen ([guidegunnar.no](http://guidegunnar.no)), whose itinerary changes every night.

Lyngsfjord Adventure is a base camp located deep in the Arctic mountains, more than an hour from Tromsø. After a wonderful minibus ride, your customers will be able to frolic with sled dogs, of course, but also to ride a snowmobile or to play with the reindeer and talk to their masters from the indigenous Sami community.

### For dog lovers

In Alta, the second-largest city in the region, it's possible to stay at Holmen Husky Lodge ([hulmenhosky.no](http://hulmenhosky.no)) and enjoy the full experience of dogsledding.

Here, guests have dinner with the owner in his pretty Scandinavian house and spend the night in a luxury teepee (with warming blankets!), where glass walls make it impossible to miss the glory of the *aurora borealis*. In the early morning, your clients will awaken to the baying of the dogs, anxious to go back on another adventure – the perfect time for guests to participate in the process of hitching the animals to the sled before heading into the forest! It's a truly unforgettable experience. ●



## GOOD TO KNOW

Where to stay in Tromsø: Thon Hotel Polar

The exchange rate is CAD \$1 for NKR 7. A cappuccino, for example, costs on average NKR 45.

To reach Tromsø or Alta by plane, it will be necessary to transit through Oslo Airport; neither destination is served by the major European carriers.

Most activity centres lend thermal clothing [coveralls, boots, gloves, etc.] required for long exposure to the cold.

G Adventures, Hurtigruten, Goway, Voyages Incurion, Tours Chanteclerc and Uniktour all offer packages in Norway, some in the northern part of the country.

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Prices include the contribution of customers to the Compensation Fund for clients of Quebec travel agents.



1 AB853 1

# Events 101



Whether it's organizing an appreciation evening for your clients, a group wedding, or a leaders' retreat in the sun, the term 'event' is broad and can encompass many different concepts. But the basics, and the key to success, remain the same.



## Define clear objectives

Before you start planning an event, ask yourself the right questions:

- What are the objectives? Lead generation, fundraising, a higher profile?
- What is the best time to do it?
- Who is your event targeted at, and what is the profile of your target audience? (Men/women, family/single, age, interests, background)
- What budget have you set, both fixed and variable?

Build a complete plan with all the elements that are part of your event and check them with your client (location, accommodation, transportation, speakers, stationery, activities, room decorations, meals, gifts, surprises...). Create and follow a tight schedule, weekly or daily. Be organized, and pay attention to even the smallest details.



## Seek the 'wow' factor

It's important to create an experience for customers.

Does your client want original and unique team-building activities? Resorts in sun destinations are often cheaper than choosing Canadian properties, and can be a welcome change for participants.

Is your client looking for an idea to organize a seminar? Remind them of Club Med Villages and their many options to personalize their offerings according to the needs of the client.

In short – surprise your customers by developing your own event brand identity.



## Find the right partners

Surround yourself with renowned and trusted service providers. If you want to use them for the first time, ask them for references from past clients and photos of what they have done, and what they offer. Listen to recommendations from your peers, or go to shows and trade fairs to find them. Do not hesitate to enlist the aid of an event planner to help you in all of these steps.



## Do a post-mortem

Too often forgotten or taken lightly, the post-event is essential. Firstly, you have to survey your client to collect their comments, what they liked and appreciated less, to improve their experience for the next few times. Additionally, you can make an objective return to all your providers. Finally, it allows you to 'close the loop' and begin planning your client's next event with them.



## Negotiate the right price

Don't be afraid to ask for several quotes from your service providers. Look into your options and see what others are offering. Negotiate politely. Keep up to date with trends and pay your suppliers on time – everyone will be a winner!



## Value your own expertise

Don't forget that you have value! You are a professional, and that's why your customers come to you. Don't hesitate to charge a service fee for your work. This will demonstrate your value to the client.



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# ISLAND-HOPPING in *Puerto Rico*

**After landing in Puerto Rico and checking into my hotel, I was eager to get out. I didn't come to Puerto Rico in mid-February to be confined by frigid air conditioning and cable TV, after all.**

By Christine Hogg



I headed out on foot towards Old San Juan. Judging by Google Maps, from where I was staying, I could see some of the most sought-after sites in an hour if I walked the route, and 10 minutes if I took an Uber which ended up costing less than \$3 on the way back. Any hotels in the city centre put you in a good position to see the best of the old town in a short amount of time.

Castillo San Felipe del Morro, one of two of Old San Juan's historic fortresses, didn't disappoint. Walking down Route 25R, towering, derelict stone walls suddenly appeared, letting me know the UNESCO site was soon approaching. The entrance

fee costs \$7, but that also gets you a complimentary visit to Puerto Rico's second fortress, Castillo San Cristóbal. From some of the fort's highest buttresses, you have the perfect view of the colourful La Perla community, made famous by Daddy Yankee, Luis Fonsi, and Justin Bieber's hit 2017 song, 'Despacito'.

But after taking in the pastel-coloured shops and eating enough *mofongo* for a lifetime, I was ready for something different.

Roughly an hour-and-a-half's drive from Old San Juan, the city of Ponce, known for its colonial homes and shops, also has another secret—it provides a direct link

by boat to an uninhabited island called Isla Cardona.

WaterLand Adventure provides a ferry service from Paseo Tablado La Guancha, on the south coast of Ponce, over to Isla Cardona. The ride takes just 10 minutes, and lifejackets are provided. The island isn't open to the public, and it's only accessible by private boat or via licensed tour operator.

Devoid of any docks, an anchor was dropped a few feet from the shoreline, and we had to jump into warm, waist-high water in order to reach the shore, which was surrounded by soft sand free of debris or rocks. →



Trees and shrubs are abundant, as is the wildlife—before you spread your towel out, watch out for the crabs, who are known to pop up from under the sand! There are no bars or restaurants, snack bars, towel or sun lounge rentals, or even a bathroom, but the company provides a picnic-style lunch, and the boat remains anchored, with a toilet below deck.

Since Hurricane Maria and Hurricane Irma's passing, Cardona Island, as our guides explained, has been slightly transformed, but in the best way possible - there's now more white sand than ever before.

Because of the shallow waters, Cardona provides incredible snorkelling opportunities, and with the abundance of pelicans we saw swooping and diving, it's no secret that thousands of tropical fish lurk below, meaning you're guaranteed to see something.

Isla Cardona is also home to a very famous lighthouse in Puerto Rico that was first lit in 1889. The lighthouse is vacant and boarded up now, but at one time, it housed many lightkeepers and their families. There are a few obvious paths around the island, and it's easy enough to walk them barefoot to find the lighthouse, which makes for a pretty picture or two.

**Because of the shallow waters, Cardona provides incredible snorkelling opportunities.**

There aren't any frequent water taxis operating to Isla Cardona, so whichever way you come, just make sure you go back the way you came—unless you'd like to spend the night. ●

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# PARADISUS PRINCESA DEL MAR

*A luxury hotel*  
with Cuban flair  
By: Antoine Stab



## The famous Cuban peninsula continues to add more and more upscale hotels.

Setting aside the award-winning service, the room design, and even the white sandy beach, the luxury of the establishment is further revealed by an overwhelming sense of calmness and relaxation in a zen atmosphere.

The large lobby is an ideal spot to cool down and sip a drink on a hot day, or surf the internet, as this is the only place where there's access to Wi-Fi, for a fee of 1 CUC per card, which grants one hour of connection time.

From here, you can see the lagoon-style swimming pool, which is a focal point of the resort, lined with comfortable Bali beds and sun loungers. To the right is the spa, behind you are the rooms and the beach, and to your left, you'll find restaurants, a disco, and a cigar bar.

Finally, the feeling of luxury is also found in the small attentions brought forward by the staff.

One example, among others: the bartender of the lobby bar, Javier, happens to be a seasoned singer, and he often breaks out in song, including an opera rendition of Leonard Cohen's 'Hallelujah'—all while serving you a cocktail of your choice. →

Varadero is changing.

The famous Cuban peninsula continues to add more and more upscale hotels.

The Paradisus Princesa del Mar is a perfect example: it's an adults-only resort that incorporates elements of luxury, while keeping the simplicity and affordability that all-inclusive resorts in Cuba are known for.

PAX stayed at the property for several nights to discover this must-see destination that is currently reinventing itself.

### A quiet escape

The Paradisus Princesa del Mar is not new to Varadero, but it certainly stands out from other hotels in the region.

Despite increased competition in the area, the resort has won the title of "Best Cuban Resort" multiple times, several times (2013, 2015 and 2018), at the World Travel Awards.

Paradisus Princesa del Mar boasts a total of 1,069 rooms, all junior suites or suites with sea, garden or pool views, spread over seven three-storey buildings. The decor is classic and modern.

## HOTEL VISIT



### Even more luxury at the Royal Service

The Paradisus Princesa del Mar kicks luxury up a notch in the Royal Service section, which offers a more intimate and privileged experience, intended to enrich the overall quality of stay for the customer.

Separate from the rest of the resort, this area hosts two separate reception-

concierge lounges, two private bar-lounges with terraces, two private pools, swim-up suites, a private beach section with a beverage service, an on-site restaurant serving specialties, and three bars.

Guests who opt for the Royal Service will also be entitled to a variety of benefits, including butler service, personal and private advance check-in,

and guaranteed late check-out (until 2 p.m.), unlimited internet, and a hydrothermal spa circuit included in the package, unpacking and packing luggage, and a private transfer to and from Varadero airport.

Those who do not stay in this section can still access it during the day, but they'll have to pay an extra fee. ●

## THE PARADISUS PRINCESA DEL MAR IN BRIEF



### Sleep

#### 630 suites

(from 43 to 171 m<sup>2</sup>) spread over seven buildings of three floors.

All rooms are equipped with a full bathroom, whirlpool bath, room service, work area, individually controlled air-conditioning, hairdryer, ironing board, coffee maker and teapot, clock radio, umbrella, and phone.

148 suites in the **Royal Service section.**



### Eat

#### Five specialty restaurants (reservation required and dress code in effect)

*Port Royal Beach Grill* (Cuban), *Firenze* (Mediterranean), *Bamboo* (Asian), *Gran Terraza* (buffet), *Sakura* (Japanese teppanyaki) and *Marseille* (international).

The "Royal Service" section also features a buffet, the *Miramar*, a specialty restaurant (international), the *Hill Top Hideaway* and three bars.



### Relax

The Paradisus Princesa del Mar has **two swimming pools**, one with three levels, the other reserved for guests of the "Royal Service" section, as well as access to an **exclusive beach** for all hotel guests.

**Additional amenities include:** Yhi Spa (not included for stays of less than four nights), beauty salon, fully equipped gym, several tennis courts and three meeting rooms for organizing events or weddings.



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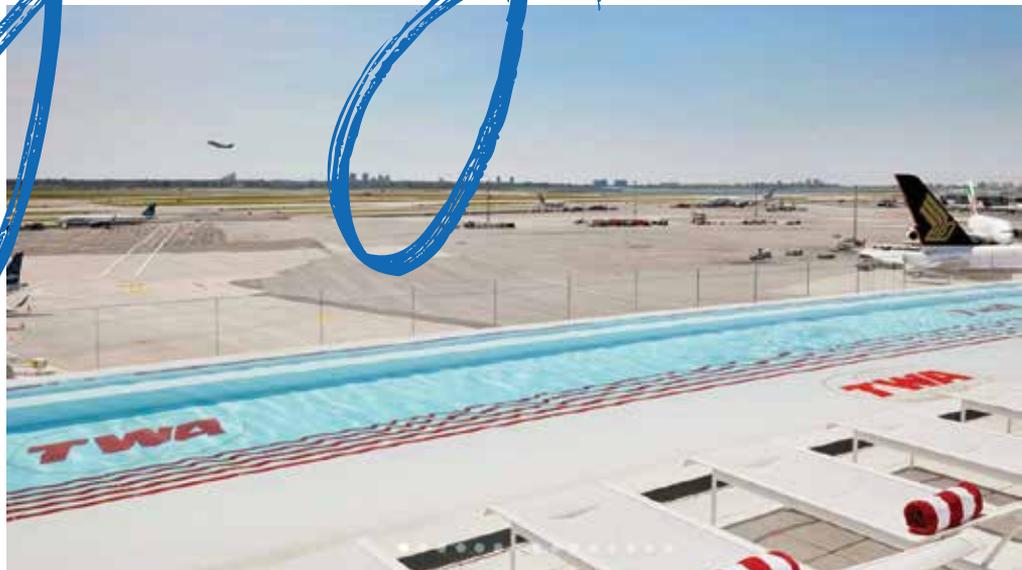
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# Flying

## with flair:

unique airport features from around the world

By Blake Wolfe



JFK International's TWA Hotel has a rooftop infinity pool with runway views.

**W**hile many travellers are all too happy to breeze through an airport en route to their next flight, others prefer to take their time criss-crossing through these facilities.

Whether on an extended layover or just not the type to rush, these travellers are being catered to with a growing array of unique offerings by many airports the world over, far surpassing the dining options and duty-free shopping opportunities that once differentiated one airport from another in the past.

In some cases, the airport itself can be a draw, whether through Internet notoriety or by deliberately cultivating attention through clever marketing (or some-

times a bit of both, in the case of Denver International Airport).

### A rare Jewel

A winner of multiple Best Airport awards from various organizations over the years, Singapore Changi Airport could well be considered a destination in its own right.

While the airport is known for its countless unique attractions—including a four-storey slide, numerous art installations, a wide range of gardens (including those devoted to cacti and sunflowers) and its famed butterfly conservatory in Terminal 3—such concepts have truly found their home at Jewel Changi Airport, a nature-themed entertainment and retail complex which opened this past March.

In addition to features such as a mirror maze and 'sky nets' – for bouncing or walking – the centrepiece of Jewel is an indoor forest, boasting more than 900 trees and thousands of shrubs, with numerous walking trails situated around a central waterfall, the largest such feature in the world.

Pokémon fans should also take note: not only is Jewel home to the only Pokémon Centre – a retail concept offering merchandise based on the popular characters – in Asia found outside of Japan, it's also the only place in the world where one can play Pokémon Explorer, an interactive mobile video game only available at the facility through the airport's app.



The Airbräu microbrewery at Munich Airport

Photo: Flughafen München GmbH



The 'Blue Mustang' is one of many odd artworks at Denver International Airport

Photo courtesy of Denver International Airport

### 'Hop' on a flight

Airport bars are not a new concept, nor is the presence of local craft beers served at their respective region's airports.

However, there's only one airport that can lay claim to having an on-site brewery, found fittingly at Munich Airport.

Opened in 1999, the Airbräu microbrewery serves thirsty travellers eight different beers – three available year-round and five seasonal brews – and allows visitors to watch the brewing process in the airport's main restaurant, either while dining or as part of a tour led by master brewer René Jacobsen. There's also a series of 'Napcabs' at the airport that will allow travellers to catch a few winks after downing their steins.

During the winter months, MUC is also home to a massive skating rink which is ringed by a traditional European Christmas market, allowing chilly travellers the chance to warm up with some hearty German fare and a mug of *gluehwein*.

### Taking the plunge

While there's a few airports where travellers can go for a swim while waiting for their connections, there's only one that will take them back to the 1960s for a quick dip.

Opened this past May, the TWA Hotel at JFK International Airport is the embodiment of the now-defunct airline's Sixties heyday, featuring architecture and décor reminiscent of the decade. →



Photo courtesy of Denver International Airport

Denver International Airport's 'Notre Denver' gargoyles keep watch over baggage

The centrepiece of the development is a rooftop infinity pool and bar overlooking the busiest runways at JFK, where guests can sip on signature cocktails including The Runway, a martini served with a flight wings pin.

In addition, guests can also visit 'Connie,' a restored Lockheed Constellation N8083H aircraft from the 1950s which now functions as a cocktail lounge.

**The truth is out there**

Is there actually something strange happening at Denver International Airport – or is it all a big coincidence?

A quick Google search of DEN will unearth a treasure trove of conspiracy theories – from

**Travellers are being catered to with a growing array of unique offerings.**

aliens to secret societies – many of which are tied to the airport's unique art features.

These include a series of murals depicting the global struggle between war and peace; a pair of 'Notre Denver' gargoyles watching the baggage area; and the 'Blue Mustang' looming over the airport grounds,

a massive statue depicting a hellish steed (complete with glowing red eyes) and notorious for killing its creator when a chunk of the sculpture fell on him during its construction.

Although DEN is yet to welcome its first flying saucer, airport officials have had fun with the stories and struck marketing gold in the process: in October 2016, DEN officials held an exhibition with displays depicting the most outlandish theories, while during a series of renovations in 2018, the airport gently trolled conspiracy theorists with a cheeky campaign stating that the facility was 'remodelling the lizard people's lair' and 'building an Illuminati headquarters,' in addition to adding new shops and restaurants. ●

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\$39 USD <<



## A safe swim

A day at the beach can always be a bit stressful – especially if you have to leave your belongings on a towel or a deckchair. Safego is a portable, light-weight, shock-resistant safe that locks with a code (3-digit custom combination) and a key. It uses a robust, flexible steel cable to securely lock almost any fixed object.

[safego.us](http://safego.us)  
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