

Travel Sentiment and Industry Marketing Begin to Show Signs of Return

As a number of states began allowing businesses to reopen over the weekend, leisure travel sentiment is beginning to show signs of increase and travel brands are preparing to respond. In our most recent U.S. Travel Association Travel Intentions Pulse Survey (TIPS), travelers demonstrated a 7-point increase in likelihood to take a leisure vacation in the next six months. While interest in traveling could be eclipsed by lingering concerns about safety, we know from experience that when consumers get past the fear and look beyond the news cycle, they actually change their minds fairly quickly. So what should travel brands do?

1. **As marketers, we are being given permission to begin marketing again, but we will need to refine tempo, sentiment and messaging as we go forward. Stay true to your brand and listen to what your audience is telling you.**
2. **Continue to build, monitor and maintain relationships with your local communities. Gaining an understanding of local sentiment about tourism in the midst of this pandemic will help craft reopening strategies and build greater trust and advocacy.**
3. **Be empathetic – not just in our words, but in how we operate our organizations. Brands that create greater long-term flexibility now will most likely be rewarded in the long-run.**

U.S. TRAVELER PULSE

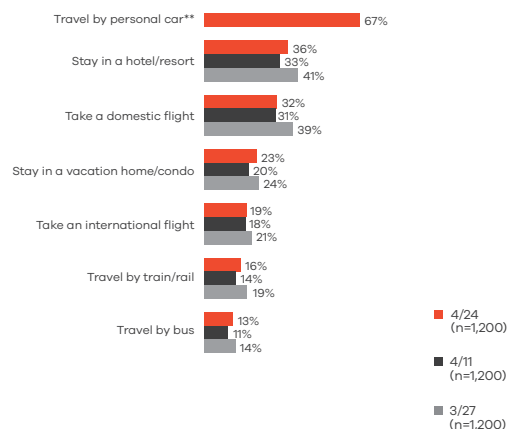
In its third wave released last week, the U.S. Travel Association Travel Intentions Pulse Survey has seen an overall increase in leisure travel sentiment. After dropping noticeably in Wave II, travelers' perceptions of safety across various forms of transportation and travel increased in the most recent wave. This is likely due to the fact that mainstream media was simultaneously covering optimism about "flattening the curve" while this survey was in the field.

- Pent-up demand and desire to travel remain high. Six in ten respondents say they will be eager to travel for leisure once the COVID-19 crisis has passed, up from 54% in Wave II.
- Sentiment around the likelihood of leisure travel continues to lead business travel. Thirty-eight percent believe they are likely to take a domestic leisure trip, up 7 points from Wave II. In addition, 21% believe they will travel for business in the next six months, indicating no change in the last two weeks.
- In Wave II, travelers were slightly less concerned about the threat of contracting COVID-19 than they were just two weeks prior. In particular, the concern about others in their household contracting the virus dropped from 40% in Wave II to 34% in Wave III. And, travelers aged 50–64 continue to be the age group least concerned.
- Data continues to suggest that road trips and travel to destinations closer to home will likely drive much of the immediate recovery as the pandemic fades. The percentage of travelers who agreed that they are more likely to travel by car after COVID-19 passes increased from 35% in Wave II to 47% in Wave III. And, the percentage who said that they are more likely to travel to destinations close to home increased from 36% in Wave II to 42% in this most recent wave. These increases reflect the interests of older travelers especially.

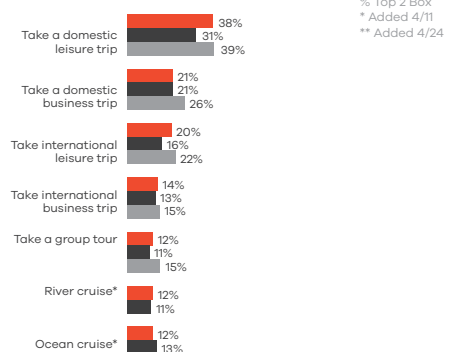
[Click here for the full report.](#)

Likelihood of Engaging in Travel Activities in the Next Six Months

Transportation & Lodging



Trip Type



% Top 2 Box
* Added 4/11
** Added 4/24

TRAVEL BRANDS ARE THE DREAM-MAKERS. NOW IS THE TIME TO LEAN IN.

In the early stages of the crisis, it seemed as if every brand coalesced around the same call: “We are all in this together.” But what began as a voice of reassurance quickly evolved into indistinguishable noise. So what are the next important steps for travel brands?

- **Data suggests that travelers are ready to hear about travel now.**
- **Your brand will be more important than ever in breaking through a cluttered market.**
- **Empathy is as important as inspiration in message strategy.**
- **Calls to action must be conveyed carefully to avoid doing more harm than good.**
- **Greater flexibility now will likely be rewarded in the long run.**

[Read the full article from Stewart Colovin, EVP Brand Strategy, here.](#)

NATIONAL TRAVEL & TOURISM WEEK

Today marks the start of [National Travel & Tourism Week](#), brought to you by the U.S. Travel Association. This annual tradition unites travel and tourism professionals across the country to honor and promote the value travel holds for our economy, our community pride and our personal fulfillment. We know that both travel and technology have the power to connect us to each other and with the broader world around us, so since we're unable to physically go places at the moment, let's connect in the ways we can to celebrate the #SpiritofTravel virtually!

MEASURING COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVES ON TOURISM

The role of the destination marketing organization has evolved over the last few years – and most noticeably in the last eight weeks. During this crisis, we have witnessed incredible examples of these organizations looking even more inward and supporting their local partners and communities in new and exciting ways. And in the absence of tourists, many residents have come to realize just how important the tourism industry is to their business community.

Prior to the pandemic, resident and community surveys were already gaining traction within the industry. As communities begin to reopen, it will be critical to measure, track and respond to local sentiment surrounding tourism in the midst of COVID-19 to understand the perception of tourism and how communities feel about welcoming visitors. Those destinations who are able to survey their residents now will have the benefit of leveraging an accurate benchmark to index sentiment moving forward.

[Contact Chris Davidson, EVP Insights & Strategy for more information on measuring community perspectives.](#)



WEBINARS/PODCASTS

Destinations International Canadian CEO-Only Coronavirus Webinar [Register](#)

Paul Ouimet, Partner & President, MMGY NextFactor
Greg Oates, SVP, Innovation, MMGY NextFactor
Jim McCaul, SVP, Destination Stewardship, MMGY NextFactor
Tuesday, May 5

Phocuswire New Reality Webinar [Register](#)

Important questions for industry leaders to address in troubled times for one of the biggest business sectors in the world.
Clayton Reid, CEO, MMGY Global
Wednesday, May 6

The Future of Tourism Podcast [Listen Here](#)

Greg Oates, SVP, Innovation, MMGY NextFactor

Destinations International U.S. CEO-Only Coronavirus Webinar [Watch Here](#)

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