



MEMO

To:
From: Michele Cota
Date: June 14, 2022
Subject: IPW 2022 Summary

Discover New England (DNE) hosted a double booth during IPW 2022 in Orlando, FL from June 4 – 8. DNE entered the conference with a full schedule of 84 prescheduled appointments which encountered a handful of cancellations due to COVID infections. In the end, the DNE booth hosted 76 appointments with tour operators, receptive operators, media and online platforms.

The following representatives registered within the DNE double booth: Lori Harnois from NH Div of Travel & Tourism Development, Mark Brodeur from Rhode Island Commerce Corp, Sue Henrique from the Connecticut Office of Tourism, Sara Ellis from TTM/DNE UK rep and Michele Cota from DNE. New England had a combined delegation of just over 40 representatives from various aspects of the industry.



NEW ENGLAND DELEGATION IN FRONT OF DNE BOOTH

In general, most European operators are either at or already over 2019 sales volume to the United States. Their clients are undeterred by the higher costs of travel and many are actually upgrading their hotels. Asian markets are still way behind and those DNE met with estimated about 15% of 2019 volume.

The most discussed topics during IPW include:

- *Inventory of hotels and attractions.* Our region is experiencing record domestic drive volume at very high rates which is reducing the incentive for properties to provide rates to wholesalers. As a result, operators have a surge in visitors who want to come to New England but nowhere to put them. As a result, about a dozen operators have said that they are willing to have direct contracts with hotels and properties and all receptives have said that they are willing to work with properties to come to a marketing commission that they are comfortable with.
- *New technology adoption.* Many operators are implementing web updates that enable them to work with dynamic pricing and to implement new travel agent sales tools where agents can build itineraries that bundle experiences available through operators such as Viators. They can hold the rates for a brief time (even dynamic rates to a degree) until the wholesaler approves the booking. From the supplier side, DNE observed greater affordability and feasibility for mobile applications that aggregate existing data/product. These tools may be useful for providing on-the-ground inspiration and services to all travelers in a way that combines and brands the region. Further research will be conducted.
- *Very low inventory for car rentals and RVs.* This is a significant challenge for operators which is limiting many tour inquiries with shorter lead times. The cost of cars and RVs is also influencing where visitors choose to go and they are opting for more experience dense destinations such as the East coast USA vs West which is so spread out.
- *Staff turnover.* This is an issue on both sides of the table in which many hospitality staff are new which makes it difficult for continuation of relationships with operators and many of the operators have new sales staff as well with limited destination awareness.

During Tuesday evening June 7 of the conference, DNE worked with its representation in the UK TTM to host a media dinner at the Osphere Grill in downtown Orlando in which 11 journalists attended. In order to keep the ratio to 1:1, only state partners were able to join. The journalists were able to order off the menu and socialize casually which they all commented on how much they enjoyed “having a nice sit-down dinner for a change.” Each journalist has different projects in the works for New England and will be followed up with accordingly.



DNE HOSTED UK MEDIA DINNER AT OSPHERE GRILL

UK MEDIA ATTENDED DNE HOSTED DINNER			
First Name	Last Name	Delegate Title	Outlet
Kav	Dadfar	Founding Editor	JRNY
Neil	Davey	Freelancer	Freelance for various publications; the week, Nat Geo Food, Sainsburys Magazine
Claire	Dodd	Freelance Journalist	Freelance for various publications; Tonic, the i paper,
Zoey	Goto	Journalist	Freelance for various publications; Mail on Sunday, Telegraph, The Sun, Nat Geo, Junior
Lynn	Houghton	Travel Writer and Photographer	Freelance for various publications: BBC Wildlife, Wanderlust, Nat Geo, Out There
Emily	Johnston	Founder / Editor	www.emilyjanejohnston.com
Mary Moore	Mason	Editor/Editorial Dir. of Essentially America magazine, UK	Essentially America
Emily	Luxton	Travel Blogger	EmilyLuxton.co.uk
Teresa	Gomez	Travel Blogger and Content Creator	broganabroad.com
Lyn	Hughes	Editor in Chief	Wanderlust

In summary, the industry has rebounded stronger than anyone anticipated. The day after IPW concluded, the US Administration announced a discontinuance of the COVID testing mandate for inbound travel. This announcement was highly anticipated and operators expect demand for the USA to surge as a result.

DNE will share leads with state partners who have the authority to redistribute accordingly. DNE will work with state partners to develop New England supplier trainings on how to work within the supply chain and will conduct separate destination trainings for operators and agents to attend.