



CONSUMERS AND PLANNERS REMAIN INTERESTED IN PUERTO RICO

Discover Puerto Rico wants to restart the tourism engine soon

San Juan, Puerto Rico, September 10, 2020- Discover Puerto Rico's research shows that despite the current restrictions in place, consumers and planners remain interested in Puerto Rico and are eagerly waiting to visit the Island. Discover Puerto Rico, the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), continues to educate future visitors about the Health and Safety Guidelines, as well as, maintain Puerto Rico in the consumers' top-of-mind. The focus of the organization is to lead the recovery of the tourism sector, of which the economic impact of COVID-19 on the Island is about \$2.5 billion to-date.

"For us, recovery does not end with reopening tourism, nor does it end with a COVID vaccine. For us, recovery does not end until occupancy rates rebound, planes are full, and restaurants and attractions are busy again. We remain committed to making that a reality, hopefully soon," expressed Brad Dean, CEO of Discover Puerto Rico, during the organization's monthly Industry Update.

Alisha Valentine, Director of Research & Analytics of Discover Puerto Rico, shared details on how airlines are constantly making changes to future schedules based on anticipated demand, "Prior to the Island's closure on July 16, airlines were adding seat capacity from Discover Puerto Rico's target markets. Though seats were cut after the rollback of opening, that airlines are adding seats back into the market before the end of the calendar year is a strong signal that they anticipate demand to Puerto Rico."

Analysis from the industry's leading economists at Tourism Economics shows that between the first week of March and the week of August 15, the United States has lost \$340.5 billion in visitor spending. While tourism accounts for about 25% of the total financial losses, the industry has been the hardest hit in terms of job losses, with 40% coming from the tourism sector. When considering losses by state and territory, Puerto Rico has lost over \$1.75 billion in direct visitor spending, more than 13 U.S. states. Given the additional economic impacts of the lost visitor spending, it is estimated that the total economic impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector to date is about \$2.5 billion.

Destination Analysts, a key DMO data partner, has been tracking consumer sentiment surrounding travel since early March, and more consumers than ever now say they are "ready to travel." For this reason, the marketing efforts are key, while Discover Puerto Rico continues to promote health and safety, it is important to carefully balance the assets of our Island, which our followers expect and look forward to.

"We must be clear that the Island is not open, but we can remind them of the beauty of the Island so that we will be included in their consideration set once we again open for inbound tourism. Beginning August 19th, we resurfaced our "All in Good Time" messaging to blend with health and safety messaging. We produced stunning assets for this campaign at the onset of COVID – some of these were not amplified to their fullest potential, which we will relaunch, and new assets will likely be created depending on the length of time the Island remains closed," explained Leah Chandler, CMO of Discover Puerto Rico.

The DMO will be rolling out in October a new video series called "Sounds Like Puerto Rico," which focuses on language and sound. These videos are being developed by the organization's internal team, to create new content that educates potential visitors about the Island in an entertaining way, sparking inspiration

Contact: Anamari Caratini, Public Affairs Director
787-402-0329 | Anamari.caratini@discoverpuertorico.com



and trip ideas for future visits. Research insights show that COVID-19 restrictions ignited desire for people to learn a new skill, pursue new hobbies, and try new activities. Chandler commented that, “Discover Puerto Rico hosts will take viewers on a journey to discover unique sounds and words to make their trip to Puerto Rico complete. Together with locals they reveal the meaning behind words and how to properly use them, experiencing the true sounds of our Island.”

Discover Puerto Rico’s destination services team and five hotel partners hosted the first virtual destination experience, focused on the Convention Center District, el Distrito and surrounding hotels. A total of 120 meeting planners joined the group to learn why Puerto Rico would be a good choice for their upcoming events and how the hosts plan to keep their attendees safe. Since the crisis began, the sales team has seen more than 82,000 rooms requested and have confirmed nearly 17,000 rooms for \$16M in economic impact.

“The COVID pandemic has devastated our industry in ways no one could have anticipated. Like you, we are eager to reopen tourism to off-island visitors and resume promoting and selling Puerto Rico. But none of us can ignore the economic battle which lies ahead, one we are committed to winning with you and for you. At Discover Puerto Rico, we will continue to help you put people back to work as soon as it’s possible to do so. When the time is right to resume promotion of tourism, we will act swiftly, and aggressively, to restart the tourism engine as quickly as possible,” finalized Dean.

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About Discover Puerto Rico

Discover Puerto Rico is an established private, not for-profit Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) whose mission is to make Puerto Rico visible to the world as a premier travel destination. The DMO brings prosperity to the people of Puerto Rico by collaboratively positioning the Island's diversity and uniqueness for leisure, business and events. It is responsible for all global marketing, sales and promotion of the destination and works collaboratively with key local governmental and non-governmental players throughout Puerto Rico's visitor economy and community at large, to empower economic growth. You can visit us at DiscoverPuertoRico.com.

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