



DISCOVER PUERTO RICO PRESENTS PLAN FOR COMEBACK AFTER CRISIS

San Juan, Puerto Rico, April 2, 2020- Discover Puerto Rico (DPR) hosted a virtual industry update regarding the effects of COVID-19 on the Puerto Rican tourism sector, and how the organization is going to help to lead the recovery. Discover Puerto Rico shared what the team has been doing amidst the emergency and provided research that has guided specific strategies that will help our destination have a quicker turnaround than other destinations, bringing back jobs in this sector that have been affected by the crisis.

“The tourism sector will have a new normal after this pandemic is stabilized, and many opportunities will arise. Even though the general sentiment of traveler today is fear, we are confident that Puerto Rico offers what travelers are looking for when the time is right. With the extreme measures taken by our government early in the crisis, we are better positioned than other destinations,” expressed Brad Dean, CEO of Discover Puerto Rico.

Through our research we can see that Puerto Rico’s drop in occupancy has been swifter and more severe than the United States’ average, seeing -71% in PR versus -56% in the U.S. Mainland. Because the island has many luxury and upscale hotels, it is perceived that the impact week-over-week is also higher than the U.S. average, because those hotels got the biggest hit during the initial weeks. Pre-earthquakes, both leisure and group bookings were ahead of 2019 pace. Even though there was a decline in the weeks post-earthquake, bookings were running above 2019 until the first week of March, seeing the sharp declines in future bookings in the last two weeks.

Destination Analysts conducted a research monitoring traveler behavior in response to COVID-19, where 47% had decided to do a “staycation” this year, while 36% have tentative trips planned for July and August. In another survey, also conducted by Destination Analysts, 63% of American travelers “Agree” or “strongly agree” that they missed traveling and can’t wait to travel again. For this reason, Puerto Rico as a destination, should promote the Island with more intensity.

Discover Puerto Rico’s CMO, Leah Chandler, discussed the COVID-19 Action Plan (CAP), which was adapted and implemented specifically in early March. The CAP is divided into four phases: Impact, Regroup, Rebound, and New Normal. In the first phase the DMO proactively shared safety measures put in place by the government, but in a positive light, to position the destination as leading by example and clarify any potential inaccuracies with travelers, media, meeting planners and travel advisors. In the second phase, which we are in right now, the DMO responsibly delivers messaging and smart activations that allude to the current global circumstances and local mandates but keeps Puerto Rico top of mind. In the last two phases, the organization will utilize research to guide marketing efforts and timing and drive immediate travel messages.

“It is crucial for us to keep our destination top of mind amidst the new realities. This is the time to get creative and push newsworthy content to keep Puerto Rico in consumers’ consideration despite the current travel limitations. If people can’t go to Puerto Rico, we will bring Puerto Rico to them,” commented Chandler during the industry update.

Discover Puerto Rico plans to aggressively re-enter the market with revised messaging to drive awareness and keep Puerto Rico top-of-mind. We are developing a new campaign, which will drive awareness, inspire the audience in this time of uncertainty, incite immediate action, and generate demand.

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



In the MICE and leisure sales, the team presented efforts including engagement and customer acquisition. Their focus is on postponing bookings instead of cancelling, re-booking cancelled reservations and giving rewards through loyalty programs, points & airline miles.

“The Discover Puerto Rico team will continue working to keep our destination in the top of mind of travelers. We have shown the world that we come back from crisis stronger each time, and this will be no exception,” stated Dean.

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About Discover Puerto Rico

Discover Puerto Rico is a newly 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 promoting the Island’s diversity and uniqueness for leisure and business travel, 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. To discover all the beauty the Island has to offer, visit [DiscoverPuertoRico.com](https://www.discoverpuertorico.com).