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Oman Air Marks A Successful Partaking At AxCel London A Report On World Travel Market 2008

Date: 23 Nov 2008



The World Travel Market (WTM)'s 2008 edition that concluded on November 14, 2008 in London was a huge success. The four-day trade show attracted more than 50,500 exhibitors and visitors from global markets around the world representing over 200 countries and regions, as well as the largest press attendance at any event in the UK - 3000 international media, making it one of the most popular tourism promotion exhibitions in the world. Results reflect growing evidence that more exhibitors are conducting business with other exhibitors during the four days, with a further rise in the number of exhibiting personnel. Last year, independent research showed that £9 billion (US\$18.5 billion) of business was conducted between exhibitors alone at the London event.

Oman Air said that they have signified their prospect strategies and objectives, in course of the forthcoming expansion of their operations. "Each day was an important business day for us at the event. The quality of meetings has been good and up to our expectations. The information provided by the buyers has been useful, and we have been able to conduct good business. Oman Air's stand in which was designed to capture the essence of the Sultanate, its cultural heritage also the carrier's future aspiration, did attract massive attention."

An invitation was extended for Oman Air officials to attend 'The World Travel Market's Captains of Industry Lunch' sponsored by Oman Tourist Office in UK on the opening day, where more than 100 senior industry leaders were present. HE Mohammed bin Hamoud al Toobi, Under-Secretary of the Tourism gave a speech where he highlighted the enormous potential that Oman has for tourism, the country's great beauty, and culture, the diverse history, right up to the achievements of the present age. HE Al Toobi also briefed the gathering on the marketing campaign recently launched jointly by Oman Air and the Ministry of Tourism in UK, stressing the importance of the UK market to Oman. The event also featured a face-to-face session between Manny Fontenla-Novoa, Chief Executive of Thomas Cook, and Michael East, Managing Director of Eastcastle Management Group, who focused on the issues facing the industry in 2009. The assembly concluded with a question and answer session.



The Under Secretary of the Ministry of Tourism, His Excellency, Mohammed bin Hamoud Al Toobi, awarded Oman Air with a memento in appreciation for the efforts put up by the national carrier in promoting the country's tourism potential and also for spreading awareness about Oman to international travelers abroad. The CEO of Oman Air Mr. Peter Hill at the Ministry of Tourism pavilion at the WTM venue received the memento.

This year's event included the WTM Global Trends Report launched at the Forecast Forum, the UNWTO Minister's Summit, WTM World Responsible Tourism Day (WTM WRTD), a live interview with

Ed Fuller, CEO Marriott Hotels and the BBC's Stephen Sackur, the WTM Global Economic Forum with keynote speaker, Prof Dr Norbert Walter, Chief Economist Deutsche Bank Group, an extended Responsible Tourism programme and exhibitor to exhibitor networking initiatives.

More than 100 government Tourism Ministers and senior aides met at World Travel Market this year to examine the impact of the current economic meltdown. They looked at its impact on the pressing global industry issues of poverty reduction, sustainability, and climate change. Francesco Frangialli, the retiring secretary-general of the World Tourism Organisation said at the Ministers' Summit that there would be no tsunami in tourism because the industry would survive on its own steam. He added that for 2008, the outlook is not negative. International arrivals up to the end of August registered a steady increase of 3.8 per cent on an annual basis. Whatever happens, there will be positive growth in real terms. In addition, he said, "The need to travel, to engage in leisure, to go on holidays, is now so deeply ingrained in the minds of people that consumers do whatever they can to continue to do so."

Tourism ministers from around the world have agreed to set up a new United Nations-backed committee to consider how to respond both to the downturn in international travel as a result of the global financial crisis and the impact of climate change. At a summit in London, the ministers announced the establishment of a UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Resilience Committee after concluding that the tourism sector needs increased collaboration, greater real-time market information and more innovation. Enhanced public-private cooperation has also been identified as critical to the health of the tourism industry as it copes with the recent slowdown in international travel, according to a press release issued by UNWTO.

In its second year, WTM World Responsible Tourism Day (WTM WRTD), in association with the UNWTO and supported by leading international industry associations such as PATA and the World Travel & Tourism Council once again provided the travel industry with a full day of hard-hitting truths to increase awareness about responsible tourism, examining in detail just how companies can change and play a more responsible role within the industry. Other sessions throughout the day focused on the role that operators and hoteliers can and should be playing in developing the sustainable tourism agenda and the issues they can impact and influence.

UNWTO reported recently in its regular barometer that international tourist arrival numbers slowed down during the northern summer this year - with growth slipping below 2 per cent in June, July and August - after averaging 5.7 per cent growth between January and April. The agency added that its initial forecasts indicated that there will be an "even more modest performance" in the tourism sector in 2009 as the effects of the global financial crisis continue to take their toll, with many consumers finding that their travel budgets are being squeezed. But overall growth for 2008 is still projected to reach about 2 per cent, thanks in part to ongoing robust growth in the Middle East and a better-than-expected performance in the Americas. Europe, the Asia-Pacific, and Africa have recorded weaker results. Between January and August this year, 642 million international arrivals were counted, a rise of 23 million on the same period last year.

2008 World Travel Market has attracted more travel technology exhibitors than ever and produced the most comprehensive programme of conferences and seminars to help businesses get to grips with the latest from the digital world. One of the key areas of rapid change is mobile technology, which World Travel Market has identified as potentially the most important new platform for the future of the travel industry. Technology and Online Travel at WTM has become the fastest growing and fastest selling area. In addition, there was a two-day Travel Technology at WTM seminar programme from Genesys about making the most of the web, which included a presentation from the Google travel team.



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