



## Benefits of Travel vs. Staycations

### Background

Over the past several months there has been increased media coverage of staycations – a vacation at home or close to home. The travel industry must be proactive in shaping a message that helps reinforce the notion of travel as a birthright and encourages Americans to take a vacation and get away from the stresses of every day life. For the past several months, the Travel Industry Association has been highlighting numerous travel trend surveys available that outline the mental and physical health benefits of planning and taking a vacation with family, friends or a significant other.

### Key Data

- One out of four American leisure travelers believe a vacation is a birthright (24%).
- Even the anticipation of vacation travel generates an increase in positive feelings about one's life as a whole, family, economic situation, and health.
- Travelers rate their overall health one full point higher (on a scale of 1 to 5) while on vacation.
- They also get three times more deep sleep after their vacation and sleep almost 20 additional minutes after their vacation.
- Research by the Mayo Clinic found that stress leads to a fight or flight response, which, unchecked for too long, can cause health effects that include anxiety, irritability, insomnia and depression. The conclusion was that, among other things, Americans need to take a mini-vacation from the usual routine.
- Life satisfaction also increases during vacation, and these effects continue after returning home, according to a study of employees at the University of Tennessee.
- Rather than detracting from work, vacationing and having a fulfilling life outside of work enhance business accomplishments.
- An inability to take a break can lead to stress, burnout, and a greater likelihood of feeling betrayed and angry when things do not go well at work.

For more information, visit [www.tia.org/pressmedia/benefits](http://www.tia.org/pressmedia/benefits).

## Strategy & Tactics

While some in the travel industry are being opportunistic in encouraging local participation in their attractions and restaurants, promoting the benefits of taking a trip to key non-local markets is important.

Develop message points to amplify the notion of travel as a birthright, and encourage travel for vacation.

- Include in press materials and external speeches when appropriate.
- Provide leaders with message points for external use.
- Work across the industry to support broader inclusion of these messages in promotional initiatives.

## Key Messages

- There's no better time than now to break away from the stresses of every day life to take a vacation and change your scenery. According to a survey by travel industry expert Peter Yesawich, getting away from home is a vital part of taking a break.
- In our fast-paced, pressure-packed, 24/7 world, vacation getaways are now more important than ever. They provide an opportunity to re-energize so we can return to our lives refreshed.
- Fortunately, Americans feel that vacations are a birthright and they will plan and save to ensure that they have quality time with their family. The economy has an effect on where families plan to take their vacations, but they will not cancel planned vacations. Often families opt for a closer destination, a shorter trip or search for a destination that provides greater value for their dollar.

## Q & A

### What do you think of the staycation concept?

A recent study has revealed that "staycations," or home-based vacations taken as an alternative to vacations that otherwise would have been taken out of town, are planned by only 9% of active leisure travelers through early 2009. It also suggests that many Americans still plan to "get away" even if their destination is closer to home.

### Why do you think it is important to take a vacation?

In our fast-paced, pressure-packed, 24/7 world, vacation getaways are now more important than ever and in many ways are embraced as a birthright. They provide an opportunity to re-energize so we can return to our lives refreshed.

### What are you doing to encourage people to travel?

We understand that Americans view travel as a birthright and continue promoting new vacation options and the enormous benefit and value of travel. Among the promotions:

- Trips on one tank of gas
- Gas vouchers for an overnight stay
- Weekend getaway packages
- Increased marketing/promotion in target markets/drive markets

## How can you encourage people to take a vacation when they can't afford it?

A recent [Travelocity](#) survey of year-over-year overall travel costs comparing July 2008 and July 2007 revealed:

- In 14 U.S. cities, the price increase of a flight and five-night hotel stay was less than \$50.
- In a few destinations, the cost of the trip actually decreased or remained flat.
- While airfare was generally more expensive, hotel average daily rates have remained flat or decreased.
- There are many ways a savvy traveler can offset any additional costs, no matter how minimal. Travelers should price out the cost of their entire vacation before making a decision on whether or not it is really too expensive.

Chris McGinnis, editor, [Expedia Travel Trendwatch](#), says: ""Frankly, the notion that Americans are staying home this summer is just plain wrong. According to our data, people have again taken to the roads and skies this season and they're taking advantage of budget-saving opportunities along the way."

A large variety of affordable options can be found across the country. Hotels, rental car companies, tour operators and the like are very in tune with what drives demand and offer a range of special offers to stimulate travel.

Travel columnist [Chris Elliott](#) wrote on August 18: "The price of a real vacation is now a bargain. A steal, actually... So between now and the holidays — the traditional off-season for a lot of vacation hotspots — here's your chance to make up for lost time. The deals will be good. Really good."

[Expedia](#) also says there are deals to be found for the upcoming holiday season. Fare searches on several high-volume routes show that average roundtrip holiday (Thanksgiving/Christmas) fares are still reasonable for peak days and even more reasonable for those who are willing to travel on non-peak days. The site's suggestion: "Book early to save -- a July 2008 Expedia poll revealed that 14 percent of U.S. adults (approximately 32 million people, according to the Census Bureau) plan to travel by air during the upcoming holiday season. Of those who have not already made plans, most (68 percent) plan to make their airline reservations in September or October.