

Your March 2013 Tourism & Hospitality Newsflash!

Weekly Inbound & Outbound Travel to 17 Feb 2013

International Visitor Arrivals

Total visitor arrivals are up 6.3% compared to the same four week period last year.

Ups: Japan 11%, China 63%, Singapore 35%, Australia 1%, USA 8%, Canada 1%

Downs: UK -6%, Malaysia -24%, Korea -32%

Unchanged: Germany

OUTBOUND travel

NZ Resident Departures (short-term overseas trips)

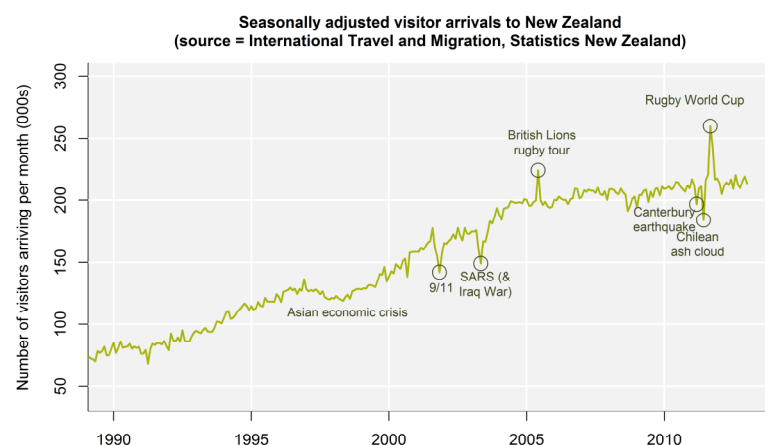
Total NZ trips abroad are down 1.2% compared to the same four week period last year.

Ups: Thailand 1%, USA 7%, Cook Islands 4%, China 97%, Fiji 8%, Samoa 2%, Malaysia 41%

Downs: Australia -8%, UK -11%, India -4%

Source: MED NZ

International visitor arrivals decline 2% for year ended January 2013 There were 2.558 million visitor arrivals to New Zealand in the January 2013 year. This was down 2% from the January 2012 year (2.603 million), which was boosted by visitor arrivals for the Rugby World Cup. However, the 2013 figure was up one per cent compared to the January 2011 year. **Annual visitor arrivals from China were up 25 per cent (38,100) from the January 2012 year, countering the decline in visitor arrivals from the United Kingdom (down 38,600).** There continue to be significant shifts in the purpose of visits. Holidaymakers decreased 48,900 when compared to the January 2012 year, while travellers visiting friends and relatives increased 10,800. This is due, at least in part, to increasing numbers of New Zealanders living in Australia returning to visit friends and relatives.



Source: MED NZ

563 million international visitor arrivals in the year ending October 2012. This is a 1% decrease on the same period in 2011.

3.3 million visitors are forecast to arrive in 2018, an increase of 28%. Visitor expenditure is set to grow to \$6.3 billion in 2018, an increase of 9% from 2011.

\$23.4 billion were the total tourism earnings in the year ending March 2012. This is an

increase of 2.4% from the previous year.

\$9.6 billion were the earnings generated by international visitors, an increase of 1.6% in year ending March 2012. International visitor expenditure to the year ending March 2012 represents 15.4% of the total export earnings (\$62.2 billion). Tourism is New Zealand's second largest export earner, following dairy (\$12.7 billion or 20.4% of exports)

\$13.8 billion were the earnings generated by the domestic tourism sector in the year ending March 2012, an increase of 3% on the year ending March 2011. This represents 59% of total tourism expenditure.

39.2% was the increase in Chinese visitor arrivals in the year ending October 2012.

There were 191,488 Chinese visitors over this period, compared with 137,604 in the same period in 2011.

Source: TIA

Why is the China market so important for NZ? China is New Zealand's fastest growing market for international visitors, rapidly overtaking other key markets to become our second largest source of visitor revenue and third largest in terms of arrivals. In the year ended September 2012, **Chinese arrivals grew by 38% to reach 187,000, while expenditure by Chinese visitors reached \$555 million.** China's relative importance to New Zealand has been dramatically increased with the onset of global economic difficulties, which are expected to suppress demand from New Zealand's other long haul visitor markets for some time. The New Zealand Tourism forecasts for 2012-2018 show that Chinese visitor arrivals are expected to grow more strongly than total visitor expenditure.

Currently Chinese visitors spend an average of \$3300 when they visit NZ, but this spend is forecast to fall almost continually over the coming years to around \$1500 in 2020, due to the changes in the visitor mix. Chinese visitors do not stay for very long when they visit New Zealand. Although in the year ending September 2012, the average length of stay was 16.6 days, half of Chinese visitors actually only spend four days in the country.

Source: MBIE, International Visitor Survey

Hotels & Motels should not hide their phone numbers and email addressesA new trend I'm noticing is that many hotel marketers are making it increasingly difficult to find the hotel 0800 and local phone numbers, as well as email addresses. For example, in conducting a random spot-check of five of the major hotel brands, three out of the five "brand.com" websites I visited did not have their 0800 reservations number posted on the front page. A fourth brand did have its 0800 number posted, but it was a vanity number only and did not show the numerical version. Also, it was posted in a very small font that was hard to read on a laptop, let alone a smartphone display.

Source: Doug Kennedy

It's true: more expensive hotels charge more for Wi-Fi When you plan a vacation you usually remember to budget for things like hotel, travel, meals and perhaps your coffee addiction. But do you remember to factor in charges for Wi-Fi? Sure, you can get free Wi-Fi at places like Starbucks and maybe McDonalds, depending on what city you're in. But who wants to leave the hotel room to get online? You want Wi-Fi in your room and you want everyone in the room to be able to use it. Gogobot recently conducted a survey of hotels and confirms what we've all been thinking - the more expensive hotels charged the most for Wi-Fi access. More than that, the Wi-Fi was at times spotty and unreliable. "There is no correlation

between the amount you pay and the quality you get. Tether-less travel is here to stay and many people, especially families, rely on their iPhone or iPad to manage their itinerary. Long gone are the days where you could connect using ethernet. The survey of UK-based hotels found guests are typically being charged more for Wi-Fi in higher end hotels, while less expensive hotels offer it as a free service. For instance, in the UK, the Hilton charges £15 per day (or around \$23) for Wi-Fi, while smaller boutique or independent hotels charge either nothing or £5 to £8 per day.

Source: Andrea Smith

Hottest Ice Hotels in the World Adventure seekers and nature lovers can spend the night at one of these incredibly detailed hotels, which boast first-class suites made from snow and ice.

1. ICEHOTEL Jukkasjärvi, Sweden, located in a small Swedish village north of the Arctic Circle offers both "warm" and "cold" accommodations. Guests in the cold rooms sleep bundled up in thermal sleeping bags while surrounded by artwork crafted from snow and ice. Each year, the igloo gallery-suites melt away and are rebuilt.

2. Hôtel de Glace, which is home to 44 rooms and theme suits, is open from the beginning of January to the end of March. The hotel is made and remade with 500 tons of ice and 15,000 tons of snow every year. Guests can enjoy cocktails in sparkling glasses made entirely of ice, and the room temperature stays between 23 and 27 degrees Fahrenheit.

3. The Sorrisniva Igloo Hotel, Sorrisniva, Alta, Norway is home to an ice chapel and an ice bar in addition to its 80 beds. Stunning ice sculptures are on display throughout the hotel, which is open from January until mid-April. There is a heated service building right next door, so you are never far from the sauna. If you visit, make sure to book a snowmobile safari to get the most out of your beautiful surroundings.

4. Kirkenes Snowhotel, Kirkenes, Norway, located near the Russian border, this cool hotel has 40 rooms, a chapel and a bar, all of which are crafted every year from snow and ice. Each suite has a different theme, and reindeer fur keeps you warm in a queen or king-size bed. Dine on Arctic cuisine at a nearby restaurant and, while in the area, make sure you go on a king crab safari.

Source: Fox News

Hotels Take Fitness Amenities to the Great Outdoors From sightseeing city runs and nature hikes down country trails to surfing sessions, hotels are luring leisure and business clients outside their climate-controlled rooms for outdoor activities to keep fit while traveling for business or pleasure. Morning runs, afternoon power walks and bicycle rides are fast becoming standard fare for hotels in urban centres, with the cityscape dictating the route. **In cities with a strong running population, managers or assistant managers will lead the morning run.** Many U.S. hotels also offer bicycle borrowing, particularly in cities such as San Diego, California, and Washington, D.C., and New York City. Studies have shown that exercising outdoors can offer advantages over indoor, gym-based fitness routines. **British researchers found that natural environments may increase activity levels with less perceived exertion, reduce stress and improve mood.**

Source: Dorene Internicola

Why You Should Have a Responsive WebsiteIf you run a **hotel/motel/inn/b&b/lodge/holiday park/backpackers or any tourism accommodation property** these days, you no doubt either have a website or would like to have a website. In this digital age, it is an essential part of your business to have a website where people can get more information about your offerings. Without a website, you could be losing out on a very large chunk of potential customers. But, I'm not going to talk about the merits of having a

website today. No, today I want to talk about responsive web design, or "mobile ready" web design if you will. Let's just assume you already have a website or are serious about getting one. **A very important thing you must consider is how your website is presented on a mobile device (e.g., smartphone, tablet). These days we do almost everything with our mobile devices, from checking our bank statement to finding a good restaurant for dinner. Recent studies have shown that a large amount of travellers these days plan, book, and track their travels abroad on the internet, and mobile devices have made this so much easier. With just a couple taps you can setup a flight, rent a car, and even book a hotel room.** Embracing mobile travellers with a responsive website design can make a huge difference for your business. Responsive web design is a web design approach **aimed at crafting sites to provide an optimal viewing experience-easy reading and navigation with a minimum of resizing, panning, and scrolling-across a wide range of devices (from desktop computer monitors to mobile phones). Without a responsive design most current mobile devices will simply either shrink a full-page design to fit within its screen boundaries, or zoom in on a specific part of the page.** This is not very desirable from a usability standpoint.

Source: Dumitru Brinzan

The 'Hotel' That's Like Being Homeless DON'T expect a chocolate on your pillow at this hotel. Actually don't expect a pillow at all. Fancy spending the night on this park bench? You can for \$10. Faktum hotels in Gothenburg is offering people the chance to spend the night like a homeless person. And it will cost you \$10. "We have chosen ten of the places that they might spend the night and made it possible to book them just like any hotel," the Faktum hotels website says. Tourists can choose to sleep in Haga park with a sleeping bag and a bed of leaves. Other options include under a tram line, on a park bench and underneath a football stadium. Gothenburg has about 3400 homeless people. OK, so it's not a real hotel. But the accommodation options are real. All of the money raised will go to supporting homeless and disadvantaged people in the city. "We work to arouse debate and opinion about homelessness and isolation, but above all we provide those most in need with an occupation" the company says on its website.

Source: News.com.au

Social Media: 7 Ways to Handle a Negative Comment If your business has a social media presence, at some point you'll have to deal with negative feedback. How you and your business handle it will go a long way toward either creating a new customer or driving a potential sale away.

1. Address the comment efficiently. Most negative feedback falls into one of four categories: a business error, a misunderstanding, a negative comment or spam. Once you identify the category of the complaint, it will be easier to come up with a positive solution that directly addresses it.

2. Don't be defensive. When faced with a negative comment, don't consider it a reflection on you personally or on your business. Avoid being defensive when handling the comment. A defensive reaction from you can quickly escalate the issue. It's best to be accommodating, polite and truly listen to the person complaining.

3. Own up to your mistake. If your business made a mistake, don't hide it. The last thing you want to do is delete the comment or ignore it. Mistakes happen, and the best way to get past them is to deal with them head on. First recognize the complaint, apologize publicly and then take the conversation off the social media page to resolve the issue.

4. Offer an incentive. When it comes to handling complaints, "Sometimes you have to pour on a lot of sugar ... to get to that positive. But it's so worth it." If the person isn't satisfied with your explanation, you can try offering a business service or a discount to calm the situation

and, hopefully, convert the complainer to a satisfied customer.

5. Ask for an explanation. If someone leaves a negative comment that doesn't look like an error on the business's part or a misunderstanding, you still need to address the comment. "What do you feel I did wrong?" and handle the situation from there. You also could ask the customer what would be a positive resolution-again, it comes down to basic customer service. If the customer isn't satisfied with any proposed resolutions, apologize and offer a refund.

6. Deal with spam too. Sometimes a negative comment is completely without merit or is an attempt by someone associated with a competitor to damage your business's reputation. If this happens, address it as if it was a legitimate complaint, apologize for the perceived mistake and take the conversation offline to address the issue.

7. Know what's being said. Even if your business doesn't have a dedicated social media presence, you still need to know what people are saying about your company on other review sites. By simply plugging your company's name into Google, you'll be able to see the comments that are out there. Set up alerts through Google and other online tools to keep on top of the comments.

Source: Linda Doell