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28 September, 2009

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Bed bank claims late sales surge



A late summer sales surge in June, July and August helped buoy sales for bedbank youtravel.com.

The average sales value was up 12% over summer 2008 thanks to currency fluctuations.

Sales and marketing director Paul Riches said: "We finished summer 2009 virtually flat - up slightly - against last summer, however considering the doom and gloom predictions from pundits earlier in the year this is quite an achievement."

The fact that sales volumes were equal to last year illustrates the importance of people's annual holiday despite the recession, he claimed.

"It's also in indicator that as a company we have matured and have a foothold as a major player within the industry. We are now three years old and have reached maturity and scale," Riches added.

The company euro currency countries hold their own throughout the summer with traditional favourite Majorca the top seller. The Algarve was number four followed by Rhodes, Costa Blanca, Crete and the Costa del Sol.

"Turkey unsurprisingly had a strong year, largely due to the strength of the pound offering great value in resort, with Dalaman coming in as the third best seller and Bodrum at number 10," said Riches.

"Egyptian resorts also performed well proving that they're contenders as year-round destinations, not just for the winter months. Sharm el Sheikh was in second place of the top selling list."

The Greek Islands were the fastest growing destinations, aided by youtravel.com's partnership

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with new luxury hotel group, Aquis Hotels and Resorts.

Top of the list was the Algarve.

Riches said: "This illustrates that when money is tight people are often looking for 'safe' destinations that they know well and are comfortable with – rather than taking a gamble on somewhere new. So a return to old favourites was somewhat predictable.

"Those destinations with a clear currency advantage though could not be ignored by thousands of Brits. Croatia, Turkey and Tunisia all featured in the fastest growing list – cementing their places in the hotspot list for the British traveller."

Bookings for winter 2009/10 are down 10% against the same time last year.

But Riches said: "With such a late booking summer a knock-on effect to the winter was inevitable, however we are seeing a one per cent swing every week for the winter, i.e. we were 11% down for winter last week, 10% this week. We expect to be at least on par with last year as we enter the season."

Egypt and the Canary Islands are taking the lion's share of the early winter booking market.

"Guaranteed sunshine without having to travel long-haul is seemingly the driving factor – Egypt has the edge on booking volumes presumably due to the currency exchange," said Riches.

"However eurozone have made the top ten fastest growing chart, meaning that travellers are not willing to disregard destinations on the currency issue – plus all these destinations have great flight connections to mainstream and regional airports, another important factor."

Forward bookings for summer 2010 are down around 10% year-on-year.

"The late booking trend for this summer and winter has had a natural effect on those booking ahead for next year. Families are holding off to see how their budgets look – this will have a major impact on the industry as these bookings used to be relied upon to come in at the end of the summer holidays, this is no longer the case," said Riches.

"Corfu looks set to be a popular choice for next summer while favourites like the Algarve, Costa Blanca, Tenerife and Majorca are coming through strongly – perhaps because people are hoping that the euro will weaken against the pound, but most likely because of their perennial popularity and if people didn't go this year they will want to next year."

Egypt and Turkey are showing strongly for next year thanks to good value for money – and those who went this summer are likely to want to revisit to explore more.

**SUMMER 2009: Top selling resorts for
youtravel.com**

RANK	RESORT
1	Majorca
2	Sharm el Sheikh
3	Dalaman
4	Algarve
5	Rhodes
6	Crete
7	Costa Blanca
8	Costa del Sol
9	Tenerife
10	Bodrum

SUMMER 2009: Fastest-growing resorts for youtravel.com

RANK	RESORT	% DIFFERENCE YOY
1	Algarve	110%
2	Dubrovnik Riviera	76%
3	Hurghada	75%
4	Corfu	52%
5	Crete	38%
6	Kos	36%
7	Rhodes	35%
8	Halkidiki	32%
9	Tunisia	29%
10	Malta	27%

WINTER 2009-10: Top sellers for youtravel.com

RANK	RESORT
1	Sharm el Sheikh
2	Benidorm
3	Hurghada
4	Tenerife
5	Lanzarote
6	Gran Canaria
7	Algarve
8	Cyprus
9	Costa del Sol
10	Tunisia

WINTER 2009-10: Fastest-growing destinations for youtravel.com

RANK	RESORT	% DIFFERENCE YOY
1	Tunisia	+389%
2	Lanzarote	+141%
3	Costa del Sol	+97%
4	Algarve	+72%
5	Gran Canaria	+54%
6	Sharm el Sheikh	+52%
7	Hurghada	+30%
8	Fuerteventura	+17%
9	Cyprus	+7%
10	Costa Blanca	+5%

SUMMER 2010: Top sellers for youtravel.com

RANK	RESORT
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1	Algarve
2	Corfu
3	Sharm el Sheikh
4	Dalaman
5	Hurghada
6	Costa Blanca
7	Majorca
8	Corfu
9	Fuerteventura
10	Tenerife

by Phil Davies

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