

GIK Travel Report 2021/22

Hamburg, 1st July, 2021 - The new Travel Report from the "Gesellschaft für integrierte Kommunikationsforschung" (Association for Integrated Communication Research - GIK) looks at developments on the German travel market from 2020 to 2022. The publication takes a look back and, above all, forward: What awaits the travel market in 2021 and 2022? How can travel communication between longing on the one hand and security on the other be successfully managed? Which target groups should the travel industry focus on now and in the coming season?

The Corona pandemic has hit the travel industry hard. This is true both for the industry, who has plenty of restrictions due to lockdowns, contact restrictions and travel warnings, and for consumers, whose habits and certainties have been shaken. This raises questions about further developments in the travel market. Using long-term data from b4p (best for planning) and b4t (best for tracking) Brands and b4t Creative, as well as the latest data from b4p trends, GIK takes a fundamental look at the prospects for the restart and "the new normal" in travel.

The travel champions' reaction

Before Corona, there was only one direction for Germans when it came to travel: up. For Germany, the world's travel champion, both - interest in travel and the actual number of travelers - have continued to increase in recent years. However, with the onset of Corona, travel behavior has radically changed: 55% of people did not travel at all in 2020 and three quarters (73%) of those who traveled despite Corona did so less than before. For 2/3 of respondents the reason for travel abstinence was Corona.

Camping as a safe option

No wonder then, that camping as a "Corona-safe" travel option has found new supporters in the past year: Camping with a car and tent is the most common. 40% of respondents did so in 2020. Camping trips by motorhome saw the most entrants in percentage terms. And the enthusiasm for this type of vacation continues: At the beginning of 2021, according to b4p trends, 24% of respondents said they could imagine buying a motorhome, i.e. they wanted to stick with camping permanently.

Between reason and wanderlust

The Germans' desire to travel is unbroken, even if the experiences of 2020 still run deep. Consumers certainly don't want to be stuck with a trip canceled due to Corona, and many are still concerned about the incidence of infections at their vacation destinations. Accordingly, there is still restraint when it comes to concrete travel bookings for 2021: although 82% (finally) want to travel again in 2021, only 13% have already booked a vacation for 2021. This means that 69% of those who actually want to travel have not yet made a booking. In general, booking behavior in 2021 will be dominated by short-termism and security: At 39%, the vacation home is in first place among the types of accommodation. From 2022, however, things really take off again: hotels and clubs are once again accommodation No. 1 and cruise tourism is also regaining popularity.

In 2022, the respondents plan to pursue their desire to travel again without restriction. While city breaks will be the most popular type of travel in 2021, ahead of beach vacations - a phenomenon that has never occurred before according to b4p 2013-2020 - beach vacations will regain their top position in the coming year. Educational tours and round trips will also boom again in 2022. They are still being avoided (probably because of the many personal contacts in highly visited places).

The same applies to vacations including health and wellness with sauna, where close contacts cannot be avoided.

Advertising - Focus on dreams or security?

Two central marketing strategies for the travel industry can be derived from this current planning and booking behavior of Germans: In 2021, perceived safety aspects such as hygiene concepts or medical care in the vacation destination should be the focus of communication for the travel offer in order to reassure travelers, some of whom are worried, and thus successfully convince them to book in the end. After all, the two-thirds of Germans who are keen to travel and have not yet made a booking for 2021 must be won over as customers. With regard to 2022, on the other hand, it is more a matter of inspiring people's desire for their (long-distance) travel dreams now and convincing them with appropriate longing triggers.

This also means that after cutting budgets during the lockdowns, the travel industry now has to strengthen its brands again (or at best further) in order to convince potential customers - ideally with expressive creations that inspire dreaming and yet do not disregard the safety aspect. b4t impressively proves in this context for the travel industry: advertising pays off! Those who advertise receive more sympathy, more willingness to recommend and more willingness to buy from consumers.

Print advertising - the right impetus for travel campaigns

And where do Germans look for their travel inspiration? According to those surveyed, the most important source of information is personal contacts; accordingly, conversations with friends/relatives/acquaintances and tips are considered particularly valuable. These people, who are frequently asked for advice when it comes to travel, are above all intensive users of print and online. This means that these media genres are particularly important for reaching multipliers when it comes to vacation tips. According to the GIK data, the most promising approach is therefore a cross-media strategy. On the one hand, to score points with the many still undecided vacation aspirants via the decision-makers; on the other hand, to strengthen brand sympathy and the willingness to recommend.

Further insights into the vacation behavior of Germans in 2021 and 2022, as well as other exciting information from the new Travel Report or on other trend studies, can be found at gik.media (www.gik.media/downloads).

About GIK

The five media companies Axel Springer, Bauer Media Group, Funke Mediengruppe, Gruner + Jahr and Hubert Burda Media have joined forces under the umbrella of the Gesellschaft für integrierte Kommunikationsforschung (GIK). They jointly operate the cross-media market media studies best for planning (b4p) and best for tracking (b4t) to provide customers and market partners with data for their advertising planning and to evaluate the use of advertising media.