

## **Passport Online Releases 2018 Digital Report Card Agent Digital Activity Spikes in First Half of Year**

Beaverton, OR (July 26, 2018) – Passport Online Inc., the industry’s leader in travel agency digital technology, has seen a spike in activity across all digital channels including growth in website sales, social media promotions, customer email activity and b-to-b cruise bookings.

“The travel agency channel has embraced its digital footprint with a significant uptick in 2018 over the same period last year,” said Marilyn Macallair, Vice President of Business Development. “With double digit increases in sales for all of our products and consumer activity with our agency customers growing on websites, social media and email, it is clear that the travel agency community is engaging with its customer base through every digital option available.”

Passport Online is in the unique position to monitor consumer interaction with their travel agency as the company powers more than 6,000 travel agency websites and helps create, expand and diversify the digital footprint of more than 40,000 individual agents through websites, social media and email marketing in partnership with many of the industry consortia and host agencies as well as hundreds of independent agents.

### **Agency activity for the first half of 2018 is up in every category:**

#### **WEBSITE TECHNOLOGY:**

Website sales are up more than 60% year over year, with the greatest growth in the full-service product, NexCite<sup>2</sup>. There has also been a rise of nearly 20% in the sale of VacationPort, which is the supplier content only shopping engine and the Datafeed option which is the raw supplier content data as agencies and travel companies create new digital tools such as apps and itinerary planners for their customers.

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA:**

Social media sales of the ESP Social Media Posting product were also up dramatically. This product had been a free service for existing customers, but demand for content and more customization resulted in converting to a paid product with little to no impact on the customer engagement.

#### **EMAIL MARKETING:**

Email marketing programs operated by Passport Online showed a rise in the size of the agency databases. In 2017 the average consumer database was about 1,000 names and in 2018 that has risen to more than 1,900 names. Email marketing still ranks highest as a sales and marketing channel for the agency community.

### **BOOKING ENGINE TECHNOLOGY:**

Passport Online's booking platform Tandem and its related white label programs, also saw a spike in bookings. Sailed bookings on the b-to-b system were up over 40% in the first half of 2018.

### **DIGITAL DESTINATION CONTENT:**

Based on travel agency requests, Passport Online expanded its destination content options for website and social media customers throughout 2018. Utilizing the company's reach with a majority of the consortia and host agency organizations, the more than 6,000 travel agency websites and more than 1,500 travel agency business Facebook pages, Passport was able to provide digital presence and create dedicated web pages highlighting unique tours, park offerings and experiences with participating suppliers. Each promotion offered agent education, agent content for their websites, and curated posts for the agency business Facebook pages.

For each destination, Passport Online's travel agency Facebook customers generated between 150,000 and 250,000 organic views on agency business Facebook pages. More than 535,000 unique consumers on nearly 1,000 travel agency Facebook pages took action and interacted with Facebook posts with likes, comments and shares. There were more than 2.7 million impressions on nearly 2,300 consumer facing travel agency websites. Total views reached almost 1.2 million and social media engagement topped 13,000 likes, comments and shares. The breadth of agency reach included AAA, Nexion, Travel Leaders, American Express, Signature, Virtuoso, Mast, Nest, TravelSavers, Ensemble, WESTA and more.

"The growth of our digital destination assets was a direct response to our agency customers' request for more robust content," said Jeanne Colombo, Vice President of Supplier Relations. "The end result, for our destination partners and tour operator, wholesale and cruise line customers, is a more refined and accurate search and delivery of their product options for the agency's consumer shoppers."

### **Consumer activity on agency digital channels also rose significantly in 2018:**

- For the first half of the year, more than 20 million unique consumer shopping sessions took place on Passport powered websites. Consumer's interaction on these sites also spiked. Detailed offer views, where a consumer clicks beyond the agency home page to explore a travel opportunity, increased by more than 20 percent in the first six months of 2018. Each month nearly 500,000 offers were viewed on the Passport powered websites.
- The top cruise destinations viewed on agency websites included:
  - Mexico
  - Alaska
  - Bahamas
- The top land destinations viewed were:
  - Orlando
  - Rome/London
  - Las Vegas

**Social Media engagement is up in every single category in the first half of 2018. Consumers are clearly responding to their travel agents on Facebook!**

|                 | 2017    | 2018      | Difference     | %       |
|-----------------|---------|-----------|----------------|---------|
| <b>Likes</b>    | 30,169  | 31,499    | <b>1,330</b>   | 4.41%   |
| <b>Comments</b> | 24,723  | 60,239    | <b>35,516</b>  | 143.66% |
| <b>Shares</b>   | 237,013 | 262,948   | <b>25,935</b>  | 10.94%  |
| <b>Clicks</b>   | 132,722 | 230,211   | <b>97,489</b>  | 73.45%  |
| <b>Agencies</b> | 933     | 1,466     | <b>533</b>     | 57.13%  |
| <b>Fan Base</b> | 503,646 | 1,026,339 | <b>522,693</b> | 103.78% |

For more information on the website products, contact Marilyn Macallair at [marilynm@passportonlineinc.com](mailto:marilynm@passportonlineinc.com).

#### **About Passport Online**

Passport Online is the leisure travel industry leader in website, web content, email marketing, and social media solutions. Passport also offers state of the art cruise and tour booking engine solutions for b-to-b and b-to-c needs. A major distribution channel for leisure travel suppliers to connect with the leading consortia, retail agencies, professional home-based agent networks, and their clients, Passport Online enables millions of consumer shopping sessions on thousands of travel agency websites. For more information, visit [www.passportonlineinc.com](http://www.passportonlineinc.com).

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