

**Destination Queenstown + Tataki
Auckland Unlimited
USA Roadshow**

1 – 12 April 2024

1. Overview

Destination Queenstown in conjunction with Tataki Auckland Unlimited and Auckland International Airport as part of our MoU collaborate on 3 nights in Auckland and 3 nights in Queenstown itinerary proposition for travel sellers in the North America market. This trade engagement includes, joint sales calls, development of roadshows and events with travel partners in market, while developing a series of themed family itineraries where we can utilise the trade channel and develop campaign opportunities.

This is our second collaborative effort to market joined by 10 operators from both Queenstown and Auckland. With Auckland being the most connected city in Australasia from North America, with 89 direct services to Auckland weekly in the summer from eight North America cities and only one direct flight to Queenstown, we offer premium complementary experiences in each destination. Covering a range of accommodation, great dining options, world-class golf, award-winning wineries, hiking, galleries, experiences, and cultural attractions. Our proposition is perfect for a short New Zealand vacation or to be the start and finish of a longer length stay.

Auckland operators included: Sudima Hotels, Weta Workshop, Millennium Hotels, Te Arai Links, Heritage Hotels, Explore Group, Accor Hotels, Fullers 360, The Big Foody and Tataki Auckland Unlimited Attractions.

Queenstown operators included: RealNZ, Altitude Tours & Black, Glenorchy Air, Southern Discoveries, Oxbow Adventure Co., Heliworks Queenstown/Heli GY, The Helicopter Line, Ngai Tahu Tourism, Skyline Queenstown and Ziptrek Eco Tours.

Our cultural ambassador was Dane Tumahai from Te Manutapu.

The target for this trip was qualified high performing premium travel advisors with a proven track record of booking quality long-haul itineraries to New Zealand and other long-haul destinations.

The goal for each event was to provide awareness of the diverse range of visitor experiences offered in both regions, to inspire and motivate travel advisors to sell high quality holiday itineraries to their clients, featuring 3 nights in Auckland and 3 nights in Queenstown.

The schedule included New York (trade & media events), New Jersey, Boston, Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Orange County and Los Angeles with a mix of both daytime and evening events depending on the travel schedule between cities. Including a visit to United Airlines HQ to connect with senior executives, and key wholesaler training sessions at offices.

Prizes were given at each event to one lucky winner thanks to the generosity of our operators. Ground only arrangements were provided in Dallas, Atlanta, Costa Mesa, and Los Angeles. And, packages that included an airfare component plus ground arrangements where Qantas for New York, Qantas for Boston, United Airlines for Chicago and Air New Zealand for New Jersey.

2. Market Overview

The United States is currently New Zealand's second-largest international visitor market.

Visitor numbers from the US are on the rise due to increased air capacity and more direct airline routes.

There are nine carriers flying to NZ (7 direct/2 indirect) from eight North America gateways (Vancouver, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas, Chicago, New York, and Hawaii). Three new routes – Dallas and New York launched in 2022 and San Francisco to Christchurch in 2023. This has enabled significant capacity increase Jan 2024 is +121% vs Jan 2019 with 16,000 more seats. Two new year-round services have also been introduced Qantas JFK-AKL (June 2023) and Delta Airlines LAX-AKL (March 2024). Data suggests that no American is less than two hours away from a domestic airport that would route through one of these ports.

Tourism New Zealand's latest research shows there are 50.6 million active considerers (Feb 2024), while there are 7.2 million active considerers in Canada that would consider visiting in the next three years.

The distribution of active considerers from largest to smallest volume – South 37%, West 30%, Midwest and Northeast both 16%.

The US economy is strong, while Canada is gaining momentum. Job creation and economic growth have been stronger than predicted and inflation has declined faster than expected, all resulting in strong consumer confidence and optimism regarding the economy.

The presidential election may fuel uncertainty and slow travel growth as elections can usually lead to reduced consumer confidence and discretionary spending.

Research shows us that the US has one of the strongest travel recovery rates globally with monthly outbound travel by US citizens has continued to exceed 2019 volumes since September 2022. American travellers report they intend to spend more on travel in 2024, with 32% indicating they will take an international trip in the next 12 months.

Despite economic pressures Americans continue to prioritise travel, targeting new destinations. High costs and lack of leave are the top impediments for Americans to travel. Travelers are prioritizing experiences and travel over material goods and continue to focus on the 'value' of a trip, leaning towards taking fewer trips and staying longer to immerse themselves in a destination. The strength of the US dollar also continues to make international destinations more attractive.

3. Attendance/Attendees

Below is a summary of travel advisors that we connected with in each location:

New York (46 guests – 66 registered)

New Jersey (34 guests – 39 registered)

Boston – included:

- Audley team training (16 in office and joined online)
- Evening event (40 guests – 51 registered)

Atlanta (40 guest – 52 registered)

Chicago – included:

- United Airlines HQ team meet and connection with key senior executives across network planning, consumer PR and digital.
- Southern World, river boat cruise (50 guests)
- Down Under Endeavours team training at office (7 agents)

Dallas (37 guests – 50 registered)

Orange County (27 guests – 50 registered)

Los Angeles, Internova Group – Global Travel Collective (GTC)/Travel Leaders and Altour (16 guests)

Follow-up of our Queenstown's regional proposition and destination overview has been sent to both guests that attended and registered for each event.

The prize winners from each city:

New York/Manhattan – Mayla, First in Service

New Jersey – Jan, Exciting Vacations

Boston – Charlotte, Audley Travel

Atlanta – Melissa, Smart Flyer

Chicago – Jim, Elitete

Dallas – Zoe, Hyperluxe Travel

Costa Mesa – Yesenia, Laura Travel Agency

Los Angeles, Internova – Karina, Altour, The Lacy Group

4. Summary

For each event there was a range of knowledge when coming to sell New Zealand, from those that were well versed in our offering, to agents that sell premium long-haul destinations, but do not currently sell New Zealand. There was a great opportunity with this audience to entice and share our regional proposition and the unique characteristics of Queenstown as a visitor destination, alongside our operators and Tourism Auckland and their operators.

The MoU arrangement had us commission in-market support and coordination for venue and premium agent database from a contact based in the US that is an independent consultant in brand management, and business development. The opportunity was unique that it enabled our regions to explore opportunities that connected us with agents outside of our own contact database, that of the airlines and Tourism New Zealand.

There was much interest in our proposition, especially in educating on connectivity and the strong US dollar. Knowledge set was varied, and agent mix was from solid 3+ nights for Queenstown at a 4/5 start with inclusions, to agents that sell one million-dollar honeymoons around the globe.

My key takeaways from this market:

- Interest in NZ is high.
- Agents have fatigue in selling Europe, which combined with understanding airline connectivity makes for an enticing proposition, that agents are excited to explore and share with their clients.
- USD has made our proposition even more favourable.
- Quality inclusions and recommendations are paramount as is understanding the multitude of options we have on offer that cater to varying client's interest.
- There are sound IBO connections from this market with many key inbound partners mentioned, we work with. This helps to further solidify our updates and destination proposition in the channel and ensure we educate in a way that is shared end-to-end.
- If the agent did not book through an IBO, the wholesalers they mentioned, we also have good relationships with, therefore, as above, this helps us support these agents to understand the scope of our portfolio and operators working with these key wholesalers.
- For those that are new to sell NZ, it presents the opportunity for DQ to connect these partners with an IBO here, or if preferential a wholesaler in-market.
- Education is king. Without it, they don't fully understand our proposition and the experiences they can share with their clients to make NZ an attractive prospect for their clients that get converted.
- For many agents, their clients don't have a cap on budget. They seek to try something new, explore somewhere different and expect a good quality vacation in return.
- There is strength in the 3+3 proposition, especially when visiting the market alongside such quality operators from each region that solidifies that opportunity.
- Visit annually to build on knowledge set and proposition is key while TNZ have no in-market activity planned, and interest is high.

5. Related Content/Event Images



