NEWS RELEASE

U.K. and Irish Agents Join the Brand USA Global Marketplace Platform for the First Time During Focus On U.K. & Ireland (April 20-21, 2021)

April 08, 2021

LONDON (April 08, 2021)—Brand USA, the destination marketing organisation for the United States, announces its next event, Focus On U.K. & Ireland (April 20-21, 2021), hosted on Brand USA Global Marketplace, a custom-built, always-on platform that provides access to a diverse range of U.S. destinations, attractions, and points of interest for the international travel industry. The virtual event will provide the latest insights on the U.K. and Irish travel landscape to U.S. partners, as well as highlight destination updates for the U.K. and Irish travel trade.

Chris Thompson, Brand USA president and CEO, says, "We're thrilled to kickstart the conversations about inbound tourism to the U.S. from the U.K. and Ireland as we plan for the reopening of borders and the resumption of international travel. Together, the U.K. and Ireland represent the largest overseas market for inbound visitation and are vital to the United States' ability to drive growth."

"Now, more than ever, we need to connect our U.S. partners with U.K. and Irish industry leadership and travel trade, as we work together to emerge from the pandemic, shape our recovery campaigns, and build the future of U.S. tourism. We look forward to welcoming U.K. and Irish agents to the platform for the first time."

Day One | Tuesday, April 20, 2021

The first day of Focus On U.K. & Ireland will offer U.S. partners the chance to hear from a range of industry leaders as they shine a spotlight on the U.K. and Ireland's rapidly evolving travel and consumer landscape, economy, and emerging trends. Experts from across all sectors of the travel and tourism industry will provide strategic insights to help inform recovery plans when international travel resumes from the U.K. and Ireland to the United States.

Program highlights include:

- **The Resilience and Future of the U.K. and Irish Traveler**: An understanding of market resilience with three leading tour operators focusing on the recovery of travel to the United States. Claire Bentley, managing director at **British Airways Holidays**, Adam Armstrong, CEO at **Contiki**, and Lisa McAuley, managing director at **dnata** will join a panel discussion moderated by Amanda Hills, president at **MMGY Hills Balfour**.
- **Promoting the U.S. to U.K. & Irish Travelers**: An overview of U.K. and Irish traveler demand with Dee Burdock, product manager at **American Holidays**, Phil Newcombe, managing director at **Bon Voyage**, and Carolyn Stead, continental destination manager, North America, at **Trailfinders**. This panel will be moderated by Claire Irvin, head of travel at **The Telegraph**, and will look closely at the outlook of travel from the U.K. and Ireland to the United States.
- **The Future of Transatlantic Aviation**: An overview of the current travel situation to the U.S. and an update from aviation industry experts with Bill Byrne, vice president of North America and director of global sales at **Aer Lingus**, Bob Schumacher, director of the U.K. & Ireland at **United Airlines**, and Rikke Christensen, vice president of networks, alliances, and commercial planning at **Virgin Atlantic**. The panel will be moderated by industry veteran, Nigel Mayes, senior vice president at **Airport Strategy & Marketing (ASM)**.
- **How are Media Preparing for the Return of U.S. Travel?**: An in-depth look at the media landscape and emerging trends with Nicola Brady, freelance journalist at **Irish Independent**, Maria Pieri, editorial director at **National Geographic**, and Katie McGonagle, features editor at **Travel Weekly**. The journalists will discuss how the media landscape has evolved throughout the past year, current consumer sentiment, and demand. This panel will be moderated by Dominic Carter, group chief commercial officer at **News UK**.

The second day of the event will be a USA Training Day, an interactive session focusing on equipping U.K. and Irish tour operators and travel agents with the latest travel trade marketing, sales, and training tools to help sell travel to the United States. USA Training Day will include DMO panel discussions, showcasing the range of new, exciting experiences available for consumers, focusing on great outdoors and city experiences in the USA. The training session will provide an opportunity for U.K. and Irish tour operators and travel agents to connect directly with many of the U.S. destination and attraction partners on what is new, from hotel openings to events and anniversaries. The event will highlight all the ways that Brand USA and its partners can showcase the diverse range of travel opportunities available in the U.S., enabling agents to be fully prepared for when international travel resumes.

Program highlights include:

- **Brand USA Resources**: From Brand USA Global Marketplace to the USA Discovery Program and the travel trade website, this session will provide an overview of all of Brand USA's tools for the members of the travel industry to help travel agents gain a further understanding of available resources.
- **Exploring the Great Outdoors in the USA**: A conversation about the appeal of the great outdoors to the U.K. and Irish traveler led by Caroline Beteta, president and CEO at **Visit California**. Panelists joining the discussion include Keiko Matsudo Orrall, executive director at **Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism**, Todd Davidson, chief executive officer at **Travel Oregon** and Brad Smyth, director of economic development and tourism at **Travel Texas**.
- **Exploring City Experiences Across the USA**: A deep dive analysing the importance of cities in the recovery drive to attract international visitors moderated by Fred Dixon, president and CEO at **NYC & Company**. Dixon will be joined by Bill Talbert, president and CEO at **Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau**, Julie Coker, president and CEO at **San Diego Tourism Authority**, and Tom Norwalk, CEO at **Visit Seattle**, as they discuss how U.S. cities are evolving and developing new product to meet consumer demand.
- **Networking with U.S. Partners**: Agents will be welcomed into networking rooms which will be geographically themed around four regions of the USA. As part of networking, there will be a moderated Q&A session where U.K. and Irish tour operators and travel agents can ask U.S. partners questions.
- **Mega USA Quiz**: At the end of the USA Training Day, tour operators and travel agents will have the chance to participate in a thematic quiz about the United States. The quiz will include themed rounds and prizes include flights courtesy of Aer Lingus, American Airlines, and United Airlines.

In addition to the scheduled programming of events about the U.S. and its diverse destinations, the U.K. and Irish travel trade community can interact with and virtually explore U.S. destinations via the U.S. Partner Pavilions, geographically-driven partner Pods representing the entirety of the United States.

Registration

Tour operators and travel agents may access Brand USA Global Marketplace free of charge, however advance registration* for Focus On U.K. & Ireland events is required, and must be completed by April 19, 2021. Tour operators and travel agents may register for the platform via this link: brandusaglobalmarketplace.com/focus-on-uk-and-ireland.

**Existing platform users do not need to re-register for the platform.*

###

About Brand USA
Brand USA is the nation's destination marketing organization, dedicated to attracting legitimate international inbound travel to strengthen the U.S. economy, increase exports, create quality jobs, and promote community prosperity. By running data-driven campaigns and unifying messaging across industry and government, Brand USA positions the United States as a top global destination while providing current visa and entry information.

Over the past 13 years Brand USA has driven 11.3 million additional international visitors who spent $38.1 billion in the United States, leading to $82.9 billion in total economic impact and sustaining an average of more than 40,000 jobs each year. These efforts have generated nearly $11 billion in attributable tax receipts at the federal, state, and local levels.

Media Contacts

Anjelica Magee
Manager, Public Relations/Consumer & Trade
202.536.2063

Libby Allan
Senior Manager, Public Relations
+44 (0) 20 7593 1749