

# Adventure travel to drive growth of international travel

According to a 2014 travel industry study written by Oxford Economics, "the global travel industry is poised for a period of sustained growth over the next decade." This growth is predicted to be driven mainly by emerging markets such as Asia and the Middle East, but Europe and the Americas are forecasted to trend positively over the same period.

While an industry-wide positive trend is always good news, it leaves the players in the market with an important question to answer - which area or areas of the travel industry will be the major contributor(s) to the growth? The tour operators and travel agents that are the fastest to arrive at the answer, and execute well on the need it presents, are likely to most successfully capitalise on this industry growth.



Congo Volcano Trekking

## From adventure travel to transformational travel

Lee Kelsall, CEO of African travel company, [Ker & Downey Africa](#), has placed his bet on adventure travel as the travel niche that he believes is most likely to be a major contributor to this growth, and with good reason: The [2013 Adventure Tourism Market Study](#) "estimates the value of the global outbound adventure travel sector to be \$263 billion, excluding airfare, up from \$89 billion [2009] first reported in the benchmark consumer study." - Adventure Travel News.

At the helm of an adventure travel company doubling in size year on year, Lee notes that "the trend toward adventure travel is clear to see in the statistics yes, but more than that the need for something deeper from travel became clear to us when speaking to our clients at the outset. When you take the time to understand why it is that people seek out the corners of the earth, you find that travel isn't just about comfortable pillows and fine silverware. People travel to find themselves, to push their boundaries and to create memories that last. We believe so strongly in this that we've invested heavily into the development of our Luxventure™ Experience category - our once in a lifetime adventure focused trips that push our clients' boundaries in incredibly unique, experiential ways. Experiences that aren't just nice getaways, but rather trips that change people's lives."

Ker & Downey Africa works with partners around the globe that are noticing the same trend in tourists looking for once-in-a-lifetime adventure experiences as opposed to the run-of-the-mill been there, got the t-shirt trips. A partner in East Africa Sarah Tjeenk of Inspired Journeys, comments that “As a macro development in the industry we will likely see a continuation of the trend towards experiential (or the latest word used is transformational) travel, where travellers are looking for their trips not only to make a positive impact on their environment but also on their personal enlightenment and understanding of this world.”

Similarly, Marc Telio of Entree Destinations operating out of Alaska notes that “we’re definitely seeing more and more guests that look to be in remote wilderness, disconnected and being at one with nature and wildlife. Our wildlife viewing programmes sell out, and we continue to see big interest in destinations that are off the grid, vast and remote.”



Alaska adventures

## **Rushing to meet the needs of adventurous travellers**

With consensus from operators across multiple continents, and with the market’s statistical trends backing the probability of a good return on the adventure travel bet, it’s clear why so many operators are rushing to meet the increasingly adventurous needs of global travellers.

With travellers’ focus shifting from comfortable hotel rooms and fine dining to remote locations and thrilling adventures, the pressure on travel companies to create once-in-a-lifetime experiences for their clients is greater than ever. When asked how Ker & Downey Africa continues to push the boundaries of adventure travel in order to meet the increasing demand of the market, Lee responds:

“I believe it all starts with a change in focus. The travel industry has traditionally been entirely destination focused: we know you want to visit Kenya, so we’ll find a five-star lodge for you there and, as a bonus, that lodge offers game drives.



Self-Drive Safari in Kenya

Today, that doesn't cut it anymore. We realised this early on in the evolution of Ker & Downey Africa, and so we don't create our trips with a focus on the destination, we start with a focus on the customer, and in particular what adventure our customers want to experience. Then we build our <sup>TM</sup>Luxventure Experiences around that moment they're chasing, rather than around a routing or a hotel room. That's made all the difference to those that travel with us."

For the global tourist, the enthusiastic response of companies like Ker & Downey Africa to the evolving needs of the market is encouraging to see as it promises increasingly exciting and unique travel experiences for the traveller of tomorrow.

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