BRAND USA

NEWS RELEASE

Thomas Cook and Brand USA announce multimillion dollar European Partnership Agreement to promote ‘Discover America’ Initiative

Washington, DC - January 13, 2014

Thomas Cook Group and Brand USA, the destination marketing organization for the United States of America, have today announced a major cooperative marketing agreement aimed at promoting the USA as the world’s leading destination for European visitors.

The multimillion dollar agreement is the biggest media and partnership deal Brand USA has made with a travel retailer in Europe, and is part of a fully integrated omni-channel campaign targeting travel-intenders across Thomas Cook’s platforms from online through to in-store, direct and inflight.

The partnership, which will initially last for three months from its launch in mid-January 2014 and run simultaneously across the UK, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, will see Thomas Cook and Brand USA embark on a high-profile, multi-media campaign that fully utilizes all of the holiday company’s consumer and trade touch-points. It will include in-store promotions across Thomas Cook’s retail estate, prominence in brochures, a variety of social media activities and dedicated sign up by Thomas Cook staff to Brand USA’s new agent training tool – the USA Discovery Program; as well as innovative print and digital marketing activity.

Brand USA’s ‘Discover America’ initiative aims to raise awareness of and inspire travel to the USA by highlighting the diversity of experiences available and by ensuring that the USA is top of mind during the holiday consideration process. The partnership will take full advantage of the Thomas Cook Group and its brands – such as Neckerman in Germany - to build pan-European awareness of the individual destinations within the USA and drive visitors to the country.

“This partnership is a powerful combination to stimulate European travel to the U.S., leveraging the full strength of Thomas Cook as an omni-channel retailer,” said Thomas Cook’s Group Head of Media & Partnerships, Stuart Adamson. “The recently-aligned Media and Partnerships team combine the best in both travel expertise and media innovation, and we are looking forward to delivering a fully integrated on and offline campaign that will stimulate further interest from our customers throughout Europe in all that U.S. has to offer.”

With the goal to reinforce interest in traditional getaways, such as Florida, California and other gateway destinations, as well as stimulating further awareness of states - including Texas and Hawaii, and regions, such as the North East which takes in the cities of Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C. and New York. The objective of the ‘Discover America’ campaign is to position the country as a diverse destination with near limitless experiences, highlighting the USA as a fresh and unexpected destination with welcoming and friendly locals.

Brand USA CEO, Christopher Thompson, said: “This fully integrated campaign provides a platform for the U.S. to re-enforce Brand USA’s efforts to deliver programs that increase awareness and enhance the image of the United States. We take great pride in our ability to partner with such an established operator as Thomas Cook, allowing us the opportunity to engage the European market to not only consider visiting the U.S but also enable them to book travel through a trusted operator.”

This major partnership follows the news that Thomas Cook has aligned its online media solutions and tour operator partnerships teams across Europe to create the Thomas Cook Media & Partnerships division. The initiative will bring together media and travel partnerships expertise within the group to deliver best in class marketing and media programs to partners, suppliers and third party brands.

About Thomas Cook Group plc

Thomas Cook Group plc is one of the world's leading leisure travel groups with sales of £9.5 billion and 23 million customers in the year ended 30 September 2012. Thomas Cook is supported by c27,000 employees and operates from 19 countries; it is number one or two in all its core markets. Thomas Cook Group plc’s shares are listed on the London Stock Exchange (TCG).

For further Thomas Cook information, contact:
Press Office – pressoffice@thomascook.com / 01733 417272 ?

For further Brand USA information, contact:
Jen Byles – jbyles@thebrandusa.co.uk / 020 7845 6391
Sarah Barnett – sbarnett@thebrandusa.co.uk / 020 7845 6378
Camila Clark – cclark@thebrandusa.com / 202 735 2305

###

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.