

Yukon Winter Tourism Development Meeting



November 27, 2009

Beringia Centre, Whitehorse, Yukon

Yukon
Tourism and Culture

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NOTE: Power point presentations by speakers can be found on www.tc.gov.yk.ca under Product Development

Cover Image: YG/Fritz Mueller Photo

INTRODUCTION

Yukon is recognized by many as primarily a summer tourism destination. Border crossing statistics supplied by Canada Border Services Agency indicate that between 85 - 90 per cent of our annual visitation occurs during the months of May through to September with June, July and August accounting for the majority of visitors.

Over the past 10 years, considerable effort has been made by industry and government to extend the revenue generating potential of tourism in the shoulder season through promotion of the Yukon as a MC&IT destination and in the winter season through promotion of activities (dogsledding, northern lights viewing, snowmobiling, etc.) and festivals and events (Yukon Quest, Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous, Frostbite, Fulda Challenge, etc).

As a result of the media exposure generated by the Fulda Challenge in the European marketplace, the department developed a three year cooperative marketing strategy with the travel trade in German speaking Europe beginning in the 2004/2005 fiscal year to grow winter travel from that market. Though well embraced and supported by industry and the trade, the strategy failed to meet visitation expectations and as a result the level of support for winter programs was reduced in favour of increased investment in media relations, fairs and consumer awareness initiatives.

In early 2009, following a successful Fulda winter incentive fair associated with that years Fulda Challenge, officials from Condor expressed an interest in exploring the potential of direct air service from Germany to Whitehorse in the winter.

As part of that exploration process preliminary discussions were held with key travel trade (tour operators /wholesalers) in German speaking Europe, Condor, representatives from the Alaska Travel Industry Association and the Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau. Further analysis with Condor and the travel trade suggested that the estimated ticket price (taking into account aircraft type, routing, demand, competition, etc.) made a direct winter flight cost prohibitive at this time given existing access options for travelers.

Nevertheless, it is widely recognized that winter tourism provides Yukon with one of its greatest growth opportunities for industry. It is also understood that for winter tourism to grow and be successful it will require the collaboration and commitment of all stakeholders including Yukon industry operators, travel trade (Tour operators/wholesalers), air carriers and the Yukon Government.

As a result, the department of Tourism and Culture organized a Winter Tourism Development Discussion involving industry and travel trade from Germany and Japan to discuss “what it would take for Yukon to be a successful winter travel destination” from those markets.

This discussion, the first of its kind facilitated by the department, provided an opportunity to hear from industry their thoughts on key issues around winter tourism development from those markets and in general, as well as, an opportunity for Yukon suppliers to hear directly from the travel trade who are selling the destination and their products to consumers.

The format was designed to be a candid, honest and interactive discussion on the potential for future development of winter tourism from Germany and Japan that could lead to the development of an All Markets Winter Tourism Development Symposium in the future.

The following sections highlight the items discussed by over 60* individuals who participated in the session representing Yukon tourism suppliers/business, non-government organizations, and other government departments.

**See attached participant list*

KEY MESSAGES

The following is a summary of the key messages shared by participants during the meeting.

1. Product Development

INCREASE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Yukon is renowned for its magnificent scenery, wide open spaces, remoteness and serenity. These are some of the attributes that the trade suggested was unique about Yukon. Summer travelers have access to all of Yukon's communities, highways, campgrounds, trail networks, tour operators and hospitality services. A multi-day self drive holiday is the primary product in Yukon that is sold by the German wholesalers; however the same product is not available in winter.

Dog sledding and other winter activities that are offered are well received by the trade, however there needs to be more for visitors to do than just an activity based program. When weather creates a down day for an outdoor activity, it is very difficult to find other activities or attractions available for guests to experience. Stores are closed, restaurants closed, attractions not open or only open on a certain day of the week, operators not actively marketing their services, visitor centres with reduced hours, etc. This is a greater issue for communities than in Whitehorse, but regardless of where it happens these become barriers to a visitor having a positive Yukon experience. For these and other reasons the German trade does not aggressively market Yukon winter vacations.

Both the German and Japanese wholesalers require suppliers to have flexibility in their scheduling. Regardless of the day of the week any visitor arriving in Yukon should be able to have access to the same activities and experiences whether they pre-book or not. Suppliers operating on one or two days of the week only, or attractions only open on the weekend are barriers to the trade selling Yukon. It is much easier for them to sell the Scandinavian countries where winter tourism is the primary season. They have the same and more winter products as Yukon and their tourism infrastructure and services are open and welcoming winter visitors every day of the season.

Whenever possible Yukon suppliers should offer packages with Alaska experiences as Yukon and Alaska are considered “one” destination and the majority of their clients are interested in experiencing both destinations when visiting the region.

2. Access

AIR ACCESS

In summer, visitors from Germany arrive in Canada and Yukon via Condor or Air Canada / Air North. There is plenty of air access in the summer for German travelers. Condor flies direct between Frankfurt and Whitehorse with a flying time of approximately 9 hours. This is the shortest flight time there is point to point. Even if Yukon were able to secure a direct winter flight with Condor, travelers would still have to fly nine hours to partake in the same activity-based holiday that they can do in the Scandinavian countries that are only a two hour flight away. **Air access in winter is not the primary challenge for the German market to sell Yukon winter. There are a number of options available with Air Canada and Air North (from YVR, YYC, YEG) to access Yukon. The key issue is** convincing clients (selling proposition) that they can have a better holiday in Yukon than they can elsewhere because of the experiences that can be found, and that the lengthy transit time to reach Yukon is worth it.

For the Japanese market, visitors tend to do a stay in the Vancouver area before flying to Yukon for a short stay of 3-4 nights for winter experiences such as the Northern Lights and dog sledding. A key issue for selling Yukon to the Japanese market is the air cost/price point to travel from Vancouver to Whitehorse. Air Canada’s fares are considerably lower to Yellowknife than they are to Whitehorse from Vancouver which makes it difficult to compete. It should be noted as well, that not only is the airfare higher, but the land products are also more expensive in Yukon than Northwest Territories. This compounds our ability to compete and sell Yukon over better known aurora destinations like Yellowknife and the Scandinavian countries.

ROAD ACCESS FOR FIT

One of the unique qualities of Yukon is the ability to experience the scenic beauty, remoteness and peacefulness of Yukon's vast land. In the summer, visitors have access to remote areas they can reach by car or RV including side roads, campgrounds lakes and trails. "Summer" visitors can experience what makes the territory unique. In the winter however, campgrounds are closed, travel routes are limited, and services along the popular summer routes are closed. Winter visitors are not given the opportunity to enjoy the Yukon's uniqueness independently like they can in the summer. Not being able to offer this to their clients makes it difficult for the trade to sell Yukon to those who want to travel independently. Clients want to see as much of our territory as they can. These clients want to if they wish, join a day long winter activity like dog sledding while they are here. Activities need to be flexible and available in the destination communities, not just in Whitehorse.

3. Awareness

MARKETING / PROMOTIONS

Yukon in winter is still relatively unknown compared to the high awareness levels of Yellowknife for Northern Lights (Japan) and Scandinavia for winter experiences, including northern lights (Germany and Japan).

Aurora Village out of Yellowknife has been offering northern lights tours and other day time winter activities at their viewing site for many years, initially targeting Japanese groups. In Canada this is the product that the trade is most familiar with, they've built relationships with *Aurora Village* operators and it is easy to sell. *Aurora Village* also has a representative on the ground in Japan. However, the market is looking for new aurora destinations and is interested in what Yukon may offer.

The Scandinavian countries have received government subsidies to develop winter tourism products and experiences and these are heavily marketed to the Europeans, who are only a two hour flight away. The question that arose during the winter meeting was – can we even compete and should we even be marketing to German speaking Europe for winter tourism?

The challenge with marketing is to convince the markets that Yukon has a better aurora product, winter experiences and tourist infrastructure and therefore, their clients will get a

better experience. The current product offerings however, are not competitive in price nor provide the flexibility and variety the market demands. Until there is a variety of winter experiences to be had and infrastructure like restaurants, attractions and shops open regularly, should we (industry and government) be using our marketing budgets to promote winter tourism in these two markets?

PRODUCT GAPS AND CHALLENGES

Product gaps are those experiences and services identified by participants and trade representatives that are not currently offered in Yukon, or require enhancement and ancillary service providers to support the quality of the experience for visitors.

Yukon challenges identified by participants and trade representatives are those things that are perceived to be barriers to development of Yukon as a winter tourism destination. These challenges represent issues to address from both the private and public sector and in many instances collaboration will be necessary to reach possible solutions.

Below is a compiled list of gaps and challenges as identified by participants and trade representatives:

PRODUCT GAPS / IDEAS

- New destination combination packages (AK/YT, YT/BC or AB)
- Winter fly-drive packages: lodge to lodge / hotel touring package
- Attractions open year-round
- Packages and optional activities around events
- Public tourist-type scheduled transportation to venues and attractions (ie. hop on hop off tour shuttle)
- Flexible day tour activities (any day of week, no minimum number: dog sledding, northern lights, ice fishing, snowmobiling, sledding, skiing)

- Available services along driving routes (any day of the week: campgrounds, restaurants, fuel)
- Dog team or snowmobile transfers to/from airports / landing strips
- “Winter Village” destination. Community works together to promote winter; snow or ice hotel, variety of activities, attractions, shopping, restaurants, etc
- Ice road driving, Arctic rally, ice driving “training” course
- More services for larger groups and winter touring
- Health conscious programs – outdoor activity with a health focus
- Hands-on Canadian experiences
- Golden Circle fall colors program; group and FIT itineraries
- Lack of winter product marketing on internet by the tourism industry, Tourism Branch, and wholesalers
- Specialists operators vs. general knowledge operators – niche products, learning experiences, unique products

YUKON CHALLENGES

**note: some of these challenges are or have been addressed, however awareness regarding what is currently in place or happening may need to be better communicated to industry.*

- Access to capital for private sector
- Land access
- Air access
- Skilled and available labor
- Investment attraction and opportunities
- Snow removal on seasonal roads and/or access roads to a residential home based business such as a B&B or cabin-based wilderness operation

- Seasonal closure of shops and attractions (especially in communities)
- No winter marketing to support the destination
- Lack of range of ancillary services (budget to high-end) such as restaurants, galleries, entertainment, accommodations
- Tourism business owners are looking to retire or sell. Who will continue on with the business, change the business, or enhance the business? What if no one does?
- Government facilities are not open year-round (museums, VIC's, Parks Canada)
- Lack of an integrated approach by Government towards development
- Lack of awareness by industry on where and who to speak with regarding their development
- A "take it or leave it" mentality by some operators
- Lack of accommodation occupancy statistics to support marketing strategies and provide a case to airlines for consideration into increased air access
- A significant investment from the private sector will be necessary; financially and commitment wise to ensure a sustainable winter destination
- A substantial promotional campaign by Government and partners **once** the product and experiences have been committed to. Does government transfer some money from summer budget to winter marketing?
- Shorter shoulder seasons – Yukon operators are opening later and closing earlier
- Pricing is not reflective of seasonality therefore there is no financial benefit for travellers to visit in the shoulder seasons
- Getting all stakeholders engaged in the development of a winter destination (hotels, airlines, restaurants, shops, attractions, rental companies)
- Lack of industry standards – customer service, quality, reliability, safety
- Lack of awareness by front line travel trade in markets
- Un-competitive air fares with Air Canada between YVR-YXY and YVR-YZF

NEXT STEPS

The Winter Tourism Development Discussion was developed as an opportunity to hear from industry (suppliers) and travel trade representatives from Germany and Japan on “what it would take for Yukon to be a successful winter travel destination” from those markets.

This discussion, the first of its kind facilitated by the department, provided an opportunity to hear from industry their thoughts on key issues around winter tourism development from those markets and in general, as well as, an opportunity for Yukon suppliers to hear directly from the travel trade who are selling the destination and their products to consumers.

It was clear that the development of the destination needs to be a collaborative effort between government, industry (Yukon suppliers), the travel trade (tour operators/wholesalers) and air carriers and that neither can expect to achieve success without the commitment and support from all parties.

The department will...

- 1)** Distribute the report from the winter meeting to all participants, to TIAY and to the Senior Marketing Committee
- 2)** Consult with TIAY and the Senior Marketing Committee on the need, desire and potential outcome of an All Markets Winter Tourism Development Symposium to include broader industry participation from suppliers targeting other markets.
 - ❖ If required, establish a Winter Tourism Development Working Group made up of private and public sector representatives to design and organize the symposium.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - PRESENTER PROFILES

Guest Speaker: Mr. Per Illian, Director North America, DERTOUR and ADAC Reisen
Address: Emil-von-Behring-Str. 6, 60424 Frankfurt am Main, Germany
Website: www.dertour.de

Personal History & Interest:

Per Illian has been with DERTOUR since 1981 including 9 years in the DERTOUR special department of “Sport Live”, 9 years responsible for the areas of Ireland, Great Britain, Boat-Tours and Golf, and has been responsible for all products in US and Canada since 2002.

Per has been to the Yukon experiencing mainly the Whitehorse and Haines Junction areas in winter. Per is an enthusiast of a variety of interests including sports and nature so the Yukon destination appeals to him on a personal as well as a professional level.

Company Profile:

DERTOUR is part of REWE group, Retail and Wholesale Shops and Markets, and is a market leader in Germany for North America, Ireland, Russia, UK, Scandinavia, and Sport Holiday Tours, etc. REWE group is one of the largest employers and consists of one of largest tour operators in Germany - DERTOUR.

Long haul tour operators of the REWE group include DERTOUR, Meier’s Weltreisen and ADAC Reisen. These long haul operators focus primarily on component tours. DERTOUR offers flexible tour components and tour packages in cooperation with scheduled air carriers. DERTOUR has been a Canada specialist for more than 20 years. Meier’s Weltreisen focuses on high end package tours with value for money and ADAC Reisen is membership driven German Automobile Association with clients interested in touring destinations on their own.

US / Canada ranks third as far as long haul and component packaging in the top 15 destinations featured by the tour operators in the REWE group.

Client / Product Interest:

The DERTOUR brochure has a special section for Canada and a comprehensive program covering all product types, mainly for FIT. Products include RV, fly-drive, motorcoach tours and adventure products. DERTOUR features individual products which can be customized to suit individual interests including flights, hotels, vehicle rentals including RV/motorhome, etc.

Distribution / Marketing:

DERTOUR offers 39 different catalogues covering 5 continents. North America is featured in 5 different catalogues (summer/winter plus special Ski catalogue) with a total distribution of more than 1.5 million copies. The DERTOUR distribution network includes 9,500 travel agencies in Germany, and more than 50,000 DERTOUR consumers in their database have made a booking in the last year to North America.

Guest Speaker: Johannes Finke, General Manager, CANUSA TOURISTIK

Address Nebendahlstrasse 16, Hamburg, Germany

Website: www.canusa.de

Personal History & Interest:

Johannes started to travel to Canada in 1984 for the first time. His first trip to the North included Yukon, NWT and Alaska followed in 1985. In summer of 1986 Johannes spent nearly 10 weeks traveling the North. After working at a Travel Agency, Johannes started with CANUSA TOURISTIK in 1989 working in various departments before becoming Operations Manager and later General Manager. Johannes is a fan of the North - not only has he been every year in the Yukon or Alaska - he has also traveled several times to Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Greenland and one time to Antarctica. Johannes enjoys traveling by Motorhome with his family in Canada / the North and spending time on the tiny island of Föhr in the North Sea - that's where he can relax best.

Company Profile:

CANUSA TOURISTIK GmbH & Co, established in October 1983 and owned by Tilo Krause-Dünow, became a major specialized tour wholesaler for CANADA and the USA in Germany. The company is focused on these destinations, with the exception of some packages in Mexico, Australia and New Zealand. The company has 7 offices in Germany and Hamburg office is their headquarters.

Product / Distribution / Marketing:

7 separate brochures are produced by CANUSA TOURISTIK. They are split into destination publications like Hawaii, YUKON/Alaska, Florida/ Bahamas and specific product-lines such as Camper & Motorhome, Coach Tours, Fly & Drive Tours incl. Country Inns and Skiing. In addition, many specials are published outside of the brochure productions. This diversification supports the image of a totally specialized company.

The circulation of all pieces has been 90,000 for the brochures, except the special productions which are printed in quantities of up to 440,000 in the past. In addition to the mentioned tour programs CANUSA TOURISTIK has the knowledge and connections to sell other tour options

available in various destinations. 90% of the CANUSA TOURISTIK business is based on FIT bookings. The rest represents group bookings.

Direct marketing is the main distribution source for CANUSA TOURISTIK for well known as well as well as the introduction of new destinations. Results have been as strong as 22-45%. Mailings are selected from a database of more than 600,000 consumer addresses targeted for interest in North America only. In addition the CANUSA TOURISTIK selection of programs is distributed through more than 4,800 German travel agencies. More than 510,000 consumers have registered to receive the CANUSA TOURISTIK e-newsletter and up to 5,000 travel agents will be reached via this source.

110 staff members, continuously trained on the different products available, focus on customized service. With this concept, the company fits the demand of a growing niche market.

www.canusa.de has been established in the market as one of the major websites for travel to North America. The website is continuously updated with special offers. www.canusa.de has received more than 4 - 5.000.000 visits per month in 2007 and 2008 and 12 - 16.000.000 hits per month. As of a year ago, CANUSA TOURISTIK online marketing has been extended to include search engine optimization.

Guest Speaker: Bill Bessho, President, MAPLE FUN TOURS
Address: #1625, 1188 West Georgia Street, Vancouver B.C.
Web address: www.maplefun.com

Personal History & Interest:

Bill was born & grew up in Tokyo & after graduating University, he worked for Hitachi Electronics (Panasonic). Bill moved to Canada in 1976 and worked for receptive company called Cantour International before opening his own business in 1981. When the business opened no other company was doing business in the Winter season for the Japan market, so MAPLE FUN TOURS started winter business first which was mainly ski product. Bill's hobbies are skiing & golf and he returns to Japan 3 to 4 times a year. He also likes Hot Springs in rural or remote areas.

Company Profile:

MAPLE FUN TOURS is a registered receptive tour operator in British Columbia and their primary market is Japan. The company has been established since 1981 and they have four sales offices in Japan (Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka & Sapporo) and three operational offices in Canada (Vancouver, Banff & Toronto). MAPLE FUN TOURS business to Canada is 20,000 to 30,000 travelers per year so they continue to be one the key players in the Japan market.

Client / Product Interest:

Winter aurora viewing, fall colour combined with aurora viewing, as well as summer touring and adventure. MAPLE FUN TOURS was instrumental in establishing Yukon as one of the key aurora destinations, and they are always interested in new ideas, routes, and products especially nature products suited for the Japan market overseas as well as the local Canadian market. Yukon has the product/market match for Japanese clientele.

Type of Clientele Served: Scheduled Group Tour, Group - Leisure, Group - Business, Individual - Leisure, Individual - Business, Meetings/Corporate, Incentive, Students/School Groups, Sports Groups, Educational/Learning Groups, Seniors.

Distribution / Marketing:

MAPLE FUN TOURS have contracts with over 100 wholesalers & travel agents in Japan & they are very hungry for new product ideas, routing & itineraries. MAPLE FUN TOURS is interested in increasing consumer direct marketing with the Japan market as well as the local Japan Canada market via the internet. MAPLE FUN TOURS builds strong traffic in the shoulder & off-seasons in Canada with successful media campaigns and agency special promotions, etc.

Memberships:

| | |
|-------|--|
| BPCPA | (Business Practices & Consumer Protection Authority)☐ |
| CITAP | (Canadian Inbound Tourism Association - Asia Pacific)☐ |
| JTOA | (Japanese Tour Operators Association)☐ |
| OTOA | (Overseas Tour Operator Association) |

Yukon Tourism & Culture's In-Market Representation

- Ms. Yuka Takahashi, Yukon Tourism's in-market representative based in Japan
- Mr. Holger Bergold, Yukon Tourism's in-market representative based in Germany

APPENDIX B - WORKSHOP EVALUATION

The winter meeting evaluation questionnaire asked eight questions. The first three were designed to help the department understand who was attending, if they have, had or are interested in working with international travel trade and if any of the information they learned may provide direct benefits to their winter business at this time.

The remaining five questions and responses are compiled* below for reference and were directly related to the participant's position on winter tourism development for Yukon.

Total evaluation comments submitted:

- 44 non-government industry participants in attendance
- 12 evaluation responses submitted (approx. 27%)

** To maintain confidentiality, some comments were edited*

QUESTIONS

Q) After today's meeting I am confident that Yukon should and can grow winter tourism products and experiences to compete with other winter destinations and to increase winter tourism traffic to the territory.

1. True - "Germany and Japan might not be the best target markets. USA and South America might be better"
2. True
3. True
4. True-partly – "unless there is better air access at least for part of the winter, I'm not confident about the "can".
5. False – "I only see a potential for growing a market in cities with direct flights to the Yukon which make a short stay worthwhile"
6. True – "we all know that winter is a very viable season for tourism. The potential has been mentioned over and over again"
7. False – "much of the Yukon is still focused on American Alcan road traffic, which Yukon tourism has been stating is a dying industry. In these economic times for the global

market place, price is a serious element in the decision making process. You can fly from Vancouver to Las Vegas for \$99 bucks, why can't Yukon come up with this type of deep discount pricing for our airline travel. During the peak summer season Alaska Airlines was running specials for \$289 round trip from Los Angeles to Anchorage. Can Yukon not get our local airlines to do some kind of pricing package regionally with Vancouver, Edmonton or Ottawa for a few weeks? This would at least help with national branding."

8. False – " I do not see evidence of tourism as a strategic industry. Words are not evidence."
9. False – " we can't compete with Scandinavia, Iceland, etc. In the past 20 years while we have been waiting for winter tourism to pick up other countries have aggressively made the decision to invest in winter tourism"
10. True – " Yukon winter tourism products and experiences have a huge potential as Yukon in winter is an exceptional place, we should be able to sell exceptional products"
11. did not respond
12. did not respond

Q) What do you think is Yukon's biggest barrier to winter tourism growth?

1. "for our market, no direct flight from Europe. More than 20 hours travel for coming and the same for going back is too much, as clients have usually in winter less vacation time"
2. Not enough awareness in Japan about Yukon.
3. "Not having a direct flight for the Japanese market. Heavily subsidized winter tourism product in northern Europe. Our government hasn't made the same commitment as the EU. Tourism still isn't seen as an important part of Yukon's economy".
4. " #1 The governments refusal to make tourism a strategic industry. #2 Sufficient private investment to complement a government that makes tourism a priority"
5. "Not enough product and marketing not reaching our potential target markets through advertising. In speaking to my friends in Asia, they think Yukon is a very cold place and would never want to visit during the winter time. My biggest concern about developing the winter market is that people don't know about our summer market, so showing

winter pictures may provide a perception that Canada is under snow always. If this occurs, then we are hurting our summer industry too. My big question, which was not answered, what is the potential for the winter market? Northwest Territories is “the” place for Northern Lights viewing, but is there much demand for that anymore especially when the market numbers are dropping for Yellowknife?”

6. “slow government processes and life style choices by business owners, who not want to work in shoulder seasons and during winter months”
7. “Lack of unique products, too far away for the average German traveller, lack of skiing potential which would serve as first attractant.” “Winter holidays in Yukon are too expensive. It takes at least two weeks of vacation time of which 3 to 4 days are spent travelling. Little variety of winter products in Yukon. The wholesaler may not know enough about the products, therefore cannot sell them.” “We believe that winter tourism will always remain relatively small scale business opportunity for already well established operators. Pretty much everything you can do in Yukon is already offered and covered”.
8. “limited/ inconvenient air access – too many highway restaurants and museum/attractions closed”
9. “access”
10. “Exposure, commitment as an industry to raise our standards, create more product and work together for solutions, not expect someone to just give us an answer. The future depends on each individual commitment to try new things and work together to grow”.
11. “Infrastructure, willingness to stay open longer (restaurants, campgrounds, etc)
12. did not respond

Q) How do you think this barrier can be overcome?

1. “More information on the demands of the market”
2. “Time and lots of networking and hard work”
3. “Target closer markets”

4. "YTG should put pressure on Air Canada to improve connections. YTG could try to convince Condor to fly once a week between mid-February and beginning of April..... I don't know how restaurants can be convinced to open at least part of the week..."
5. "Direct flights. Products around the Yukon Quest"
6. "Good Luck"
7. "? for Government. Bring in more private capital for industry"
8. "I still think we could have a direct flight from Japan. If Condor can do it, JAL or Air Canada could too. Government would have to negotiate with the airlines and offer perks. Government needs to decide whether winter tourism is something we want to focus on or not. We need to be more aggressive than we have been in the past 20 years."
9. "Condor will fly to Whitehorse if they can book 180 pax/ flight. All together we will get soon 180 pax/flight/week. (hotels, lodges, adventures, business)"
10. "First we need to become a friendly / profitable environment for outside investment to resolve our lack of winter tourism product. We need to be pro-business, and reduce our operating costs for the tourism industry if this becomes one of the industries that Yukon promotes." we need more quality product in the Yukon, but we chase investors away with our high cost of business. ..Yukon has serious branding issues to where customers don't know Yukon exists nationally or globally. Government needs to be working on reducing both of these issues, as most of these issues are self induced"
11. did not reply
12. did not reply

Q) I am interested in attending an all markets winter development symposium in the future.

8 = Yes

1 = No

3 = No Comment

ADDITIONAL EVALUATION COMMENTS:

1. "That meeting was so depressing. It makes me think that we should forget about focussing on German and Japanese markets altogether. Perhaps we should just focus on Americans and Canadians during the winter"
2. "Good first step. Don't bother with additional step if government not willing to come to the table".
3. "Please organize future meetings under the assumption that participants know about the markets, product, pricing, commission and basic travel trade practices. I am tired to start at the bottom each time we meet. I would like meetings to be more result driven. We talk a lot, but hardly ever is there a result at the end from which we can move forward"
4. "I could not feel that the trade representatives do believe in Yukon winter products. They go with the flow and will sell what the customer is looking for. The Yukon is still not on the world map for them."
5. "But, government needs to do more than just have meetings. They need to start focusing on reducing costs for the Yukon so that we can get business occurring. This is both costs for travel and costs for owning a business. ...if Yukon Government could get a direct flight from Asia to Yukon, how much would that reduce transportation costs for emerging markets? How many of my rooms would be filled during the peak season? Could this then be grown into a winter flight too for Japanese and even undercut the flight costs to Yellowknife?"
6. We strongly believe that Yukon Tourism must work towards extending the summer season into spring and fall. May is a great time to visit Yukon with already long days and usually friendly weather. Condor is already serving Whitehorse from the first week of May. Unfortunately too many businesses and tourism attractions are still closed at that time of have unattractive opening hours. Same in fall; September may be cool and windy but offers still great opportunities for hikes, road trips and short paddling adventures. Again Condor offers service into early October. Tourism Yukon must find a way to make it attractive for local operators to offer products in spring and fall. And all attractions must be open from the first week of May until the first week of October. This includes campgrounds, museums and visitor centres"

Interviewed by Vic Istchenko of the CBC, DERtours Per Illian and Maple Fun Tours, Bill Bessho shared their perspectives with the reporter regarding the winter meeting discussion and their involvement as well as their outlook for winter tourism potential in Yukon.

“Istchenko: What are the realistic barriers though? You’re telling me most Germans who are looking for a winter experience have one close by.

Illian: First of all it’s a big challenge because we have the Scandinavian countries which are very close, which is Sweden, Norway, Finland is about a 2.5 hour flight. So a lot of products which are sold or which are available here in the Yukon are as well there, so that is your competitors and to come here takes a little bit longer. Let’s say – we came in yesterday and it takes us about 18 hours to come here but there is a huge interest because we have good business with your destination in summer and we’re happy to support in this brainstorming session for the winter.”

The question was asked by the reporter what he thought it would take.

Illian: “Time. A lot of time. I think this was a kickoff and it has to be the industry, the tourism industry who is really looking for this business so there has to be a demand by the supplier and maybe in the long, long run, not in the first few years, maybe as well a direct connecting flight for at least some weeks who brings clients directly in 8 to 9 hours to the Yukon and this would really open up the business. It was suggested that even if a full chartered jet of 300 people arrived here now there wouldn’t be enough for them to do to occupy their time for a week and that the number of rooms are limited.

“Istchenko: Obviously we have to provide more winter product before that can be a reality for tour companies like yours”.

“Illian: Yes. A lot of variety of the product is there but to fill planes it needs more products, but I think this is only the third or fourth step is really to have this plane now. We have to see okay is there another chance to slowly grow because we can’t say, okay, now we put a plane in and then suddenly the business boosts. That’s not going to work. We have to slowly build it up and we are happy to be a partner and therefore we have come over.”

The reporter then discussed with Maple Fun tours their perspective on the comparison between Yellowknife and Whitehorse as an attraction. Bill Bessho shared that Yellowknife is “well established and are willing to work with us or folks that are in Japan and so their mechanism or infrastructure is well established”. Whitehorse’s infrastructure and flexibility in working with the Japanese markets is just not there yet.

When asked what it was that we needed in Yukon, Maple Fun Tours replied that they want to work with those businesses that are serious about working with them. They need flexibility with their suppliers to “service even the single occupant – in Yellowknife for example they take any day, anytime, but here it’s a bit different because they maybe lack the manpower or you know the business so defiantly – a little more commitment from Whitehorse suppliers”.

The final question’s response regarding what else might be needed focused on the need to build greater awareness of Yukon in the Japanese market both in summer and winter and that Maple Fun Tours is trying to do that now by working with Air Canada to bring more Asians to Yukon in winter.

APPENDIX D - PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION LIST

Note : the registration list is not reflective of those who “no-showed”

| | <u>NAME</u> | <u>BUSINESS</u> | <u>E-MAIL</u> | <u>WEBSITE</u> |
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