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DISCOVER PUERTO RICO REPORTS HIGHEST TOURISM REVENUE AND VISITOR NUMBERS IN THE ISLAND'S HISTORY AS IT CELEBRATES ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

With year-to-date revenue of \$445M and 1.67M passenger arrivals across the San Juan, Ponce, and Aguadilla airports, Puerto Rico is tracking towards a record-breaking year.

San Juan, Puerto Rico, July 1, 2019 – Today, Discover Puerto Rico, the Island's first-ever Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), celebrates its one-year anniversary, announcing that tourism is the strongest it's ever been, as the destination tracks towards a record-breaking year. Year-to-date revenue is the highest in the Island's history, with \$445M reported through May.¹ The Island has received 1.67M visitors across the San Juan, Ponce, and Aguadilla airports in the first few months of this year, the highest number of airport arrivals in the January-April timeframe in the Island's history.²

"Despite the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) estimating a recovery between 2021-2022, and New Orleans taking eight years to get back to pre-Katrina levels, we set an aggressive goal to fast-track the visitor economy at a record pace, for the benefit of local communities," said Brad Dean, CEO of Discover Puerto Rico.

Since its inception last July, Discover Puerto Rico quickly embarked on a mission to reposition Puerto Rico's brand, fully capitalizing on the Island's rich tourism product to thrive as a leading Caribbean destination. The organization's five major initiatives include:

- **Decreased negative perception:** Discover Puerto Rico addressed the negative perceptions travelers and meeting planners had, to strengthen both the leisure and meetings and conventions segments.
 - Consumers' likelihood to visit Puerto Rico increased 6 points over the past year,³ an impressive jump, despite significantly reduced marketing budgets.
 - Among meeting planners, post-Maria perception of Puerto Rico as a fully recovered or ready for business destination has increased 5X (from 8% to 41%) over the past year. Desirability for booking meetings & conventions has grown almost 3X (from 24% to 71%) this year.⁴
- **Repositioned the brand for growth:** Given inconsistent branding through the years, Discover Puerto Rico repositioned the brand. They developed a new brand identity, and launched a research-based marketing strategy, along with a new brand campaign, a move that has already yielded results and will yield even greater long-term impact.
 - Data shows that consumers who are exposed to the new brand campaign are staying nearly three days longer than those who haven't been.⁵

¹ Source: STR Monthly Trend Report, January-May 2019. AirDNA Monthly Market Summary Report, January-May 2019

² Source: Aerostar Airport Holdings, LLC. PMM Business Intelligence, January-April 2019

³ Source: Strategic Marketing & Research Insights, LLC, Brand Health Research

⁴ Source: Discover Puerto Rico, Planners' Perception Research

⁵ Source: Arrivalist

- Media coverage of areas outside San Juan has grown 4X since last July, and there has been a tremendous growth in the number of visitors outside of San Juan. Arrivals into Aguadilla are 44% higher than the previous record from 2017, and the airport is on pace to receive 800,000 passengers this year, which would shatter the existing record.
- Media coverage of Puerto Rico most prominently features culture, arts, and cuisine, followed by natural attractions, versus just beaches.
- **Revamped digital marketing that drives results:** Discover Puerto Rico is more strongly connecting with travelers online. The new website, revamped approach to driving social media engagement, and strong digital ad performance, are proving effective.
 - Since launch, traffic to the new website is up 128%. Pages per session are up 34%, showing people are engaging with a range of content. Time on the website is up 31%, and bounce rate is down by 13%, meaning the content is driving interest. Page views are also up 228%.
 - Discover Puerto Rico has seen nearly 40,000 referrals to local businesses and points of interest.
- **Catapulted the meetings and conventions business:** Discover Puerto Rico took a very weak pipeline of sales prospects, and injected strong interest to propel Puerto Rico as a leading force in the space, as they elevate the Island's status as the most technologically-advanced destination in the Caribbean, offering ease of traveling, combined with unparalleled culture and diverse natural offerings.
 - Leads-generated and contracted events are the highest they have been in five years. Requested and contracted rooms are also at an all-time high. And, conversions on bookings are up 121% (from 14% to 31%).
 - Discover Puerto Rico estimates over \$92M in economic impact, with groups already signed and another \$288M in potential impact from opportunities in the pipeline.
 - This effort secured Connect 2021, which will bring a gathering of 1,700 meeting planners across a wide range of sectors.
- **Increased operational efficiency and effectiveness:** The DMO is preparing for industry accreditation to position Discover Puerto Rico among the highest in quality and performance standards for destination marketing and management. A year in advance of being eligible, the DMO checks off meeting high standards in areas including governance, finance, human resources, sales, communications, branding, destination development, and research. The DMO already complies with 70% of the mandatory accreditation standards and 40% of the aspirational or voluntary standards of leading DMOs.

“We’re thrilled to report that Puerto Rico’s tourism is the strongest it’s ever been. However, this is just the first step. Our ultimate objective is to put the transformative power of travel to work in Puerto Rico, by doubling the visitor economy, and continuing to benefit the Island’s residents and businesses. It’s critical to ensure we have the right resources to continue this momentum,” said Brad Dean, CEO of Discover Puerto Rico.

The destination is seeing numerous enhancements to its product, drawing travelers to its growing list of experiences. The Island’s rich culture, cuisine, history, arts, music, and dance are unparalleled. It’s an Island filled with natural wonders, including the only tropical rainforest in the U.S. Forest Service, El Yunque National Forest, and three of the world’s five bioluminescent bays.

The Island has also become a hotspot in the Caribbean for the LGBTQ+ community with a culture of inclusivity, and a variety of attractions and nightlife.

And, with growing hospital developments on the Island, and the benefit of recovery in a tropical climate, the medical tourism sector will also be one of growth in the future.

Among Puerto Rico's numerous and exciting future endeavors, are the 500-year anniversary of San Juan, with cultural events beginning in Fall 2019, the opening of District San Juan, a five-acre hospitality and entertainment district, destined to be the most vibrant in the Caribbean, and being named the host destination for the upcoming World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) 2020 Global Summit.

For more information on the destination, visit: DiscoverPuertoRico.com.

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About Discover Puerto Rico

Discover Puerto Rico is a newly established private, not for-profit Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) whose mission is to make Puerto Rico visible to the world as a premier travel destination. The DMO brings prosperity to the people of Puerto Rico, by collaboratively promoting the Island's diversity and uniqueness for leisure and business travel, and events. It is responsible for all global marketing, sales, and promotion of the destination, and works collaboratively with key local governmental and non-governmental players throughout Puerto Rico's visitor economy and community at large, to empower economic growth. To discover all the beauty the Island has to offer, visit DiscoverPuertoRico.com.