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## Travelzoo and GHA Study: Luxury Today is a Good Night's Sleep

**LONDON/NEW YORK/MUNICH, June 1, 2017**—The most important thing for consumers purchasing a luxury travel experience is being able to truly switch off and relax, according to a study of international consumer sentiment regarding luxury travel. Global travel deals publisher Travelzoo® (NASDAQ: TZOO) and the Global Hotel Alliance (GHA) collaborated on a survey of over 4,800 people from their respective membership bases and found that hotels, cruise ships and airlines should focus on simple requirements such as comfort, cleanliness and exemplary service in order to win over customers seeking a luxury experience.

Richard Singer, Travelzoo's President, Europe, discussed the findings at the recent Ultratravel Forum in London, as part of a panel of presidents from leading luxury travel brands. Singer said: "It's easy to assume that consumers are looking for sophisticated perks and indulgences when seeking a luxury travel experience. What our research suggests is that people really value getting the basics spot-on. The ability to properly recharge in a restful environment far exceeds other considerations, such as endorsements from famous people or high-tech gadgets. We can also see just how important gold-standard service is when it comes to luxury. In a commoditised world, travel brands should focus on this and on creating spaces for people to relax properly and switch off."

### **Paying for a good night's sleep**

The main incentive for all respondents to pay more and fly business or first class is the ability to lie flat and get a good night's sleep during their flight. This is the case regardless of disposable income or average spend on travel. Just 2% of British respondents cite better food and drink as the reason to fly anything other than economy, and for Germans the number is only 4%. Food and drink were more of

an incentive for Americans, with one in 10 respondents saying they would fly business or first class for the in-flight catering.

### **Luxury travellers are open to mix and match**

Collectively, more than half of all respondents say they are open to the idea of mixing luxury and budget in their travel plans, flying low-cost then staying in a 5-star hotel or resort, for example.

Convenience, including flight times and the ability to fly from a nearby airport, is a key decision-making factor when choosing which airline to fly with, particularly in short-haul travel.

For long-haul travel, the picture is slightly different. For high-income respondents, the attitude towards low-cost long-haul shifts, with the majority in favour of traditional carriers who are perceived to provide a high-quality experience as part of a luxury holiday. British and German consumers with a household income less than \$100,000 per year are more open to low-cost long-haul routes, with two thirds saying they would fly this way.

### **Celebs don't sell hotel rooms**

The study also reveals the influence of celebrities is minimal when it comes to selecting a luxury hotel. Less than 5% of respondents in all markets cite a celebrity link as an influential factor when choosing a hotel. For American, British and German respondents, the two most important factors that define a luxury hotel are exemplary service followed by an ideal location. For Germans and Britons, the third defining aspect of the luxury hotel is a large room size, while for Americans it is a luxury bathroom.

### **What not to do in a luxury hotel**

When asked what would damage the perception of luxury in the hotel environment, travellers are clear that the biggest turn-offs are 1) lack of cleanliness in the hotel, 2) thin walls preventing that all-important good night's sleep, and 3) expensive Wi-Fi. Costly Wi-Fi is most irritating to German guests.

### **The rise of the Middle Eastern airline**

When respondents were asked which airline brand best defines luxury, Emirates exceeds all others and received the most mentions in all markets. In the United States, American Airlines received only 4.4% and United Airlines just 3.2%, while 21% of respondents feel Emirates takes the luxury-air-travel crown. In the UK, Emirates is number one in luxury for 31% of people, while British Airways was cited by 15% of respondents. In Germany, a similar picture emerges, with Emirates taking 29% of the votes and no

national carriers featuring in the responses. This shows the extent of Emirates' penetration into the luxury market and its perceived brand differentiation from national carriers.

### **Cruising can be luxe**

Over half of all respondents in the survey believe a cruise holiday can offer a luxury experience. Cunard is the clear winner of top luxury cruise brand in the UK (66%), followed by Oceania Cruises and Celebrity Cruises. In Germany, Hapag-Lloyd-Cruises takes the top spot with 57%, followed by Celebrity Cruises. In the United States, Celebrity Cruises just takes the crown with 25% of votes and Cunard is in second place.

### **The ultimate luxury brand**

When it comes to the overall top luxury brand in the consumer universe, Rolls-Royce received the most mentions in an unprompted question about the ultimate luxury brand in all sectors of consumer goods and services, with Rolex in second place.

Commenting on the results Christopher Hartley, CEO of the Global Hotel Alliance said: "We got a fascinating response from among our 10-million-strong customer base, many of whom are regulars in our luxurious Ultratravel Collection hotels. The survey created some interesting discussions among the CEOs on the Ultratravel Forum Presidents Panel; but for now, the clear message is to focus on service, before chasing celebrity chefs and their Michelin stars!"

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### **About the research**

\*The Travelzoo & Global Hotel Alliance survey was completed by 4,789 respondents in the United States, Germany and the UK from May 2–10, 2017.

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