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DOCTOR'S ORDERS: AMERICANS WANT VACATION Rx

Air New Zealand Partners with Former NASA Scientists to Conduct a Groundbreaking Psychological and Physiological Study of Travelers

EL SEGUNDO, Calif. (June 21, 2006) – Air New Zealand has teamed with a group of former NASA scientists at Alertness Solutions to conduct the most intensive study of travelers to date. Using methodology previously used to study only astronauts and pilots, the airline is breaking new ground in examining what they have termed the “Vacation Gap,” the knowledge gap that exists regarding what happens to leisure travelers before, during and after their vacations.

The Vacation Gap study is a two-phase project. The results of the first phase, an in-depth national online survey, measure consumer perceptions of the vacation process and will compare it to the data from the second phase – an intricate in-flight study of travelers. The findings from both phases will be used to examine a wide range of vacation and travel related questions, as well as guide the airline on future enhancements designed to maximize the vacation experience.

“By studying the Vacation Gap, Air New Zealand is continuing its efforts to make our flights a positive part of the entire vacation experience,” said Gus Gilmore, vice president of Air New Zealand – The Americas. “Air New Zealand will use the results of our study to identify and explore new ways to accelerate the vacation mindset and extend it for travelers once they return. By the time we’ve completed this study, no one will know more than we do about the vacationer’s mindset, inside and out.”

The national online survey of 1,200 Americans was conducted in April and included 46 questions about work and stress, the vacation experience and the mental and emotional transitions people make between work/home and vacation modes. Among the findings, more than half (51 percent) would be willing to reduce benefits, daily breaks, pay or holiday time off to get more annual vacation time.

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In addition, the survey has revealed an increasing paradox between America's stress levels and the genuine need for rest and vacation, and a significant gap between the desire for a vacation and actually taking one. Nearly 70 percent of those surveyed believe doctors should be able to write prescriptions for vacations and more than half feel that extended time off results in as much as a 25 percent increase in work productivity.

The second phase of Air New Zealand's Vacation Gap project uses scientific monitoring devices to measure brain, eye, muscle, and heart rate activity of 10 passengers flying from the U.S. to New Zealand in April and May. In addition to undergoing intensive in-flight monitoring, vacation travelers also collected data as they transitioned from home to vacation and back home again using a wrist actigraph to collect 24-hour activity levels and quantify sleep, a PDA to collect objective performance of travelers, a daily diary for reporting activities, mood, stress, relaxation and more.

Additional highlights from the consumer survey include:

The American Leisure Paradox

- Respondents worked about nine to 10 hours a day at work, and almost half rated their stress levels as "moderate" to "extreme."
- Other than time or money, 30 percent of respondents cited family commitments, 20 percent cited workload concerns and 11 percent cited guilt about leaving work as the biggest obstacles to taking vacations.

Transitioning to and from the Vacation Mindset

- More than half (59 percent) feel like they're on vacation before they even arrive at the destination and 66 percent say they do not work while they are on vacation.
- However, the survey suggests the vacation mindset fades quickly after Americans return. More than half (57 percent) begin to feel like they were never on vacation within the first three days back, returning to their normal stress levels and routines with exercise, sleep, work, diet and social activity.

The Benefits of Vacation

- The majority of people surveyed acknowledged that vacations have both physiological and psychological health benefits. When asked what they thought would happen if they took two weeks off of work at a time, nearly 40 percent said they thought they would “return relaxed and refreshed.”
- Respondents also agreed that after a vacation, they feel more energized, happy and have a higher ability to communicate with others and concentrate, as well as see up to a 25 percent increase in happiness at work and productivity and decrease in stress.

Men vs. Women

- During the planning process, the week before and day of departure and on the plane, men rated their levels of relaxation up to 16 percent higher than women.
- Do women work harder than men? According to the survey, it would seem so. On average, women have taken three fewer days of vacation in the past year than men (female average = 25.0 days vs. male average = 27.9 days). Additionally, the majority of women rated their current stress levels as “moderate” (41 percent), while most men rated theirs as “normal” (36 percent).

Under 50 vs. Over 50

- When responses were broken down by age, there was a significant difference of opinion on whether doctors should be able to write prescriptions for vacations, as well as their perceived benefits. Seventy-three percent of people under the age of 50 felt doctors should have the authority compared to only 59 percent of people over 50.

About Air New Zealand

Air New Zealand offers more direct flights to the South Pacific than any other airline, including nonstop flights from Los Angeles to New Zealand, London, Australia, Fiji, Tahiti and Samoa. Starting April 2007 the Cook Islands will also be on a nonstop route. With Air New Zealand's newest route addition, between London and Hong Kong, passengers can now fly round-the-world on one airline. Consistently rated among the world's best international airlines, Air New Zealand's most recent accolades include recognition by the *Conde Nast Traveler* Reader's Choice Awards, the *Travel + Leisure* World's Best Awards and *Business Traveler Magazine*. United Mileage Plus, US Airways Dividend Miles and Air Canada's Aeroplan members earn and redeem mileage on select flights. Both flight and vacation essentials can now be booked on AirNewZealand.com, where the lowest possible airfares are always guaranteed. Flight and vacation bookings can also be made by calling 1-800-262-1234 in the USA and 1-800-663-5494 in Canada.