

## Sounding Off



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# Sounding Off: Sustainability efforts in travel can't be all talk, little action

By PhocusWire (/PhocusWire-2147097825) | October 9, 2020



Jeremy Sampson, the Travel Foundation

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*"The words I'm using - I'm sorry to say - are empty platitudes devoid of any real meaning."*

Quote from Jeremy Sampson, CEO of the Travel Foundation, in an article on PhocusWire this week about sustainability in travel.

**Each Friday, PhocusWire dissects and debates an industry trend or new development covered by PhocusWire that week. (<https://www.phocuswire.com/rebuild-successfully-sustainably-travel-cautious-platitudes>)**

Talk is indeed cheap, especially when it comes to pressing issues such as sustainability.

And in 2020, when travel companies are fighting for their survival, a sustainable future might not be top of the agenda.

Jeremy Samson, CEO of Travel Foundation, makes an interesting point in his comment about the subjectivity in the interpretation of "build back better."

Is it better that airlines have got rid of older aircraft and that the industry is going to be smaller, at least in the short to medium term? Is it good enough?

The pandemic has raised interesting questions around whether airlines should get a break on environmental taxes and whether governments handing out bailouts should do so with environmental clauses?

In March and April, countless voices called for "green strings" to be attached to airline bailouts.

The French government attached some environmental conditions to its €4 billion bailout of Air France, as did the Dutch government for the bailout of sister carrier KLM.

But it's too easy to single out aviation - what of the cruise industry? Or hotels and tour operators that flood destinations with tourists with little thought on the impact?

Before the pandemic there was more action on sustainability. The world, in 2019, was in the grip of The Greta Effect.

Some in the investment community said they would be **putting sustainability at the center of investment strategy** (<https://www.phocuswire.com/venture-capitalists-sustainability-travel>).

More specifically in travel, **a report from Responsible Travel talked of calculating carbon impact of a whole trip** (<https://www.phocuswire.com/tourism-declares-climate-change-initiative>) and not just the transport element.

These were positive steps but they need to translate into action.

Just calculating the impact is also an important step but much more is needed.

**A report from Lufthansa and Hopper** (<https://www.phocuswire.com/Hopper-Lufthansa-sustainability>) published earlier this year revealed consumers wanted to see sustainable travel initiatives but not follow through with action.

There is genuine concern now that these initiatives won't translate into action.

In "building back better," everyone has a role - consumers, private enterprises and legislators.

Sustainability needs to remain firmly on the corporate agenda and travelers must vote with their wallets, supporting those with solid green strategies.

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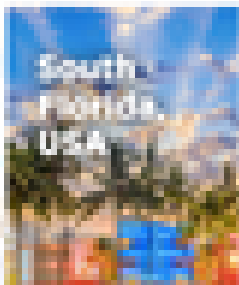
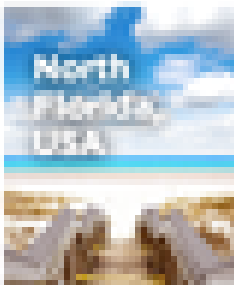
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