

# News & Notes

TRAVEL • MANUFACTURER • RETAIL • TRADE SHOW

TRAVEL

## When Travel Insurance Makes Sense



Inclement weather, expensive getaways, potential illness and relationship troubles are just some of the reasons travelers may want to consider investing in travel insurance in the event a trip is delayed or cancelled. Writing in the *Chicago Tribune*, Carolyn Bigda

suggests travelers first consult their credit cards, more than half of which offer robust coverage in the event of travel mishaps. Credit cards may provide as much as \$5,000 in coverage for nonrefundable travel expenses if a trip is cancelled or interrupted – or even \$500 for delays longer than six hours. Airlines and travel booking sites often offer their own coverage, but Bigda says they're not ideal. Instead, consider purchasing coverage from an independent agent such as InsureMyTrip, which offers hundreds of policies for a cost between 4% and 8% of nonrefundable travel expenses. For those with pre-existing medical conditions, coverage typically must be purchased within 10 to 30 days after booking a trip. Berkshire Hathaway Travel Protection offers AirCare, a “cancel for any reason” policy that will reimburse travelers for everything from weather-related delays and missed connections to breaking up with a significant other prior to a trip.

SOURCE: CHICAGO TRIBUNE

## Corporate Travelers Aren't Interested in Airbnb

Airbnb, the service that pairs travelers with property owners willing to rent out their houses and apartments, offers a service that caters exclusively to business travelers. Yet many travel managers have deliberately avoided this aspect of the “sharing economy.” According to a white paper released by the Association of Corporate Travel Executives in conjunction with American Express Global Business Travel, the vast majority of 350 corpo-

rate travel managers have no plans to introduce Airbnb-style services. More than half say they're focused on trimming budgets rather than improving the travel experience for their clients. Security concerns hinder the sharing economy, which includes other services like ridesharing apps Lyft and Uber. Nearly half of the travel managers surveyed said their customers simply aren't interested in Airbnb and other sharing economy travel options.

SOURCE: SKIFT

## How to Make Travel More Meaningful



According to *National Geographic Traveler* Editor at Large Christopher Elliott, travelers are tiring of the same old empty travel rituals. Instead they are looking for ways to make journeys more meaningful. Out are clichéd pilgrimages such as autumn vacationing in New England to “watch leaves fall off the trees,” and traveling to New York's Times Square to see a disco ball descend on New Year's Eve. Increasingly, travelers are looking for ways to avoid tour groups and tourist traps and instead gain insights about real people and places in the hopes of enriching their own lives. To do so, Elliott, writing in *USA Today*, recommends three approaches. First, consider volunteering. “Our most meaningful experience yet was just recently when we had the honor of teaching schoolchildren in Tanzania,” says David James, author of *Going Gypsy: One Couple's Adventure from Empty Nest to No Nest at All*. Next, follow a passion. “A vacation can provide us with the perfect place and circumstance to discover how impactful and vital your passion is to you,” says psychologist Kim Chronister. A vacation to New England for the fall foliage could, in fact, ignite a love for outdoor photography. And finally, even if you're not able to volunteer you can still put your dollars to good work. “On past trips,” says Annie Scrivanich, senior vice president for Cruise Specialists, “clients visiting Cambodia to tour Angkor Wat have contributed to local well projects to provide clean water for many local villagers.”

SOURCE: USA TODAY

## Rolling Luggage: Loved by Travelers, Loathed by Airlines



**W**hy does rolling luggage so often appear on baggage carousels lying on its front rather than its reinforced back? Are airlines in cahoots with luggage makers who want bags to wear out faster? Not quite. In fact it's often because of the wheels on rolling luggage. "We find that by placing the front side down on the conveyor," says Charles Hobart, a representative for United, "it keeps the wheels off the conveyor and prevents falls." Wheels are more prone to get caught in conveyor belts, or simply make bags roll off the conveyor belt. "This is particularly bad when the cruise lines are handling the bags," says Denis Carvill, deputy executive director of operations, maintenance and airline relations at Burbank's Bob Hope Airport, "and they roll off into the water." Even four-wheeled spinners raise the ire of some airport workers because they claim the bags take up too much space by rolling next to a traveler rather than trailing behind.

SOURCE: LOS ANGELES TIMES

## The Next Crowdfunded Luggage Success

**A**round this time last year, upstart luggage maker Trunkster garnered headlines for its crowdfunded success when it raised more than \$1 million via a Kickstarter campaign. Travelers must be hungry for innovative new smart luggage offerings, because now Travel-Light LTD has raised more than \$275,000 in just 24 hours on Kickstarter for its G-RO intelligent carry-on bag. The suitcase includes a built-in tablet stand, long handle, two-port USB charging station, impact-resistant polymer panels, large-diameter wheels, a waterproof bottom and an optional electronic module with a battery, location tracker and proximity detector. The G-RO far exceeded its initial goal of \$125,000, and the luggage is still available to order for \$249.

SOURCE: CROWDFUND INSIDER

# Grand Trunk Joins the Inc. 5000



Grand Trunk, maker of a wide array of adventure travel gear and accessories, has been named to the 2015 Inc. 5000 list of the fastest growing private companies in the

United States. With growth of 142% over the past three years, Grand Trunk earned position 2597 on the list. "We are thrilled to be among the companies on this prestigious list," says Grand Trunk Co-Founder Jon Neff. "We never dreamed our adventures would lead to such success, and we are honored that today our products are sought after by countless travelers and adventurers around the world." Since 2002 Grand Trunk has designed travel goods and accessories to make the outdoors more convenient and enjoyable. Founded as "The Travel Hammock," the brand has evolved into a renowned line of hammocks, shelters and "goods for the road." Grand Trunk joins Zappos, GoPro, Timberland, Clif Bar, Patagonia and Fitbit among other notable companies on the high-profile list.

SOURCE: GRAND TRUNK

## Bugatti Buys Joanel

**T**he Bugatti Group, formerly known as Bugatti-Sedona Inc., has acquired handbag and accessories maker Joanel Inc. This is Bugatti's third acquisition in two years, and it provides the brand with resources to develop a strong line of handbags. "Both companies shared similar values and complementary strengths," said Johanne Boivin, president and creative director of Joanel. "It was not long before both companies concluded that together we could accomplish great things. We plan to build a global women's line of bags and accessories." As the company's management team looks to expand global sales, Bugatti plans to continue seeking acquisition opportunities.

SOURCE: BUGATTI GROUP INC.

## Goodwipes Commercial Featured in Adweek

**G**oodwipes, maker of personal hygiene wipes formulated with natural tea tree oil and peppermint "for when you can't shower," has produced a two-minute commercial that caught the attention of *Adweek*. The advertising industry publication questioned some of the "over the top" jokes about bodily functions, but it ultimately gave Goodwipes "an A for effort, on a tiny budget." The two-minute clip features actress and comedian Lace Larrabee who pulls no punches in describing just how useful Goodwipes can be. Check out the spot, and *Adweek's* review, at [bit.ly/1Mfiv8g](http://bit.ly/1Mfiv8g).



A still from Goodwipes' notable new commercial for its personal hygiene body wipes.

SOURCE: GOODWIPES

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## New Partnerships for LCI

**L**CI Brands has announced partnerships with the Outdoor Industries Women's Coalition (OIWC), an organization that encourages female leadership in the workplace, and The Grommet, a website that sells innovative items with a focus on forging direct connections between makers and customers. "LCI Brands is proud to partner with OIWC, a dynamic organization committed to educating companies and employees on gender diversification and inclusion in all areas of business," said Jen Panattoni, LCI's director of marketing. "We also wanted to make the most of our membership with the new OIWC program that includes membership matching through The REI Foundation's Mary Anderson Legacy Grant. We know that funds raised through corporate partnerships directly impact the outdoor industry and create a more sustainable future for our best asset: our people." The partnership with The Grommet has focused on featuring Lewis N. Clark products on the site. Mere days after launch, sales expectations for the brand's backpacks and duffels were far exceeded, so now these bags will be joined by Lewis N. Clark's Sling Pack to be offered on The Grommet Wholesale, a B2B platform serving 5,000 retailers. SOURCE: LCI BRANDS



The Lewis N. Clark ElectroLight Sling Pack from LCI Brands

## Cabrelli Welcomes New Sales Agency

**C**abrelli, makers of Fashion Executives rollerbriefs and Koltov organizers, is happy to welcome Total Accessories sales agency, the Southeastern sales representative for Cabrelli, to the retail and wholesale family of Atlanta sales group The Link Companies. Formerly known as The Southern Link, The Link Companies represents select brands, primarily in the gift and home decor industries. Each of The Link Companies' agencies is founded on "outstanding service, strong relationships and a commitment to succeed." SOURCE: CABRELLI INC.

# Biaggi Slated for New TV Appearance



Biaggi CEO Stephen Hersh with Lori Greiner from "Shark Tank"

The only luggage line to have appeared on ABC's "Shark Tank" television show, Biaggi Luggage will now send its CEO, Stephen Hersh, to its spin-off program "Beyond The Tank." Premiering in January 2016 on ABC and airing in primetime on Friday nights, the show's second season will feature a follow-up look at the outcomes after Biaggi's initial experience on "Shark Tank." With almost \$5 million in retail sales in less than a year, Biaggi was one of the most successful products ever to appear on "Shark Tank." SOURCE: BIAGGI LUGGAGE

## Hidesign's "Art of Reuse" Contest

**L**eather goods manufacturer Hidesign promotes ecologically sensitive manufacturing techniques, such as the use of natural materials and handcrafted products. To that end, the company sponsors its "Art of Reuse" campaign to help build an appreciation for the importance of recycling. The campaign runs in India, where the company is based, and features a contest in which paper bags and leather scraps, wax thread, needles and punches are provided to contestants who then create beautiful products out of the recycled materials. The kits are available in the more than 70 Hidesign stores throughout India, and winners will receive an all-expenses-paid trip to Hidesign headquarters in Pondicherry, as well as a chance to design a bag and product vouchers worth approximately \$200. SOURCE: HIDESIGN



Examples of the types of interesting recycled products that are submitted to Hidesign's "Art of Reuse" contest.

## Royce Leather Featured in Mashable Video

**O**ne online multimedia publisher Mashable is producing a series of videos highlighting family businesses that have transformed themselves through entrepreneurship and innovation. A recent video highlighted leather goods maker Royce, a family-owned company since 1974 that can trace its origins to 19th century Austria. Run by the Bauer family, Royce has incorporated Bluetooth tracking and biometric technology into its products in order to improve security for travelers, transforming a traditional family business into a tech company. "Royce has succeeded by remaining true to our family culture and our values," said CEO Andrew Royce Bauer, "while embracing the most innovative business practices which can propel use into new markets and new growth opportunities. Our sustainability as a company is built on both our resilience as people and our intellectual curiosity as product designers." SOURCE: ROYCE LEATHER



A still from Mashable's video profile of Royce, featuring CEO Andrew Royce Bauer and his brother, Managing Director William Bauer.

## Eagle Creek Launches The Travel Hub Online

Eagle Creek has converted its blog into The Travel Hub, a one-stop-shop for helpful travel tips and information. Topics including destination inspiration, trip planning, savvy travel, safety and packing organization make The Travel Hub a useful resource for pre-travel planning and a great place to get inspired by new destinations. “Every traveler wants to be smart and appear even smarter,” said Phil Diehl, e-commerce manager at Eagle Creek. “They want to get the most value for their investment and they want the trip to be memorable. To that end, we’ve consolidated and simplified our content to create the best possible user interface for our customers, regardless of how they’re accessing the site. The result is a wealth of information and tips born of first-hand experience, right at your fingertips.” Visit the Travel Hub at [www.eaglecreek.com/blog](http://www.eaglecreek.com/blog).

SOURCE: EAGLE CREEK

A screenshot of Eagle Creek's new Travel Hub, a one-stop-shop for helpful tips and travel information.



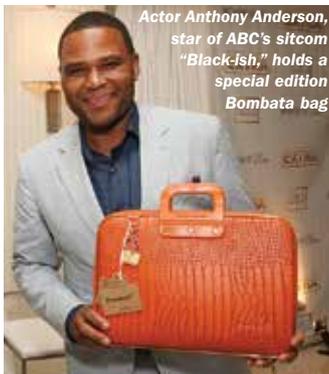
## Back Saver Wallet Named Best Men's Accessory

The Back Saver Wallet has been selected as a winner of the 2015 Global Product and Service Consumer Choice Award for Quality Golf Gifts and Accessories by *Corporate Vision* magazine. The patented, 100% American-made wallet is constructed of full grain cowhide and will hold as much as a bi-fold or tri-fold wallet, but at less than half the size. “With the Back Saver Wallet, bulky pockets are a thing of the past,” said Vlad Gribovsky, owner of TPK Inc. “As a thin wallet for men, it features a construction that eliminates the bulge by folding flat, making it one of the best front pocket wallets out there. The Congress of State Chiropractic Associations has recommended our product as an ideal wallet to eliminate sciatica due to its thin design and function.” Corporate Vision’s Global Products and Services Awards recognize professionals “whose dedication to innovation and moving their industry forward... has seen them take their rightful place at the vanguard of their industry.”

SOURCE: TPK INC.

## Bombata Sponsors Emmy Weekend

Entertainment news television show “Extra” hosted a “Weekend Of Lounge” at the Emmys in September, and Bombata was a featured sponsor. In the lounge at the London Hotel in West Beverly Hills, celebrities including Anthony Anderson, Alan Cumming, Michael Rapaport and Jordan Peele were presented with a black Bombata Trolley that doubled as a “shopping cart” while browsing the lounge, and they were gifted



Actor Anthony Anderson, star of ABC's sitcom “Black-ish,” holds a special edition Bombata bag

a laptop case or travel wallet as well. A special edition of 110 bags with a gold-tone Bombata logo was produced specifically for the event. “It was fun to meet and talk with them,” said Bombata Designer Fabio Guidoni of the celebrities in attendance. “I received many compliments and suggestions. They all travel a lot so I am confident they are going to use them soon.”

SOURCE: BOMBATA USA

# Luggage Online Launches Redesigned Website

Online luggage retailer Luggage Online has launched a redesigned website at [www.luggageonline.com](http://www.luggageonline.com). The new site makes finding a traveler’s ideal luggage as simple as possible.



Luggage Online's newly redesigned website is aimed at improving the customer experience.

After choosing a brand – from the likes of RIMOWA, Samsonite, Tumi, Travelpro, Briggs & Riley, American Tourister, DELSEY, Victorinox Swiss Army and many more – customers can use a slider interface to browse all available collections from that brand. Further sorting is done via enhanced product refinement options, including popular features such as leather or non-leather, weight, carry-on sizing, checkpoint friendliness, laptop capacity, wheeled or non-wheeled and more. The revamped site uses simplified navigation and high-definition photos and graphics to improve the customer experience.

SOURCE: LUGGAGE ONLINE

## eBags Invests in Innovation

Online luggage retailer eBags has launched a partnership with Iterate Studio to create an Innovation Lab with assets in Colorado, Silicon Valley, India and Ukraine. The Innovation Lab consists of two elements, according to eBags CEO Mike Edwards. “The first is a Rapid Test Center,” Edwards says, “designed to improve the velocity and number of experiments conducted on eBags’ websites each month. This workflow will speed up our absorption of unique digital tools that are proven to improve shopping for the 36 million people who visit our sites each year. The second is a Digital R&D Lab that will deliver the Internet of Things and business model enhancements for eBags.” Iterate Studio is a practitioner of open innovation in the digital space, discovering and curating emerging technologies and helping its customers implement proof-of-concept tests to reduce the time, costs and risks associated with deploying innovative new technologies.

SOURCE: EBAGS

## For Retailers, Social Media Bridges the Gap Between Online and Off

While many retailers may think of online shopping as an entirely different animal than in-store shopping, according to a panel at the SAP Retail Forum, the best approach is, in fact, a consistent, integrated experience that merges online and offline shopping. The panel suggests that one thing bridges these two worlds better than any other: social media. The rise of “social retailing” provides a new approach for blending a store’s web presence with its physical location, and the opportunity to tap into an audience as a real-time focus group for opinions on everything from favorite products to what traditional marketing methods result in the most meaningful customer engagement. Social media also offers a direct sales tool, from shoppable ads on YouTube to Twitter’s “Buy Now” button and Pinterest’s buyable pins. Mobile devices are driving the social retail experience, as clicking on social media apps can be much easier than opening a browser and typing a long URL on a tiny virtual keyboard. Smart retailers aren’t isolating in-store shopping from online, they’re taking pains to be social and unite the two.

SOURCE: CHAIN STORE AGE

## Chipped Credit Cards a Challenge for Small Retailers

On October 1, 2015, the rules surrounding credit card fraud changed, particularly as they relate to new credit cards embedded with microchips. Prior to that date, banks bore the cost of counterfeit cards. But now, in conjunction with the introduction of new Europay MasterCard Visa (EMV) technology that incorporates microchips into the face of credit cards, retailers will be liable for losses due to counterfeit cards if they do not have a card reader capable of reading the EMV cards’ embedded microchips. The National Retail Federation (NRF) supports improved card security, but believes the measures do not go far enough and in many cases will be cost-prohibitive for small retailers. According to the NRF, replacing magnetic-stripe card readers with chip-card readers is costing businesses between \$30 billion and \$35 billion nationwide. The organization has publicly agreed with the FBI, which says chip-based credit cards should be used with a PIN instead of a signature to minimize the risk of fraud. NRF cited a gift shop owner who testified before Congress in October that the change to EMV readers has been overwhelming and that many small business owners are “disappointed that without PINs they are being pressured to make an expensive investment without receiving the full level of security that could be provided.”

SOURCE: NRF

## Different Demographic Groups Shop Differently

New consumer survey data reveals why retailers should keep different demographics in mind when working on marketing and customer experience. The data focuses on the in-store versus online shopping habits of each demographic in today’s “concierge economy.” Millennials, those born between 1980 and 2000, will make up one-third of the population by 2020, and they have received the lion’s share of retailers’ attention in recent years. Millennials are forcing brand marketing strategies into digital channels, including social engagement. They prefer individual attention and “just-for-me” products and, despite their time spent online, Millennials prefer face-to-face meetings over self-service opportunities. Baby Boomers, those born between 1944 and 1964, have the most money to spend (an estimated \$400 billion each year on consumer goods and services) and they, too, have taken a liking to online resources. However, for Boomers the online shopping experience is largely limited to pre-purchase research, while the transaction itself is most likely to happen in a brick-and-mortar store. Members of Generation X, born between 1965 and 1979, account for 18% of total U.S. spending power, are highly educated and highly skeptical. They will research anything and everything online, primarily as a means to ensure they aren’t being taken advantage of by savvy marketers. For retailers, that means giving Gen X customers all the salient details and remaining straightforward and transparent in marketing.

SOURCE: NRF

## I.L.M Agrees to Coordinate Calendars with The International Travel Goods Show

Internationale Lederwaren Messe (I.L.M), the International Leather Goods Fair, has agreed to coordinate its calendar with The International Travel Goods Show. This will be a tremendous boon to retail buyers, as Europe’s largest leather goods trade expo will no longer conflict with the world’s largest travel goods show.

In the past, the biannual leather goods show would occasionally overlap its winter dates with The International Travel Goods Show, negatively impacting attendance for both shows. This new agreement between the Travel Goods Association (TGA) and I.L.M’s organizers ensures retail buyers who need to attend both shows will no longer be forced to choose between one or the other.

According to David Lomas, director of Go Travel/Design Go and vice chair of TGA’s Board of Directors, “The firm links now established between TGA and the I.L.M in Germany are a great example of the cooperation between two shows with so much in common, separated only by distance. This bond will help strengthen both shows and will help attract overseas vendors and visitors.”



TGA leadership recently attended the I.L.M show in Offenbach, Germany. From L to R: Cathy Hays, VP of The International Travel Goods Show; Arnd Hinrich Kappe, managing director of Messe Offenbach; Michele Marini Pittenger, TGA president; David Lomas, director, Go Travel/Design Go, TGA Board of Directors vice chair and TGA Show Committee chair.