

## Monster Category 5 storm batters Caribbean and takes aim at Florida coast

This week, 25 years after Miami suffered a direct hit from the devastation of Hurricane Andrew, South Florida—and the entire state—is frantically preparing for an even bigger and stronger storm that has already flattened parts of the Caribbean.

Hurricane Irma—like Andrew before it—could have a serious impact on travel and the travel retail business in the region. Clocking in as the strongest hurricane ever measured in the Atlantic Ocean, the category 5 storm has been packing winds of 180-185 miles per hour for more than 33 hours as I write this—another record.

Preliminary reports show that several of the Caribbean islands escaped direct hits, but Barbuda, and St. Martin—especially on the Dutch side—suffered damage to as much as 90% of the buildings on the island.

In St. Maarten, Princess Juliana Airport has reportedly been seriously damaged. Images of the flattened airport have been circulating on Social Media since yesterday morning. On a positive note, Penha St. Marten reported that all their staff are fine, however, they say that damage is widespread throughout the island.

The eye of the hurricane passed north of Puerto Rico early Thursday, and was moving west-northwest off the northern coast of the Dominican Republic on Thursday morning, the National Hurricane Center (NHC) said.

The Turks and Caicos also looks like it will take a direct hit and tourism officials urge visitors to leave if they can.

Here is an island by island report from the Caribbean Tourism Organization and other sources as of Thursday, Sept. 7:

The U.S. Virgin Islands has reportedly suffered very serious damage, with “hours of pounding with lots of rain and hurricane-force winds, leaving many parts of the second largest of the U.S. Virgin Islands in shambles, with dozens of persons reporting destroyed roofs, flooding, collapsed homes and more,” according to the *The Virgin Islands Consortium*.

The U.S. Virgin Islands governor Kenneth Mapp reported Hurricane Irma significantly damaged St. Thomas and St. John. Fire and police stations collapsed and the main hospital in St. Thomas sustained heavy damage. Authorities are distributing emergency food and water, and other supplies, and evacuating hospital patients to Puerto Rico and elsewhere. A curfew remains in effect, including for about 5,000 tourists.

In St. Thomas, Windward Passage will be closed for six months due to Hurricane Irma, while Sugar Bay Resort & Spa will be closed through December 31, 2017.

The Buccaneer on St. Croix remains open but reports some limitation of services over the next few days.

**St. Maarten (Dutch) / St. Martin (French)** Much of the dual-island nation has suffered significant damage, with hotels, government offices, homes and smaller buildings badly



damaged on both the Dutch and French sides of the island.

Princess Juliana International Airport suffered extensive damage to the roof and building, but authorities are working on clearing the runway. Damage is reported to the dock and seafront areas.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said there is “widescale destruction of infrastructure, houses and businesses in St. Maarten. There is no power, gasoline or running water.”

Sonesta Hotels, Oyster Bay Beach Resort, the Westin Dawn Beach, Beach Plaza reported extensive damage.

Both the French and Dutch governments are sending people to the country along with supplies and vital aid.

“It is an enormous disaster, 95% of the island is destroyed. I am in shock,” Daniel Gibbs, chairman of a local council on St Martin, told Radio Caribbean International, reported Reuters.

**Anguilla.** Hurricane Irma passed over Anguilla early on Wednesday, September 6. There are no reports of loss of life. The Clayton J Lloyd International Airport did not sustain any serious damage, although it has not yet reopened. Seaports also remain closed until further notice.

From all preliminary reports it appears that the major resorts are relatively intact, although many private residences sustained some damage.



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## Hurricane Irma threatens Florida with catastrophic damage

*Continued from page 1.*

**Antigua** escaped the worst of the disaster, reporting no loss of life and that the local population and all visitors to the island are safe. Most residential, business and hotel properties in Antigua remain largely unscathed and the main roads have been cleared of debris. The V C Bird International Airport has reopened.

**Barbuda**, Antigua's sister island, has been devastated by Hurricane Irma, however, with reports that almost 100% of the persons there are now homeless, and damage upwards of 90% of the island.

"Barbuda right now is literally a rubble," Prime Minister Gaston Browne of Antigua and Barbuda told an interviewer with ABS TV/Radio Antigua, and reported by CNN.

"The entire housing stock was damaged," Browne said after visiting the island of 1,800. "It is just a total devastation."

### British Virgin Islands

The British Virgin Islands took a direct hit from Hurricane Irma. The full extent of the damage is still being determined, but cars, trees, homes and boats have reportedly been destroyed.

The tourist board is reporting that most communications remain down, including mobile phone service and internet access.

**St. Kitts & Nevis.** The island nation sustained minimal damage overall. Hotels are reporting no structural damage and all visitors are safe and accounted for.

St. Kitts' Robert L. Bradshaw International Airport (SKB) reopened as of noon today (Thursday). The island's cruise ports are closed until further notice and visitors who have not evacuated are being sheltered

### Miami

Miami International Airport remains open on Thursday but will be closing when the wind picks

up, MIA reports. The airport is not a designated shelter during a storm, and operational needs at MIA may require occupants to be evacuated to nearby shelters.

MIA hub carrier American Airlines announced it will be winding down operations on Friday afternoon in Miami, Ft. Lauderdale, Fort Myers and West Palm Beach, and in Orlando on Saturday. Flights that were scheduled to arrive in Miami Friday from Europe and South America have also been cancelled. AA has issued a travel alert for more than 40 airports.

Carnival Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean, Norwegian, and Disney have all cancelled cruises. Miami Beach and coastal areas are being evacuated.

### Cuba

The Cuban civil defense agency is preparing people on the northern coast of Cuba's eastern provinces. Santiago province has opened 125 evacuation centers that can hold 38,000 people. Civil Defense representative Odesa Fuentes said the centers will remain open for the duration of the storm's passage on Friday, Sept. 8.

### Dominican Republic

Irma's strong winds and torrential rains affected the Dominican Republic today, damaging homes on the north coast of the country. There are no immediate reports of deaths and information is still being gathered.

### Haiti

The Haitian government called for all institutions, public and private, including banks and stores, to be shut down from noon on Sept. 7 until further notice.

President Jovenel Moïse said his cabinet spent a week preparing for the hurricane and the police are working with local officials to evacuate people from the most vulnerable areas.



*Sint Maarten has suffered major damage from the impact of Category 5 Hurricane Irma. Photo was one of those posted on Facebook and Twitter and recarried by SMN News.*

**The Bahamas:** Most airports, including in Nassau, closed today between noon and end of day. Six airports – including those on Andros, The Abacos, Grand Bahama and Bimini, will close on Friday. A statement will be issued by Nassau Airport Development Company NAD to advise the traveling public as to when the airport resumes full operations.

**St Barthélemy** has serious damage to homes and structures, including the fire station which was flooded, reports government officials.

There is a total electricity blackout and the main EDF sub station is out of action.

**Puerto Rico.** Gov. Ricardo Rossello reported that more than one million people in the country are without power and that crews are investigating and until they know the extent of the damage, "it will be difficult to estimate how long the power outage will last." Ports on the island are still closed, and it's unclear when commercial flights will resume.

*L. Pasternak*

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## International tourism delivers strongest half-year results since 2010

Destinations worldwide saw the arrival of 598 million international tourists in the first six months of 2017, some 36 million more than in the same period of 2016, according to the latest UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.

Worldwide, international tourist arrivals (overnight visitors) increased by 6% compared to the same six-month period last year. This is well above the sustained and consistent trend of 4% or higher growth since 2010. It represents the strongest half-year in seven years, even as tourist arrivals to the United States declined.

Results are underpinned by robust growth in many destinations and a continuation of the recovery in those that suffered declines in previous years.

By region, growth was strongest in the Middle East (+9%), Europe (+8%) and Africa (+8%), followed by Asia and the Pacific (+6%) and the Americas (+3%).

UNWTO says that the first half of the year usually accounts for about 46% of total annual international arrivals, with the second half longer by three days and including the Northern Hemisphere high season months of July and August.

"The first half of 2017 shows

healthy growth in an increasingly dynamic and resilient tourism market, including a strong recovery in some of the destinations impacted by security challenges last year," said UNWTO Secretary-General Taleb Rifai.

### Mediterranean leads growth

Mediterranean destinations reported particularly strong growth in the first half of 2017, with Southern and Mediterranean Europe (+12%), North Africa (+16%) and the Middle East (+9%). This trend is driven by the continued strength of many destinations in the area, combined with a significant rebound in destinations that suffered decreases in previous years, such as Turkey, Egypt and Tunisia.

### US arrivals fall

The Americas continued to enjoy positive results across most destinations. Growth was solid in South America (+6%), Central America (+5%) and the Caribbean (+4%). In North America (+2%), robust results for Mexico and Canada were partly offset by a decrease in arrivals to the United States, the region's largest destination.

### Europe/Asia increase

International tourist arrivals through June grew 8% in Northern Europe, 6% in Western Europe and 4% in Central and Eastern Europe. Sub-Saharan Africa recorded 4% more arrivals.

South Asia (+12%) led growth in Asia and the Pacific, followed by Oceania (+8%) and South-East Asia (+7%), while results in North-East Asia (+4%) were more mixed.

### Strong outbound demand

Arrivals growth in this period was fueled by strong outbound demand from major source markets. In particular, Canada, China, France, the Republic of Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States continued to report solid growth in outbound expenditure.

This first half-year also saw a strong recovery in demand from Brazil and the Russian Federation after a few years of declines in terms of expenditure abroad.

### Argentina considering new air routes

Argentina's aviation industry is on the verge of major growth.

At a public hearing in Buenos Aires on September 6, ten new airlines launched a bid to operate more than 500 new routes. The airlines promised to invest around US\$ 6.9 billion in Argentina, creating at least 10,000 jobs

If the government accepts the route applications, more than 300 international routes will be opened along with 200 domestic routes. Norwegian Air Argentina, which plans to invest US\$4.3 billion over the next 5 years with the creation of 155 routes, was the star of the public hearing. If approved, Norwegian plans to launch in Q4 of this year.

Argentine transport minister, Guillermo Dietrich, said the interest shown in new route applications underlined the new airlines confidence in Argentina and that the investments would bring real employment opportunities to the country. He also confirmed that the government will invest AR\$22 billion to improve infrastructure in the aviation industry. AR\$ 19.5 billion will be spent on improvements at 19 airports including the country's 2 biggest airports in Buenos Aires, Ezeiza and Aeroparque. The balance will be allocated to improve the country's air navigation system.

*John Gallagher*

## Canada duty free sales jump in June

Duty free sales in Canada's airports soared 27% in June 2017, to \$42 million. Land border sales increased 6.93% to \$15 million, according to the latest numbers from the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).

For the first six months, airport sales rose 11% to \$217 million.

Perfume, Cosmetics, Skincare, the number one airport category in June with 37.44% of sales, was up 30.22% for the month. The category was up 16.65% for the year. Alcohol, (20% of June sales) increased 35.81% for the month, and is up almost 14% for the year.

Land border sales for the first six months are up .34% to \$63 million.

Alcohol sales on the land border (43.99% of sales) increased 9.54% in June. Through the first six months, land border alcohol sales rose 2.22%. Tobacco (almost 20% of sales) increased 1.63% in June, but are down 1.75% for the year. Perfume, Cosmetics, Skincare (13.32% of June sales) was up 4.37% for the month, but is down almost 4% for the year.



**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**
**FDFA announces management change:  
Executive Director Laurie Karson leaves Canadian Association**

The Board of Directors of the Frontier Duty Free Association today announced the departure of Executive Director, Laurie Karson, effective immediately. Karson joined FDFA in April 2005.

The FDFA will continue to move forward in a positive direction and will organize a successful FDFA Convention in Montreal in November 2017, says the official announcement.

In addition to the convention, the Board will be actively involved in ensuring an active dialogue with all government stakeholders, including CBSA.

"We are optimistic and enthusiastic for our industry's future as we prepare for a new chapter to capitalize on all opportunities within our collective businesses. The Board would like to take this opportunity to thank Laurie for all her efforts and wish her all the best in her future endeavors," said the statement.

Speaking with *TMI*, FDFA President Abe Taqtaq said that the Board is currently evaluating the Executive Director office and commitments to better understand the position and they will take steps to fill the position at the annual meeting in November.

In the meantime, the Board will take a more active role in running the Association.

"Our operations manager, Allison Boucher, is here and will provide continuity. Allison is well briefed on all the files," said Taqtaq.

The Board will also discuss the Association's strategic plans going forward with the full membership at the Annual Meeting during the convention in Montreal," he said.

All inquiries should be directed to: Abe Taqtaq Chair, Frontier Duty Free Association Board of Directors [abe@tunneldutyfree.com](mailto:abe@tunneldutyfree.com) Telephone: 519-252-2713 ext. 623 -3

**US inbound travel traffic numbers revised downward**

The U.S. Travel Association, which produces the monthly Travel Trends Index, has revised its assessment of international visitation to the United States downward.

The report updates earlier numbers with newly available data, and finds that international visitation—initially found to have grown consistently this year—actually contracted in four of the seven months for which data is so far available.

The declines were steepest in February (6.8%) and March (8.2%). U.S. Travel economists say the slight uptick in April is likely due to the travel-heavy Easter holiday falling in that month this year.

For the TTI, a score above 50 indicates growth while a score under 50 indicates decline.

Year-over-year, international inbound travel declined in July 2017, with a Current Travel Index (CTI) reading of 49.8. The Leading Travel Index (LTI) continues to project a weakened outlook for inbound travel, which is expected to trail the domestic market through the beginning of 2018.

Domestic leisure travel grew in July, increasing slightly above the 6-month moving average. Domestic business travel declined in July, on the heels of two months of growth in May and June.

The 6-month LTI reading of 50.6 indicates that total U.S. travel volume is expected to grow at a rate of around 1.2% through January 2018. Domestic travel is expected to grow by about 1.6%, while forward looking metrics for international travel indicate continued weakness.

The TTI is prepared for U.S. Travel by the research firm Oxford Economics and includes data from IATA, OAG and other tabulations of international inbound travel to the U.S.

International Current Travel index		
	Previous	New
Jan-17	54.9	50.3
Feb-17	52.9	46.6
Mar-17	50.1	45.9
Apr-17	53.3	54.2
May-17	52.6	50.7
Jun-17	None	49.1
Jul-17	None	49.8

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**Customer Service  
Representative for Caribbean.**

Responsible for providing exceptional customer service to clients and processing all orders. Position serves as a liaison between distribution team and 3<sup>rd</sup> party warehouse ensuring logistics procedures are followed.

Responsible for maintaining and updating internal reports and systems by direct contact with clients, warehouse and brand.

**Desired Skills and Experience**

\*Bachelor's degree in related field  
\*1-3 years of relevant professional experience;

Bilingual English - Spanish.

French is a +;

\*Excellent written and verbal communication skills

\*Attention to detail/ accuracy;

\*Time management and sense of urgency

\*Proficiency in Excel & Quickbooks

Send resume to:

[prodriques@actium.us](mailto:prodriques@actium.us)

**Brand Manager - Fragrances**

The Brand Manager is responsible for developing and implementing tools to support the growth of the brand's portfolio, including distribution organization, merchandising, marketing plans, new product launches, animations, and training of sales associates and negotiating business development opportunities in the cruises industry and US Travel Retail and Caribbean Local Market and airports.

**Requirements**

\*US TR Experience

\*Bachelor's degree in business administration, sales and marketing  
\*5 years min. of relevant professional experience in travel retail channel either cruises is a must and a plus is US Travel Retail

\*Travel 30%

\*English speaking – Spanish and French are a plus but not a must

\*Excellent communication and presentation skills

\*MS Office skills (Excel and PowerPoint mainly) – High expertise in Excel is a must.

Send Resume to:

[hfraysse@actium.us](mailto:hfraysse@actium.us)

**The Hershey Company**  
 has a career opportunity for an  
**Associate Business Manager (81426)**  
 Location: South Florida or Hershey, PA

**Summary:**

The WTR Associate Business Manager will execute store level sales and promotion plans with customer retailers in the North America travel retail channel; implement and maintain promotional and merchandising standards, and ensure 100% distribution on aligned portfolio across the channel. Needs to understand the complexities of a multi-national, multi-channel travel retail environment. Location preference South Florida.

**Major Responsibilities include but are not limited to:**

Supports achieving all financial and growth targets of NA TR; Achieves distribution & merchandising objectives in NA TR;  
 Builds excellent collaborative partnerships with all key retail accounts and distributors.

**Minimum requirements:**

- \* Fluent English, Spanish a plus
- \* Strong analytical skills, proficient in understand and utilizing syndicated data from many sources
- \* Excellent PC skills in Excel, Word, Power Point and Outlook
- \* Excellent Planning and Execution Skills, Action oriented,
- \* Should love traveling often, Self-reliant and can work alone or away from office
- \* Proven account management and negotiating skills, strong Finance understanding.

**Minimum Education and Experience Requirements:**

- \* College graduate preferably in Marketing/ Finance/ Business Management with at least 3 years' experience in Distributor/Key Accounts Management in a fast-moving consumer goods company.
- \* Experience in Travel Retail preferred. Must possess cultural awareness appropriate to the region.
- \* Be passionate about our company and our brands and hungry to succeed.

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The ideal candidate must have  
 excellent communication and  
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- Responsibilities include:
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  - Review and validate marketing calendar at country level with Global Marketing.
  - Review country unit forecast vs individual marketing calendar.
  - Liaise with Global Marketing on artwork for logos, Duratrans
  - Maintain POS, Duratrans photo library;
  - Validate Ad spend with Global Marketing
  - Receive and validate stock order vs forecast and marketing /launch/promo calendar.
  - Allocate G's Testers, Sample, gift sets and other promotional items at country level;
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**ESSENCE CORP.**

Has an immediate opening for a  
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 Caribbean Territory**

- Knowledge and understanding of retail environment to organize promotions and Sell-out Actions at Point of sale; Ability to work independently, prioritize and handle multiple deadlines; Expert knowledge on makeup, skincare and fragrances; Extraordinary level of attention to detail; Excellent organization
- Must be able to travel 50% of the time; Fluent English and Spanish
- 3+ years in retail sales, training/ education
- Experience in luxury beauty related industry

**Accounts Receivable Clerk**

Essence Corp is currently seeking to fill the position of an Accounts Receivable Clerk reporting to the Controller.

The candidate must have excellent communication skills verbal and written in English and Spanish. Customer service orientation and negotiation skills with a high degree of accuracy. Advanced knowledge of Excel with hands on experience in operating spread-sheets. Knowledge of SAGE software is a plus.

A team player whom is motivated, proactive and a quick learner. A multi-tasker with strong organizational skills.

Associates degree or BS degree in Finance, Accounting or Business Administration is preferred.

Please email your resume to  
[musallan@essence-corp.com](mailto:musallan@essence-corp.com)

**ALTIMETRE GROUP**

has an immediate opening for an:  
**Account Coordinator Caribbean Territory**  
**Description**

Sales development and customer support (merchandising, training, promotion) for the beauty market in the Caribbean. Current activities are for a prestigious, imported Baby/maternity beauty and hygiene brand. Additional beauty brands in the future.

**Requirements**

- Must be able to open accounts and negotiate best sell-in conditions in stores.
- Retail knowledge to organize sell-out promotions and Actions at points of sale. Channels include pharmacies, drug stores, perfumeries, hotels.
- 3+ years retail sales experience in health/cosmetics, and/or knowledge of the territory required.
- Ability to work independently, prioritize and handle multiple deadlines.
- Excellent organization and attention to detail, · Must be able to travel at least 50% of the time.
- Fluent English; Dutch and Spanish a plus., · Can be a multi-company freelance sales rep.

Please email your resume to [adv@altimetregroup.com](mailto:adv@altimetregroup.com)



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