

COLUMNS

Luxury travel adapts to needs, expectations of Gens X and Y

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By **Tammy Smulders**

While much attention is being paid to millennials in the media, it is Generations X and Y, in their role as Globizens, who are energizing change in the world of luxury travel.

These Globizens typically ages 35-50 are in their peak earning years. Many are single, couples or young families. These social, political, and business leaders have become experts in the art of living.

Hardworking jetsetters, they share a passion for success and a hunger to live life to its fullest. They share experiences personally and digitally.

Most importantly, for Globizens, travel has become a way of life for business and pleasure, and they are the new authorities on luxury travel.

Going on a limb

For Globizens, luxury is experience-based, and 360 degree experiences at that. They define themselves by their story, which they share online or with in-person, with friends. They are completely connected. Globizens are always online. Mobile devices are practically a physical limb.

These Globizens have an incessant desire to share, whether by Instagram, Twitter or Facebook. Online profiles are a self-curated exhibition of one's life.

Equally, they have high expectations. They are the most sophisticated and demanding generations we have seen far more than either baby boomers or millennials.

Here are 10 trends in Globizen culture that will change how we will perceive luxury travel going forward:

1. Midlife gap year: After 15-20 years of working, Globizens are increasingly taking a year out to reassess their career goals and enjoy what they have achieved so far.

This midlife gap year means a year of travelling in luxury. How they spend their time varies from visiting friends in different cities, going to extreme parts of the world, or undertaking charity works internationally. These are undertaken as singles, couples or young pre-school family.

2. Sabbaticals: Globizens may not have time to take a full-year off work, so sabbaticals are the short terms answer.

Sabbaticals may be one to three months, spent in extended executive education, TedX at luxury resorts, learning a new language, or learning to cook.

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Hotel groups and airlines will increasingly develop programs for Globizens looking for funniment for an extended holiday period.

3. Going native: Globizens often want to feel like a local, creating a residential experience.

While luxury apartment rental services, such as AirBnB and OneFineStay are taking off, luxury hotels and concierge services are doing more to create an authentic local experience and make recommendations of local coffee shops or designer boutiques.

Equally, living room and library spaces in hotels are becoming more common, as are mini-bars filled with local delights.

4. Totally mobilized: Globizens live on their mobiles and tablets.

Always on the go, the Globizen wants to travel light. All reading material, including newspapers, books and magazines are now housed in the iPad, and the phone is the home of travel documents and information at their fingertips.

While mobile air flight information and boarding passes are now commonplace, Globizens will soon be checking in via mobile device, scanning their passports on arrival, and unlocking their hotel rooms with an Apple device.

Moreover, Globizens will be able to order room service, set wake-up calls or turndown service, and get concierge recommendations via their application.

Soon, suitcases check out Bluesmart Luggage will be paired with mobile phones, enabling GPS tracking for baggage collection and serving up power sources for mobile devices.

5. Friends in many places: Globizens have friends in cities around the world people they went to school with, worked with or with whom they partied.

No trip is complete without connecting with their local friends or friends of friends to find out the latest hot spots and have an insider or native view of the city, which simply enhances their own feelings as a Globizen.

6. Take a walk on the wild side: Globizens want to chart new territory and push themselves to the limits.

For some, it is travelling to a marathon in faraway cities Pyongyang Marathon, anyone? and others it is kite surfing in Morocco.

For many others, it is finding their wild side at Burning Man or in Ibiza, during after-hours.

Any way you slice it, Globizens feel they need to chart new frontiers.

7. Content travel: When not visiting friends or taking a walk on the wild side, Globizens enjoy a sense of purpose with their travel, often seeking to meet fellow Globizens around a topic of interest.

From the increasing whirlwind of art fairs Basel, Venice, Frieze, FIAC and TEFAF music and media events such as SXSW and Sonar, and event leadership events including Davos and the Milken Institute, Globizens want to interact with their own.

8. DIY concierge: Globizens do not sign up for concierge services or read guide books they ask their friends or, more often now, friends of friends.

Globizens pride themselves on being in the know or knowing people who know people. Facebook continues to be the source of where to go to field ideas from friends.

9. Fixer apps: When it comes to booking a table or getting in to a club, more often than not nowadays, fixers on the ground are deployed.

Those who do not have a fixer may call Little Emperors for a table in London, or access an app in New York such as Killer Rezzy or Resy and pay a fee for just that a killer reservation.

10. Conspicuous leisure: Economist Thorsten Veblen spoke of conspicuous consumption acquiring of luxury goods and services to publicly display financial power or social status, rather than intrinsic practical utility of the goods and services.

In this day of social media, the display of one's personal adventures on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter is obligatory.

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