

Completing a Vacation Checklist



By Melissa Kvidahl

An addition to the 2009 Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, the term "staycation" (meaning a vacation spent at home or nearby) has been going strong for years—and doesn't seem to be losing steam. From cost-effectiveness to eco-awareness, families are finding more reasons to stay close to home than ever before.

This shift in vacation mentality is manifesting itself in not just how families spend their free time, but how they spend their

money at retail. And now it's up to retailers to meet this need with vacation-friendly products and displays appealing to those taking flight for faraway destinations, and also those taking advantage of local attractions and events.

"I think that the majority of retailers haven't classified what's been happening—a spike in local sales—as staycations," offered Debby Swoboda, founder of AskDebby.com (Stuart, FL). "It's an incredible opportunity to grab items retailers already have in the store,

and bring more attention to them."

"With the more people choosing staycations to cut costs, retailers may need to adjust their set of vacation products in line with their geography—consider what people in your region do for their staycation and when they take them," suggested

Steven V. Joyal, MD, Life Extension's (Fort Lauderdale, FL) vice president of scientific affairs.

Topical Solutions

Clearly, topical products such as bug repellent and sun block come to mind as vacation staples. But often, these products are loaded with chemicals that the natural products shopper might not want to include in their carry-on.

Enter Kiss My Face, a Gardiner, NY-based manufacturer of natural skin care products. According to the company's vice president of marketing, Lewis Goldstein, the products' relatively manageable size makes them perfect for traveling, and their chemical-free ingredients lists make them particularly appealing to natural products shoppers.

First, retailers might consider featuring bug repellents, which will apply to any vacation-themed display, as well as backyard staycationers. Kiss My Face's sunSWAT with lemon eucalyptus and SPF 15 doubles as a light sunscreen, while Swyflotter taps into the benefits of herbal insect repellent, tansy.



Next, the company offers a line of paraben-free sun care products including Sunspray lotion with SPF 30, an easy-to-apply sunscreen that offers fragrance-free and water resistant UVA and UVB protection. The line also boasts an After Sun Aloe Soother and sunless tanner, in addition to Hot Spots SPF 30 for delicate facial areas that need extra protection from the sun like the ears, brow, lips, nose and cheeks. Especially appealing to travelers is that the company makes available 1-2-oz. sizes of the products sold separately or in its Kisses On Trial kit.

But even an arsenal of sunscreens can't guarantee that children—those most vulnerable to sunburns—will be cooperative. Retailers would be wise to point parents in the direction of Kiss My Face's new Kids Sun Stick, which features a stick application and a formula that boasts natural, effective ingredients. The stick is available in an electric blue shade or in clear, both featuring an orange scent. "The colored formula is blue when they smooth it on, and you know it's time to reapply when the color is gone," said the company. "The white formula rubs on clear for kids who aren't feeling so daring."

Skin-Friendly Supplements

While sun blocks and bug repellants are certainly top of mind as any vacationer's must-haves, natural products shoppers know that a vacation also means that the body is met with an array of new challenges that supplementation can tame.

"Life Extension offers a full line of highest quality vitamins and supplements that our customers use on a daily basis to support optimal health," said Joyal. "With the vacation season soon upon us, supplements are a crucial addition to one's daily regimen to help address some of the health concerns generated by traveling."

To supplement any topical vacation display, Life Extension offers an oral formulation featuring FernBlock®, a natural extract derived from the *Polypodium leucotomos* fern plant, which helps to quench danger-



PREVENTING VACATION SIDE EFFECTS

While skin health will likely be at the forefront of any retailer's vacation display, Steven Joyal, vice president of scientific affairs at Life Extension, outlined three secondary vacation concerns that can be managed with supplements and can make welcome additions to any merchandising plan.

1. Stress/Sleep: "Travel and vacationing can be stressful on the body, especially when crossing time zones, which can disrupt sleep cycles. And many times the vacation itself, while meant to promote relaxation and to reenergize the soul, can sometimes be disrupting and stressful (think of crowded airports and delayed planes, trying to cram in a full day of sightseeing and stress with family members!)."

2. Celebrating: "What do we do on vacation? We celebrate the people we're with and places we're in, getting into the spirit of the moment. Often times we indulge, whether with a rich meal or alcohol, and there are supplements that one can use to help mitigate the side effects of over indulgence."

3. Food-borne Illness: "Unfamiliar food and questionable hygiene in food preparation when traveling abroad can cause gastric distress and may leave you vulnerable to opportunistic food- and water-borne bacteria and parasites. Revving up the digestive system prior to traveling can better prepare the GI tract and minimize disruption of vacation time."

ous free radical exposure to the skin from sunlight. Also, as frequent fliers know, the interior of an airplane is one of the most drying environments for the skin. Retailers might want to feature moisturizers alongside Life Extension's Antioxidant Facial Mist, which comes in a carry-on-friendly travel size.

But while smaller SKUs are perfect for travel, they present their own challenges for retailers.

"You have to be really creative with smaller items like supplements,"

explained Swoboda. "When you have something like skin care supplements, to fill up an end cap or display, it takes a lot of product to fill multiple shelves, and the customer won't immediately understand the message unless there's signage."

Timing is Everything

A retailer's focus on topical or oral skin protection will determine when he or she should order and plan to display these products. According to Goldstein, "sun products should be ordered in February and March to have ready for the main sun-selling season beginning in April. But for many parts of the country, retailers are now stocking sun products year round for warm climate areas and for people traveling."

For supplements, when time and absorption are of the essence, Joyal recommends a different regimen. "For travelers, it is best to prepare far in advance, so getting product early ensures one less 'to-do' item is on the travel list," he said. "Some products need time for full efficacy to be in place by departure. For example, it takes up to five days for the immune system to be 'primed' by beta-glucans."

Joyal recommended that retailers take note of not only the typical summer vacationing season, but also local schools' breaks. "Since there is not a uniform travel season for Americans like August vacations for Europeans, it is harder to have a discrete time to have product available," he said. "And many suggested products are carried year round for general health."

Ultimately, though, retailers will experience the most success with travel or staycation supplements and products by taking note of their region. "People getting ready to go skiing need a totally different set of products for wind burn and altitude from what I would suggest for Florida," said Swoboda. "Retailers have to know their seasons. If they know there's a jump in sales, they need to start hinting at it 60 days ahead of the season. Start the actual display 30 days before the season—bare minimum. If you wait until you're in the season, you can miss the pre-thinkers!" **VR**

For More Information:

- AskDebby.com, (772) 287-9559
- Kiss My Face, (800) 262-KISS
- Life Extension, (888) 884-3657