

Case study



Getting together again

People-focused business sees high demand for villas

Like many businesses in the travel sector, villa and pools tour operator Villa Plus faced difficulties during the pandemic in terms of financial challenges, and dealing with the consequences of travel restrictions. Now, however, there is a flip side. Holidaymakers, it seems, when limited to a "staycation", got used to self-contained accommodation. And now, they are ready and able to book their own exclusive place to stay in stunning locations, says Raj Mavani, CEO of Villa Plus.

"Because people have had staycation holidays in the UK over the last two years, we have noticed a rising demand for villa holidays -having their own space with friends and families, who they have missed," he says.

"Raj sees it as a time for people of renewing and deepening relationships with family, extended family, and friends."



Destination Corfu

Villa Plus is seeing increased demand because of so many people booking self-contained accommodation – as are other companies within that branch of the travel sector. Certain locations are proving particularly popular for Villa Plus, one of these being Corfu. Here, from every villa there are stunning sea views, and holidaymakers can take boat trips around the island. The local tavernas are also a big draw – serving food of a very high standard.

Another interesting development in the market, that Raj has noticed, is that customers who would previously have gone to a long-haul destination are now emulating that type of trip – but with a short-haul destination. Customers are also prioritising having an experience which is different to the mass market holiday, he says.

One piece of messaging that the company already used pre-pandemic, but which now resonates even more with customers, is “book with confidence”. And Raj understands that, for people who haven’t had an overseas holiday for two years, this is very important. He thinks the trend of booking with trusted brands is going to be accelerated. All of their customers book online, and during the pandemic, the company took their website on to another level altogether.

People first

He knows they are competing with the likes of Airbnb, and as a small business, the competitive advantage that Villa Plus has is strength in terms of people. Villa Plus has always been a people-centric business, he says. And so they took a decision at the start of the pandemic to make no staff reductions. “I’m a firm believer, that if, internally, as a business, you manage the people side then everything else will come into place.”

He says there is a fantastic mood among his staff right now. “The team have been phenomenal. Not just dealing with a pandemic, but now the transformation that we’re carrying out.” The company is rolling out plans to sell to customers in many EU markets (rather than just to the UK market).

Having weathered the storm of the pandemic with a strong team, Raj is optimistic about the future.

And this positivity is reflected back among the holidaymakers arriving on their long-awaited vacation, who are certainly in a great mood.



“Having had a staycation, people are more open to having a holiday in a villa.”