

Transforming Visitation: Experience Kissimmee's Partnership with HBX Group

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About Experience Kissimmee:

Celebrating a decade of success, Experience Kissimmee, the official tourism authority for Osceola County, Florida, is dedicated to creating economic opportunities by driving tourism to the region. Known as the Vacation Home Capital of the World®, Kissimmee offers a wide variety of accommodations, with convenient access to world-famous theme parks and just minutes from Orlando International Airport (MCO). With a vision to be a trailblazer in destination marketing, Experience Kissimmee promotes Central Florida's diverse tourism experiences to the world. By welcoming millions of visitors each year, whether for leisure, business, or sports events, the organisation is committed to support local economic growth and continues to position the region as a premier travel destination. For more information, visit www.experiencekissimmee.com.

About Kissimmee:

Located at the heart of Florida, Kissimmee is 25 minutes from Orlando International Airport (MCO), close to world-famous theme parks and attractions, offers a variety of shopping and dining locations, and provides access to natural spaces" and outdoor adventures carefully preserved natural spaces and outdoor adventures. Also known as the Vacation Home Capital of the World®, Kissimmee has approximately 50,000 options of accommodations, including sprawling hotels and resorts, and more than 30,000 vacation homes ranging from two-bedroom condos to 15-bedroom mansions.



The Challenge: What was Experience Kissimmee's main goal?

One of the main goals for Experience Kissimmee, which was one of the key motivators for their partnership with HBX Group, was the desire to **increase the visitation levels to the destination**. They wanted to **expand on the global awareness of what Kissimmee offers**, and more specifically to put it 'on the map' for a **larger international audience**.

In addition, while Experience Kissimmee had established a memorable brand for Kissimmee as a destination, they were looking for external support to ensure their awareness campaigns turned into conversions: booked trips and increasing international visits.

We recently spoke to **Cristina López, International & Domestic Sales Manager for North America at Experience Kissimmee, at our MarketHub Americas event** who suggested that their main challenge was '*support on conversions and increasing visitation to our destination, and primarily to let the world know where Kissimmee is, as the 'Big Bold Heart of Florida.'*

López mentioned that '*as we are very much a destination that is funded by Tourism Development*

Tax, we really needed help on the conversion portion of visitation to our destination, and a lot of the marketing campaigns [we ran] were focusing on impressions versus conversions.'



CRISTINA LOPEZ

SALES MANAGER FOR NORTH AMERICA
AT EXPERIENCE KISSIMMEE



The Solution: How did HBX Group help?

In terms of storytelling, Experience Kissimmee had been curating impactful marketing and sales campaigns which showcased the 'endless opportunities' in the destination, and as López said, *'we love to welcome all our visitors, international or domestic, not only to our world famous theme parks; but also to the rest, and have other unique experiences that are very much connecting with nature.'*

But when it came to the **core focus** of these campaigns, and **uplifting the conversion levels** of these marketing efforts, this is where Experience Kissimmee sought expert advice and guidance.

This is what prompted Experience Kissimmee to reach out to HBX Group (then Hotelbeds) during 2020, in order to capitalise on our experience offering **Marketing as a Service solutions** for [Destination Marketing Organisations \(DMOs\)](#) all over the world, as well as our established position as a global partner for travel businesses across the industry.

'When we reached out and partnered with HBX Group, it definitely helped us to make it click and brought what we needed to make sure [our campaigns] would make sense,' López revealed.

Experience Kissimmee's objectives were twofold - to increase global awareness and visitation levels for Kissimmee, and to implement marketing campaigns which resulted in higher conversion levels. This objective was compounded due to the challenges they faced during the pandemic, and the consequent need to increase awareness on an international scale as a result of decreased inbound activity.

However, it was clear that the solution was interconnected: to drive higher conversions and uplift their global brand awareness, we needed to understand the core focus of Experience Kissimmee's sales and marketing campaigns, to turn positive impression metrics into tangible bookings and ROI and revitalise international revenue streams.

By establishing a close working relationship, based on transparency and clear communication, HBX Group were able to **identify Experience Kissimmee's core targets** and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), which enabled a **realistic and goal-oriented marketing strategy**.

Plus, our **Key Account Managers and destination marketing teams** ensured that **responsiveness** was one of the key elements of this partnership, given that proactive guidance was vital for Experience Kissimmee: *'We really love everyone at HBX Group that we've been interacting*

with, for the openness, communication, and the information [received] but above all the responsiveness. Which is very key in order for us to make things happen,' López stated.

This close partnership allowed HBX Group to better understand where the opportunities were present based on Experience Kissimmee's past and current campaigns and marketing initiatives, to offer and implement **bespoke marketing solutions that targeted their ideal audiences in a more granular and impactful way.**

By utilising our experience in delivering **insight-driven, partner-centric strategic marketing campaigns**, we were able to work collaboratively with Experience Kissimmee to generate more opportunities for exposure and market share.

This approach was applicable to both domestic and international markets, which was key for Experience Kissimmee and their main objective of increasing global awareness levels for this destination.

López also commented on the benefit of our **reach and networking connections**, which allowed Experience Kissimmee the **increased exposure**, especially at key events like the MarketHub, HBX Group's flagship events: *'We've been grateful to have your support not just domestically, but internationally, thanks to the networking and reach that HBX Group has. As well as providing the support that comes with having all our products covered and being able to deliver to our B2B clients and partners.'*

The established positioning of HBX Group within key international markets was a core benefit for Experience Kissimmee, as López confirmed: *'[The partnership] really helped us to stay afloat and immerse ourselves in our international markets, and be able to stay, be present, be relevant and continue increasing brand awareness and visitation into our destination.'*



The Outcome: Why HBX Group was able to elevate Experience Kissimmee's success

The result? A significant upward trend to the number of room nights booked to Kissimmee. In discussion with us, López suggested that *'it's been wonderful to see the increase of room nights booked primarily into our destination because like I said, our destination is funded by our county on the bed tax. So HBX Group has helped us to drive that increase in room bookings, which brings [into focus] the value of targeting and accomplishing our KPIs as well.'*

Data-oriented, López highlighted the value of the actionable reporting that Experience Kissimmee have received throughout our partnership, which has allowed them to more accurately identify which potential markets represented the best, long-standing investment opportunities. López also

revealed that this partnership has empowered Experience Kissimmee to establish new partnerships themselves, exemplified by the recent expansion into Puerto Rico as a new market, as a result of their scaled presence.

As HBX Group is a leader in the B2B TravelTech industry and a key ecosystem player, we benefit from a wealth of experience not only for our sourcing teams, but also in travel marketing and assisting DMOs just like Experience Kissimmee in uplifting the success and impact of their destination.

This meant that Experience Kissimmee had an expert team at their side, but also a **transparent partner dedicated to their growth**.

López mused that this mutually beneficial connection has been one of the defining factors of this strategic partnership: *'It really has set you apart, the strong relationship you have internationally [with the industry]. Because it was easy to secure the domestic market post-COVID primarily, which is right around the time when we were able to connect with HBX Group.'*

Through expert guidance and support to deliver converting campaigns, beneficial networking opportunities, and the established channels offered as part of HBX Group's wider ecosystem structure, Experience Kissimmee have elevated their positioning in both domestic and international markets.

Overall, this partnership has **better established Experience Kissimmee** in both their existing domestic and new international markets, empowered them to **forge connections** with valuable providers and clients across the industry, and **drive more bookings** to the destination as a result of **stimulated demand**.

HBX Group has also been able to gain valuable experience in guiding a **profitable partnership** for Experience Kissimmee as a DMO, enhancing our reputation as a true partner and leader in the B2B travel distribution space.

López mused on the success of the partnership in conversation with us, and where she sees this going in the future: *'We are super excited to continue with HBX Group primarily because our relationship is really a true partnership that we've been building. It's really that collaborative marketing and sales between us that is really making it happen for our strategic goals.'*



Why partner with HBX Group?

HBX Group is connecting and empowering businesses in the ever-evolving world of travel.

By delivering fast and reliable access to a global network of interconnected products and services, we empower choice for partners, while removing friction from the end-to-end travel experience.

- **190+ source markets.**
- **Over 60,000 travel distributors in our network.**
- **Products in 170+ countries.**
- **An expansive global portfolio - 250,000+ properties and 23,000+ experiences.**
- **Powerful TravelTech booking platforms that handle 7 billion searches per day.**
- **1000+ support agents for on-hand, expert advice and guidance.**

Experience for yourself our best-in-class platforms, and bespoke B2B travel solutions, dedicated to your growth. [Sign up today.](#)

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