

# TRAVEL AND THE GREAT OUTDOORS

A more global and diverse community is shaping today's travel industry. Here are some areas of opportunities to look out for.



Emma Mulholland on Holiday makes unisex graphic T-shirts (above) with slogans that encapsulate the carefree feeling of a vacation.

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The travel industry has had a rough couple of years (who doesn't remember the pandemic?). But now, the concept of travel is bringing new brands to life and, with fewer gatekeepers, the market for everything from sunscreen to suitcases is up for grabs.

PART ONE

## Niche necessities

It seems like a much more diverse and exciting era for travel has finally arrived. At last, the industry has adapted to consider new ways of living and working, and there's plenty of inspiration for businesses that want to align themselves with the future of travel. And, although old-school products used to dominate the market for travel essentials and experiences, there's never been a better time than now to launch your dream travel business.

Vacation, co-founded by Marty Bell in 2020, sells a range of products that include sunscreen, after-sun gels, face mists and SPF lip balms. Its packaging and marketing have an aesthetic that screams eighties resort. Now seen by many as an essential for a trip to the beach or a weekend getaway, the brand has aligned itself with the mood of what it means to be on vacation.

Connecting to the same idea, designer Emma Mulholland makes what she describes as 'your ultimate holiday wardrobe' with her brand, Emma Mulholland on Holiday. Her colorful, patterned sundresses, swimsuits and linen trousers can all easily squeeze into a suitcase, along with matching towels, tote bags, beach pouches and pool robes.

'I want people to bring the idea of what they feel like on holiday home with them,' says Emma. She pivoted from running her eponymous high-fashion couture brand to a more casual, travel-focused one in 2017. 'My new collection includes sweaters with "Someone on holiday loves me" [printed on them] so, even if you're not away, you can still feel it.'

The amount of money that people spend on an individual trip tends to increase every year and, with the influence of TikTok vacation wardrobe hauls and destination inspiration videos, the desire to travel (or to feel like you are) is stronger than ever. The rise of TikTok as a marketing tool for travel brands is huge, with nearly 80% of people on the platform choosing where they travel or what they purchase for a trip because of content they've seen on the app.

But Melbourne-based travel accessories brand July wants longevity to be the key to its

business, not just something for a single trip. Its personalizable suitcases, travel tote bags and luggage tags were developed after its co-founders, Athan Didaskalou and Richard Li, read more than 4,000 reviews of similar items and worked out the pain points for customers. After the pandemic, with the total closure of Australia's borders, the business nearly collapsed, with a 95% loss of revenue. But, now that overseas travel is an option again, July has recovered, made itself a go-to brand for travelers and launched in the US and the UK.

Businesses are rebranding beach umbrellas, pool inflatables, drink coolers, towels, sunhats and skin tints that make you look sun-kissed as essential travel items. Plus, they're exploring the idea of what a travel brand can be for the younger generation. And, if there's something that everyone agrees on, it's that we all feel our best on vacation – and brands are getting smarter at tapping into this feeling.

