Message from the Dean

Why trust and travel are natural companions

POISED ON THE EDGE of another summer season, this issue of Business Class takes stock of how Gustavson crosses boundaries and how our community interacts with the world of tourism, hospitality and travel.

Travel, and the personal and professional growth that comes from international learning, has always been a central element of Gustavson’s ideology and curriculum. From our BComs studying abroad (78.7% will spend a semester on exchange in 2017!) to our MBAs’ International Applied Projects, and the world-travellers enrolled in our Master of Global Business program, international travel, study and perspective are highly valued and tightly integrated into all our programs. Indeed, it is one of the core principles that sets our business school apart from others.

At the same time, we recognize that travel has high impact on the environment and on local communities and our choices as travellers may have far-reaching consequences. The decisions we make reflect the extent to which we trust others to behave responsibly and to deliver on their promises.

In travel, trust is paramount, perhaps more so than in other industries. At the industry’s very core is the travellers’ willingness to get out of their comfort zones and throw caution to the wind; without trusting service providers, they would never leave the controlled environment of their homes (or home universities).

And as travel is essential to our identity at Gustavson, so, too, is trust. Each year, we publish the Gustavson Brand Trust Index, a ranking of leading Canadian and global brands. We survey more than 6,500 people and measure their trust in 294 brands across 26 industry sectors. The survey has taught us invaluable lessons about the currency of trust. These lessons apply particularly well to hospitality and travel providers and to destinations. They point to something successful travel providers already understand: that earning client trust is multi-faceted. Customer service excellence, sustainable and socially-conscious practices and innovative experience offerings are all hallmarks of travel brands trusted by consumers, and things we focus upon here.

You’ll see these concepts reflected in various ways by the stories featured in this issue. From the partnerships our program innovations rely on (p. 8 & 16), to our inclusive culture that aims always to empower student growth (p. 26), we wouldn’t be who we are without trust or travel.

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