



THERAPY JOURNAL FOR TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS



Baltic Destination Management Company

WORD FROM THE CEO

A therapy journal for travel professionals? I would not be surprised if this unconventional title enticed you to open this publication. But you are probably also wondering what exactly it means. Let me explain. You see, we did not want this to be just another DMC sales brochure. Instead of merely promoting our DMC business and the Baltic countries as a travel destination, we wanted to create real value and meaningful content for travel industry professionals.

At Baltic Vitalis DMC, we feel that, as an industry, we don't talk enough about stress and anxiety that are so common in the life of a travel agent. We decided to tackle this issue head on. Most of the articles in this journal feature valuable insights about the difficulties that travel industry professionals face in their daily lives, and how these difficulties can be overcome.

The reason why we decided to talk about these issues is because we want to play a part in solving them. Baltic Vitalis is a B2B destination management company offering incoming travel services in the Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia) and beyond (Scandinavia, Poland, Russia, Belarus). As a B2B DMC, we want to be the rock that protects our partner travel agencies and tour operators from unnecessary stress.

As promoters of travelling, we all often talk of travelling as the ultimate form of therapy. What most people often fail to recognize, however, is the hard and stressful work put in by the travel industry professionals who are the wizards behind the miracle of effortless travelling. Tour operators and travel agents have one of the most demanding jobs in the world: if anything goes wrong, they are the ones taking the heat. At Baltic Vitalis, we decided to ask ourselves: how can we make life easier for our partner travel agencies and tour operators? How can we bring therapy to the people prescribing the therapy?



Anti-Stress B2B Travel Plans / pages 6-8

In the first piece of this journal, we introduce to you our anti-stress B2B themed travel plans. These plans represent different tours across the Baltic states. While each of these tours is a great way for your tourists to experience the therapeutic miracle that is the Baltic region, what's truly unique about them is that they are put together according to the different needs of travel agencies and tour operators. Please turn to the next page to learn more about our B2B plans for Relaxed travel agents, Profound travel agents, Contrarian travel agents, Chill-master travel agents, and Haut Monde's travel agents.



Take a Chill Pill / pages 10-11

Next up we explore the psychological state of a travel agent. We all came to this industry with expectations of a dreamy and adventurous lifestyle. And while these expectations were not entirely wrong, most of us had to face a different workplace reality which is full of overtime, stress, unexpected situations and pressures. In this piece, we offer some insights about how these unhealthy trends can be reversed, and how travel professionals can lead the professional life that they hoped for. We also explain how teaming up with Baltic Vitalis DMC can also help reduce your daily stress levels.



Feedback from Partners / pages 12-14

Nobody likes a bragger, right? Our brand promise is to be the chill pill for your business. But, in order to trust this promise, new potential partners would also like to hear some feedback from our current B2B clients. In this piece, we interview key managers from three of our oldest clients: German tour operator Tour Vital, Italian tour operator Gea Way, and German tour operator Viamonda. Three experienced travel professionals talk about workplace stress and how a trustworthy DMC partner can help reduce it. They also explain why they trust Baltic Vitalis as their exclusive DMC partner in the Baltic region.



Japanese Adventures / pages 16-18

When we started back in 2008, over 95 percent of tourists coming to the Baltic states were Europeans. It is only natural, therefore, that we have built our DMC business around partnerships with Western European travel agencies and tour operators. Nowadays, however, the Baltics are being discovered by tourists from all the world, especially Far-Eastern Asia. Therefore, we have recently established our first important partnerships with travel companies from this area. And we are looking forward to expanding our partnerships network in this part of the world. In this piece, we reflect on our leaps forward in the Japanese market.



Meet the Therapists / pages 20-22

Finally, we introduce you to the key members of the Baltic Vitalis team. These are the people who are ready to work tirelessly to take the world's weight away from your shoulders. If your travel agency is considering expanding its portfolio by including Baltic destinations, you may want to do your due diligence and research the people you will be dealing with. We hope that this brief introduction will inspire confidence in our abilities and in the sincerity of our desire to make your life easier.

Dear colleagues, I hope you will enjoy reading our therapy journal for travel professionals. As a professional group, we tend to worry too much. It's time we all take a chill pill. Our mission is to help you relax and to remind you why, despite all the poppycock, travel professionals actually do have the best job in the world!

Kristina Šimkevičiūtė

CEO at Baltic Vitalis

BALTIC TRAVEL PACKAGES FOR TRAVEL AGENCIES

Baltic Vitalis is a B2B destination management company offering incoming travel services in the Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia). Our business mission is captured in our brand slogan 'The Chill Pill for Travel Professionals'. What this means is that we take such good care of your end-customers that you can kick back and chill instead of worrying about how the tour is going. Working in the travel industry was supposed to be fun, remember? And it still can be.

Since we are B2B DMC, our Baltic tours are put together according to the needs of our B2B clients. At Baltic Vitalis, we understand that travel agencies and tour operators have different business models, target different customers, and apply different margin rates. To reflect these important differences and represent a variety of different ways to experience the Baltic countries, we have created different B2B-themed packages. No matter which part of the world your business is based in, and no matter your positioning in your market, you will find the right Baltic tour package that fits your business model.

We have packages for **Relaxed** travel agents, **Profound** travel agents, **Contrarian** travel agents, **Spiritual** travel agents, **Chill-Master** travel agents, and **Haut Monde's** travel agents.

Even though the packages feature important differences, there's one constant that is common to all our Baltic tour packages. They all represent time-tested and proven ways to travel across Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and neighbouring countries, which means that you will experience zero stress while working with us.

① Relaxed Travel Agent

A **relaxed travel agent** is a clever travel agent. What you need from your DMC partner are standard and time-tested travel programmes that are profitable, easy-to-manage and stress free.

That's what you get with our classic tour of the Baltic States. This tour includes everything that your mainstream customers may possibly expect from the Baltics: 7-to-8 days of discoveries, serenity, and joy from Vilnius to Riga and all the way to Tallinn.



At Baltic Vitalis, we have organized and overseen this tour hundreds of times. This means that it's a bullet-proof choice for you as a travel agent seeking to maximize your profit and reduce your stress levels. You just make the sale, and we do the rest, while you relax in complete harmony. Take a midday nap, go for a glass of wine, or turn on your Play Station. With "**Relaxed Travel Agent**" package, you have nothing to worry about.

② Profound Travel Agent

A **profound travel agent** demands more value from travelling products. Standard tours may be cheaper, but it's hard to put a margin on a product that has many equivalents. In advanced markets, the end-customer is only willing to pay extra if he or she sees extra value in the tour offered.

For such deep-thinking travel agents, Baltic Vitalis offers a culture and shopping themed tour across the Baltic states, from Vilnius to Riga and all the way to Tallinn. Unlike standard Baltic tours, the cultural tour

allows tourists to get a deeper feel of the Baltic spirit. It is not limited to standard touristic attractions, and encompasses unique museums, local designer boutiques, and postmodern cultural phenomena.



With “**Profound Travel Agent**” package, you’ll gain a competitive edge over other travel agencies in your region that are dealing in Baltic tours. We’ll take good care of your customers while you kick back and relax. We don’t just want you to do good business with us, we want you to feel free from the typical stresses of travel management.

③ Contrarian Travel Agent

Contrarian travel agents look for opportunities outside standard touristic packages. They realize that authenticity-seeking tourists will pay a larger premium for unique thematic tours. When talking to their DMC partners in different countries, they first



want to hear about alternative ways of experiencing those countries.

Baltic Vitalis has plenty to offer to contrarian travel agents. Your tourists will enjoy experiencing the Baltic countries through our Culinary Tours, Photo Tours, Cinema Tours, and Adventure Tours.

Compared to standard tours, thematic tours demand much greater managerial and organizational skills on the part of the DMC company. And that’s what we deliver as we take excellent care of your tourist-customers during their stay in the Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. A contrarian travel agent needs to have some chill-time occasionally, and that’s what you’ll get by partnering with Baltic Vitalis.

④ Spiritual Travel Agent



Spiritual travel agents realize that what tourists seek most in their travels is a spiritual uplift. They target spiritual tourists and offer them unique pilgrimage tours. Therefore, what they want most from their DMC partners in different countries is experience and skill in organizing faith-based pilgrimage tours.

The Baltic countries are being discovered by Christians from around the world as the go-to destination for religious pilgrimage. With hundreds of outstanding churches of different architectural styles, with a rich Catholic-Protestant dynamic, and with the legendary Hill of Crosses which mesmerized pope John Paul II during his visit, the Baltic countries represent an excellent environment for spiritually thirsty pilgrims.

If you choose the **"Spiritual Travel Agent"** package and pass your pious tourists over to Baltic Vitalis, you can rest assured that they are in good hands. This is when you can have your own time for spiritual improvement. Go to a prayer house, take a meditation class, or wake up early to enjoy the rising sun. Baltic Vitalis has your back.

5 Chill-Master Travel Agent

Nothing is more stressful in a travel agent's professional life than living with the risk of having to cancel tours. After putting in hours and hours of work, you realize that you don't have enough paying customers to cover the cost of a trip. Not only is this harmful to business, having to inform your customers about tour cancellation is a truly soul-sucking experience.



Working in the travel industry was supposed to be a chill experience, remember? And it still can be with our guaranteed departure Baltic tours. These tours are appreciated by our B2B partners worldwide who still believe that travel-making should be a fun and stress-less experience. It's time to awake your inner chill-master.

If you want to take the guesswork out of planning, make a good profit on Baltic destinations, and experience zero stress doing that, the **"Chill-Master Travel Agent"** package is your go to option. You just make the sale, and we do the rest, while you chill and grill in your backyard.

6 Haut Monde's Travel Agent

Why work a lot with low profitability if you can work less with high profitability? That's how elite travel agents think. It's not easy to become a haut monde's travel agent, however, because one has to earn the trust of elite tourists, and that is no small feat. But if you do, your life quality as a travel professional (and your margins) can skyrocket quickly.



The high society's travel agent is very demanding when it comes to tour programmes from local DMC's. We get that. At Baltic Vitalis, we are ready for this. Our luxury Baltic tour allows the members of the high society to get acquainted with the Baltic countries in the exclusive and luxurious way they are accustomed to. The tour features high-end hotels, restaurants, and means of transportation.

We know how sensitive you are about handing your VIP customers over to our supervision. Rest assured, however, that luxury travelling is our expertise. So, don't worry, leave everything to us, and go enjoy your favourite champagne with caviar.





TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS ARE OVERSTRESSED

Here's One Great Remedy – Find the Right DMC Partner

The position of a travel agent is frequently mentioned in various lists of dream jobs and professions. Dissatisfied with their troublesome professional lives, people in other lines of work often think of the travel industry as their great escape option: 'If only I worked in the travel sector where the skies are blue, the margaritas are cold, and the work is all about making other people happy.'

And while a career in the travel industry certainly has its perks, we – the insiders – are aware of the harsher reality: being a travel agent is a hell of a stressful job. On the one hand, travel agencies are constantly being asked the impossible from end-customers who, on top of that, are prone to changing their mind when it's time to pay up. On the other hand, agencies must deal with irresponsible partners and third parties, thereby suffering on a regular basis from impossible deadlines, unreasonable payment terms, flight cancellations, last-minute itinerary changes, and substandard services from their partners. Let's be honest about it: as a professional group, we are overworked and overstressed. And the list of stress sources could go on indefinitely.

So why are we in this thing? Because after all, most of us would not change this profession for any other. Working in the travel sector is simply the best way to experience the colors of life, to meet awesome freedom-loving people, and to learn about different cultures. What most of us do need to change, however, is our approach to dealing with professional stress. And the first rule of stress prevention is teaming up with the right partner.

Healing Solution for Travel Professionals

Do you agree that one of the most soul-sucking experiences in the life of a travel agency is having to own up to the mistakes of your partner DMCs? You do everything right and you expect your partners to uphold the same standards of excellence. When this trust is broken, the end-customers don't want to hear your excuses. They blame you even if the blame lies elsewhere.

At Baltic Vitalis DMC, we want to help travel agencies and tour operators live a happier professional life. What this means is that our Baltic tours are organized and managed in a way that is not only profitable for our B2B partners worldwide, but is also completely stress free. We want our cooperation to be a healing and meditative experience.

Our entire business model is focused on eliminating stress, and bringing therapeutic value for our business partners in Europe, North America, and Asia: we make the product, you make the sale, and we do the rest while you rest in complete harmony! Let us explain how this works.



B2B Products

Since we operate exclusively as B2B DMC, our Baltic tours have been put together according to the needs of our B2B clients. We have packages for **Relaxed** travel agents, **Profound** travel agents, **Contrarian** travel agents, **Spiritual** travel agents, **Chillmaster** travel agents, and **Haut Monde's** travel agents (turn back to pages 6-8 for more information on these travel packages).

At Baltic Vitalis, we understand that travel agencies and tour operators have different business models, target different customers, and apply different margin rates. Our B2B-themed packages reflect these important differences and represent a variety of different ways to experience the Baltic countries. No matter which part of the world your business is based in, and no matter your positioning in your market, you will find the right Baltic tour package that fits your business model.

Chill Pills



After you choose the product that is right for you and sell it to your customers, you want to feel safe that your tourists are getting the best possible Baltic experience. Moreover, you don't want to be bothered by your end-customers calling you 24/7 while away on the trip. What this means is that your partner DMC must have certain safeguards in place to both guarantee maximum end-customer satisfaction and manage end-customer problems (if they occur) on-ground without bothering you with petty issues. These safeguards are like chill pills for your business.

At Baltic Vitalis, we have in place a number of safeguards that secure your peace of mind (24/7 telephone line; direct lines of communication with tourists; an efficient crisis prevention system; efficient communication with other DMCs in the route). What's even more important, however, is the experience and dedication of our employees. Even though our B2B packages feature important differences, there's one constant that is common to

all our Baltic tour packages. They all represent time-tested and proven ways to travel across Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, which means that you will experience zero stress while working with us as your one-stop shop for Baltic destinations.

Find Your Why

Since work is where we spend most of our waking hours, we should be conscious about the causes of our daily professional stresses. Working in the travelling industry is a blessing, but it can all quickly go sour if we lose control and let stress boss us around.

While it is extremely difficult to overhaul your entire organization culture at once, it's easy to make small steps towards creating a soothing and relaxing work environment. One of these small steps you can make is to partner up with Baltic Vitalis as your one-stop shop for Baltic destinations.

Looking at the broader picture, we friendly advise all travel agents and tour operators to reflect on the underlying reasons why they got in this business in the first place. If you know why you are doing something, it helps you get through the tough times. The little issues don't matter that much if you know what the big reasons are.

For instance, at Baltic Vitalis, our big WHY is to remind travel professionals that they have the best job in the world. We do that by organizing and supervising the best Baltic tours in the marketplace, so that you can enjoy your profits and focus on new exciting projects while we take care of your customers.



THE HUMAN SIDE OF B2B PARTNERSHIPS

An interview with Baltic Vitalis clients in Italy and Germany

There's a double game involved in the activities of destination management companies. While their daily work revolves around satisfying incoming tourists, it's actually the satisfaction of B2B partners that shapes the success of a DMC. At Baltic Vitalis, we are trying to get better at this double game every day. And we have made it our mission to provide the best possible B2B service for travel agencies and tour operators who are in the business of sending their customers to the Baltic countries.

This mission transcends business and goes straight to basic human needs like workplace happiness. In every B2B partnership, we seek to build a relationship that allows our partners to eliminate the typical stress sources associated with the professional life of a travel agent. By being the best partner we can be, we want to remind travel professionals that they have the best job in the world. This should never be forgotten!

In this piece, therefore, we decided to examine how some of our most beloved B2B partners feel about our mission to make their life easier. Below is an interview with three experienced travel professionals working in outstanding outgoing travel agencies: Ms. **Susanne Donner**, head of purchases at **TOURVITAL** (Germany), Ms. **Patrizia Mongiardo**, manager at **GEA WAY** (Italy), and Ms. **You Young Yang**, destination manager at **VIAMONDA** (Germany).

Can you tell our catalogue's readers a little bit about the history of your company and its current scope of activities and destinations?



Susanne: **TOURVITAL** is the leading German tour operator for eventful guided tours. We offer tours in over 40 countries all over the world. The company is based in Cologne, Germany. We specialize in tours in Asia, Europe and South America. What also sets us apart from most competitors is that most of our travel groups are accompanied by a doctor.



Patrizia: **GEA WAY** Tour Operator is a company with over thirty years of experience. We are an Italian tour operator that offers tours all across the globe. Faith and culture based tours our main area of expertise.



You: **VIAMONDA** is a young German tour operator that specializes in individual roundtrips. Our focus is on FIT tours and small groups of up to 20 persons. Viamonda operates exclusively as a digital agency. Online is the way of the future for the travel industry, and it allows us to offer a truly wide selection of tours.

What are the main reasons why tourists in your country choose to visit the Baltic states?



Ms. Susanne Donner

Susanne: I think the main reason is that, for German travelers, the Baltic States offer a lot of German history. Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are very much of interest concerning culture, history, modern design as well as nature.

Patrizia: It's all about the curiosity to visit three fantastic new countries with beautiful cities and interesting histories. Most of our Baltic tours are accompanied by a priest since most of our groups are interested in pilgrimage and the rich religious heritage of the Baltic countries.

You: The Baltic states are still a hidden gem among European destinations! Despite being very small, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania offer a wide selection of different activities. There's something special for every type of tourists. Now, for German tourists specifically, there's also an added interest in history which is very much intertwined with the German past.

Do you find the Baltics to be a good destination for your business? How is doing business with partners in the Baltic region different from your cooperation with partners in other regions?

Susanne: The Baltics are a very good destination for our business and over many years one of our main destinations in Europe. In terms of doing business, this destination is different because in Baltic Vitalis we have a perfect partner concerning quality, service, responding time, etc. Your commitment to our business relationship is truly extraordinary.

Patrizia: What I can say in this regard is that every year we are receiving more interest in the Baltic countries from Italian tourists. This gives me optimism about the growth of our cooperation.

You: While the Baltics are a small destination in our portfolio, there's plenty of room for growth. Low cost carriers have made it very affordable and easy to reach the Baltic capitals. For me personally, doing business with you is very special, since our relationship has grown into a true friendship.

As a travel agency, you depend on destination management companies in different countries. In your opinion, what makes a great DMC partner? What key qualities must DMC partners demonstrate to earn your trust?

Susanne: Reliability, quality, service, the willingness to go the extra mile, the willingness to improve the product by suggesting enhancements. During the many years of our cooperation, Baltic Vitalis has been a great partner in all respects.

Patrizia: What we expect from DMCs is availability 24/7 and readiness to solve unforeseen problems both before the groups depart and during their visit. And I must say I really enjoy the can-do attitude that is inherent to your company.

You: Honestly, trust and support are the key qualities. I expect DMCs to treat our guests just like as if they were your direct customers. I always pay attention if a DMC makes an extra effort even if it is only a small thing. Small things can make a huge difference. What's also important is that DMCs have a broad outlook. It's

Ms. You Young Yang



nice to think about making bookings and money together. But I feel best when DMCs share our values and our ideals. As travel professionals, we are serving a very important mission of showing people our beautiful planet. This should be our primary goal.

Viamonda is truly happy to have a partner like Baltic Vitalis in the Baltic region. We have so much history together. In the past 10 years, we went through a lot, and it is wonderful to see the progress we have made! In every program we built together, I could find a tiny little piece of our relationship. I believe our tours worked out so well because guests could feel that they were made with love and dedication. It's also awesome that you are open to new things, trying to seek new markets. I believe that your hard work and efforts will turn out into something great!

At Baltic Vitalis, we feel that, as an industry, we are paying too little attention to stress and anxiety that are pervasive in our profession. Would you agree that working in the travel industry is one of the most stressful jobs? Can you tell us a little bit about the kinds of stress you experience in your daily work life? What are your favorite methods for dealing with stress?

Susanne: Yes, we do experience stress. There are stressful situations due to the political situation of a country, terror attacks, natural catastrophes. Then there are also minor problems with cancelled flights and complaining customers.

But we should keep in mind that there are jobs that are way more stressful than ours. What we sometimes forget is that we are working with a great topic! We are not selling some boring screwdrivers. We are creating the miracle of holidays and vacations. So, excitement should be a stronger feeling than stress. After all, we all can travel to our destinations and see how wonderful our products are. We should also all be a bit more self-reflective and understand that we are not heart surgeons, and no one will die if we do not reply to our emails immediately.

Patrizia: As you correctly point out, working in the travel industry is stressful. To survive and grow in this profession, you need to develop patience, empathy, and tolerance. You can't lose your mind every time something unforeseen happens. A good travel

professional sees unexpected circumstances as expected, and deals with them with a cool head.

You: I want to congratulate you for raising this important issue. For most people, vacation is the most precious time they have. Therefore, it must be perfect. And because people seek perfection, we are put under extreme pressure. It is hard to meet so many people's different needs. I guess all we can do is try. At Viamonda, we offer individual tours that can be quite pricy which means that the guest's expectations are even higher. Not only the product, but also the service must be impeccable. And you are expected to be available all the time. I must admit that I really miss the times when a weekend was actually a weekend.

But, while stress is omnipresent, I don't want to complain because there are so many great things about our profession. I also want to emphasize that stress can be managed. For me personally, the best method for dealing with stress is working out. And, no matter how hard it is, you must find time for yourself. Because if you are properly rested, you will find it much easier to deal with difficult situations.

Do you agree that a trustworthy DMC partner can help you avoid unnecessary stress?

Susanne: Absolutely, reliable DMCs can prevent stress by offering great service for both us and our end-customers.

Patrizia: Obviously!

You: Definitely! While operating our first tours, I realized how important it is to have a trustful partner in a destination. Although we are the tour operator, it is the DMC that is closer to our end-customer. You are the ones who are making it an awesome experience for guests.

We thank our three interviewees for their invaluable insights. We humbly hope that positive feedback from our existing partners will help attract new tour operators seeking a trustworthy DMC partner in the Baltic region. On our side, we promise to keep on improving our B2B service. We want to be the best cure for travel agencies and tour operators who are carrying too much stress on their shoulders. We seek to be the chill pill for your business.



EYES SET ON THE EAST

Or How We are Making Headways in Japan



Kamilė Mitrikaitė

One of the leading destination management companies in the Baltic countries, Baltic Vitalis has made its name primarily in the European market. Numerous agencies from Germany, Italy, US, Asia and the rest of the world entrust us with their groups travelling to the Baltics. And while European partnerships remain central to our business, in the last few years we have been expanding our focus to the global tourist market as well. It is a well-known fact that Northern and Eastern parts of Europe are booming in popularity among Asian tourists. And we are making all the right moves to dip into this growing market space. In this piece, we share a story about our continued efforts to grow our presence in the most advanced of all Asian markets, Japan.

It was a steaming hot June morning when Ms. **Kamilė Mitrikaitė**, our Japanese Department Manager, was packing her two giant suitcases with insane amounts of chocolate chill pills. Later that day she would board a plane taking her to the land of the rising sun.

We will return to the mystery of the chill pills later. For now, let's say that Kamile's destination was the 'Baltic Road Show 2019' event organized by national tourism promotion agencies of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Japanese partner company "Foresight Marketing, Inc". The event took place in three cities – Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya – and was attended by roughly 200 Japanese travel agencies looking to offer their customers an exciting new travel destination.

Kamilė was sent on a mission to establish new B2B partnerships with Japanese travel agencies. It was no easy task of course, for Kamile was matched against numerous hungry DMC competitors from the Baltic region. And yet we were fully confident in her abilities. After all, she was the perfect professional for this job.

Not only is Kamile a fluent Japanese speaker, she is an expert of Japanese culture who has recently completed her MA thesis on Japanese culture and tourists. What's more, she has vast experience working both as a guide for Japanese tourists in Lithuania and as an account manager working with our existing B2B clients from Japan. We were confident that none of our competitors would be as well prepared for the task at hand as was our Japanese account manager.

After Kamile had returned to our head office in Vilnius, Lithuania, we sat down with her for a quick Q&A session to get her feedback on her trip to Japan.

Kamile, how do you feel after talking to hundreds of Japanese travel professionals in Tokyo, Osaka, and Nagoya?

I feel great. And I have a feeling there's a lot of business coming our way. Of course, Japanese clients are famous for their patient and cautious ways. There's a lot of trust-building to be done. But we're definitely on the right track. We have already received multiple queries from the travel agencies that I talked to in Japan. As a personal note, I would like to say that I was very happy to put my Japanese language skills to use.

Most of the people I talked to over there felt very positive about talking to me in their mother tongue.

If you could identify one common thread in most conversations you had over there, what would be that thread?

On the one hand, Japanese travel agencies and tour operators are excited about Baltic States as a new destination. It brings freshness and uniqueness to their assortment of travel destinations. On the other hand, it's a very small destination which is why it presents some risks.

The common thread in most conversations, therefore, is that most Japanese clients would prefer tours that would include the Baltic States, but would not be limited to this region. That's why Japanese tour operators were pleased to hear that our tours can also include Scandinavian countries and Poland. We also have trustworthy DMC partners in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.

Other Japanese travel agents expressed their preference for starting small. Before attempting to work with large groups in a region that is relatively unknown to them, they wish to send over some of their individual travelers. I was pleased to inform them that Baltic Vitalis does organize travel programmes for individual travelers and small groups.

I believe these two options – tours across the larger Northern-Eastern European area and programmes for individual travelers – were highly appreciated by clients who don't want to go all-in on the Baltic region before having a taste of it.

Kamile, you are experienced in guiding Japanese tourists across the Baltic States. Now you've also had an opportunity to talk face-to-face to hundreds of agents from Japan. Talk to us about what draws the Japanese to our region. What is it that they expect most from the Baltic states?

Japanese tourists are usually very impressed by unique Baltic craftsmanship including our linen products, amber jewellery, unique honey products, craft beers, etc. And then, of course, there's nature. Unlike most other European countries, Baltic

countries are very rich in untouched natural splendour. Nature-loving tourists from Japan are usually taken aback by our rivers, lakes, valleys, and forests. The capital cities are another story which is best experienced first-hand: Vilnius, Riga, and Tallinn are three unique gems that can no longer be considered the best hidden secrets of Europe. The secret is now out: the Baltic capitals are awesome. Japanese tourists also have a special soft spot for Lithuania due to the heroic deeds of the legendary Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara during World War Two.



What is unique about Japanese tourists and their needs?

From my experience, Baltic destinations are usually chosen by older Japanese people. But their age does not do justice to how active, curious and open-minded these tourists are. Japanese tourists are very open to experiencing local traditions, and willing to try out local traditional cuisine. They are also way more polite than your average tourist. But that shouldn't fool anyone. Japanese tourists expect a perfect, smooth, no-nonsense experience. And that's what we deliver.

As a Lithuanian student of Japanese culture, what similarities do you see between Lithuanian and Japanese cultures?

I think both Lithuanians and Japanese are private people, not prone to displaying their feelings in an extrovert fashion, not prone to invading other people's personal space. I also see structural similarities between Shinto and Baltic paganism. These ancient systems of belief have resulted in our shared respect



and fascination for nature. That's why, our Baltic programmes for Japanese tourists are especially 'nature-heavy'.

Our final question is about those mysterious chocolate chill pills. What on earth were they doing in your suitcases? And why did you take so many of them?

As you know, travel professionals always bring gifts from their countries to give their colleagues in other countries a small taste of what their culture is about. However, we knew that all the other DMCs from our region would be bringing gifts representative of the Baltic countries. We wanted to do something different this time.



So what if you bring a potential new client a jar of Lithuanian honey or a bottle of Latvian spirit? Such cliché gifts don't really tell anything about you as a company and the value you are ready to bring to your B2B clients. That's why we went with custom-made Baltic Vitalic chocolate chill pills. After all, we have a chill pill in our new logo, and in our slogan. These pills represent our readiness to be a DMC company that makes life easier for our client travel agencies.

At Baltic Vitalis, we know that travel professionals have a very demanding and stressful job. And we do everything in our power to transfer some of that heavy load on our shoulders, so that our partners can relax and have a good time. To embody this philosophy, we chose the chill pill as our symbol, and that's why I presented each of the potential clients with a small bag of delicious chocolate chill pills. Because every time you do business with us, it's like taking a chill pill!



We thanked Kamile for her rich feedback and left her to her work. Having generated so many new leads, she's now busier than ever before. As an end note, we would like to emphasize that Japan is far from the only new faraway market that we are targeting. We believe that travel agencies from all over the world would do themselves a favour by teaming up with Baltic Vitalis.



THE HEALERS WHO HEAL THE HEALERS

Meet the Team of Baltic Vitalis

Here's an interesting fact for you: mental ill health is more common in doctors than in other professional groups. It's a paradox, but it's true. The healers get tired of healing, and are in dire need of healing themselves!

We observe the same paradox in the travel industry. Every day, travel agents across the globe are creating the miracle of effortless travelling which provides tourists with the best form of therapy in the world. Miracle-making is no easy job, however! Travel agents get overworked and overstressed. And just like doctors, travel agents become healers in need of healing.

At Baltic Vitalis DMC, we have a mission to dispense anti-stress healing to our clients, the travel agencies. By striving to be the most trustworthy and hard-working DMC partner in the Baltic region, we want to help travel professionals recapture their love for their profession. In the previous pages of this catalogue, we explain how we apply this unique therapeutic approach in our business model.

In this piece, we turn to the actual people who are doing all the hard work so our partners can relax and enjoy the profit they are making out of sending their tourists to the Baltics.

So, here goes, ladies and gentlemen! Introducing: the dream-team of **Baltic Vitalis**

Kristina Šimkevičiūtė,
CEO



Our clients often refer to Kristina as the queen of the Baltic countries. She is managing key accounts in Germany, Italy and Switzerland and the rest of the world. A leader of our team, Kristina is beloved by both clients and team-members. Highly experienced and fluent in multiple European languages, she is one of the top industry professionals in the region. All of our team speaks very highly of her role as an emotional leader who knows how to motivate people and manage tough situations.

Kristina comes from a humanities background. And she believes that financial considerations should never be above human-relationships. "It is important to always keep in mind that our B2B partners are human-beings, not money-making machines," says Kristina, "Therefore, at Baltic Vitalis, we care about their human needs and try to be as efficient as possible in order to make life easier for them".

Vytautas Kastanauskas, Managing Partner



If there's one metaphor that captures his role in the company, it would be that of a Swiss army knife. Vytautas does everything from managing partnerships with travel agencies and overseeing the daily activities of account managers to strengthening the Baltic Vitalis brand. Co-workers describe Vytautas as a calming force: if he's doing so much and remains as calm as a Buddhist monk, why should the rest of us lose our peace of mind?

Before joining Baltic Vitalis, Vytautas worked in sales in a variety of different industries. "I must admit I don't like the word sales," confesses Vytautas, "It is a very cold description of a process which is mostly about being kind and thinking about the needs of the others."

Renata Severjanova, Head of International Market

How can we describe Renata? She's a superhero, a mixture of Wonder Woman, Catwoman and Buffy Summers the Vampire Slayer. She is the most experienced, organized, number-savvy and detail-attentive member of our team. Some of our best tours are Renata's brainchilds. Fluent in English, Russian and Polish and familiar with German, Italian, Chinese, Renata works 24/7 and does everything from



managing projects and developing tours to training new employees and welcoming tourist groups. Her no-nonsense approach to managing projects prevents mistakes and gives our clients the peace of mind that they crave.

"It was my dream to work in tourism since I was 15," recalls Renata, "Of course, today I am much more aware of the pressures that this profession comes with, and I take it upon myself to insulate our client travel agents from all the unnecessary stress and anxiety".

Kamilė Mitrikaitė, Japanese Department Manager



Kamilė is an expert in Japanese culture and a fluent Japanese speaker. Her extensive knowledge of the Baltics as a travel destination and her deep familiarity with the Japanese worldview make her indispensable when it comes to working with Japanese travel agencies. In the summer of 2019, Kamilė completed her Master thesis on Japanese culture and tourists. Kamile's co-workers are humbled and impressed by her academic achievements and her burning passions for all things Japanese.

"I see some structural similarities between Shinto and Baltic paganism – these ancient systems of belief have resulted in our shared fascination and respect for nature," explains Kamilė, "This is one of the reasons why Japanese tourists love the Baltic countries which are much more natural than some of the more urbanized European countries."

Svetlana Nenortaitė, Italian Department Manager



As Italians say, Donna buona – vale una corona (a good woman is worth a crown). This certainly holds true for Svetlana, our key person for managing our Italian B2B partnerships. Not only is she perfectly fluent in Italian, Svetlana is very imaginative when it comes to developing innovative programmes for our tours

across the Baltic countries. According to Kristina, the company's CEO, "not only does Svetlana speak Italian, she knows their culture and the way they like to be talked with".

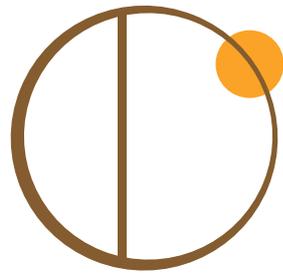
"Italians are hard-working people, but they also want to enjoy la vita bella," says Svetlana, "That is why Italian travel agencies like working with Baltic Vitalis – they can kick back and relax while we are taking good care of their customers".

Deividas Preišegalavičius, Operations Manager



Deividas is probably the deepest and most creative member of the team. Not only is he a top destination manager, Deividas is also a serious literary writer who has recently published a poetry book. Having lived in Germany and perfectly fluent in this language, he is responsible for managing German speaking clients. One of his outstanding skills is fact-finding. While the rest of the team are still discussing, Deividas is already on the phone with the people in the know.

"You can travel across the world, or you can travel across the pages of the great books," explains Deividas, "Both types of travelling are great for the human soul, and I am happy I can help people with both destinations".



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