

Nordic Insights Nordic Tourism Collective_Final.mp3

Satu: [00:00:00] Well, good morning, Paul and Andy, it's very nice to have you here as my guests all the way from London. So how are things in London at the moment?

Paul: [00:00:11] Delighted to be with you. London is a glorious autumn morning with a little bit of sunshine, very still day. And we've got some nice days ahead in terms of the weather. Apparently a bit of Indian summer coming. Lovely to see you.

Satu: [00:00:28] I am intrigued. How come two Englishmen are running an organization for the Nordic travel industry? So what's the story?

Andy: [00:00:37] Good morning, Satu. So it's a lovely morning, as Paul says here in London. That's a good question. What are you doing? Paul and I worked together for many years at an organization called Tumlare Corporation, which is one of the largest Scandinavian and Nordic inbound DMC's. And we both love the area and both love the region. And we felt as though it was something that we wanted to do for ourselves. We wanted to start a business where we would work exclusively in an area which we loved so much. It seems a bit strange and a bit weird, but I think that the fact that we're such advocates and such scanty files is really is really is really what it's about. We just both left the area and we just want to do something for the area just to echo that 100 percent.

Paul: [00:01:28] Having worked so many years in the region and building up to so many friendships and understanding the cultures and and the different landscapes in the region. It was just a no brainer for us when we got together and said, come on, let's do something where we can have a little bit of a legacy in the region. And so it happened.

Satu: [00:01:49] I think it's also as representing Scandinavian and Nordic travel industry. I think it's great that you are neutral so there will be no politics involved. So that's why you will get everybody on board. So well done.

Andy: [00:02:08] Well, we we when we started, we were a little bit concerned about this, to be honest, because Paul and I worked together for Tumlare Corporation. I was director of international marketing and Paul was director of international purchasing. So as a combination, we we sort of fit the fit together very well. So we cover all the bases,

so to speak. So when we started the organization, the Tourism Collective, we were a little bit nervous by the fact that we were to Brits. And in fact, it's worked out to our advantage because of exactly the vision that you say were not Norwegian, were not Finnish and were not Swedish. And therefore we regarded with less scepticism and perhaps less fear than that we would be otherwise. I think if we were Norwegian or we were Finnish, we would not have been able to present ourselves in such a neutral way and really achieve all of the support and the encouragement and the cooperation that we've actually managed to do.

Satu: [00:03:09] Yeah, that's great. And both of you have a really long career in tourism industry and working with Nordics and and a lot of experience.

Satu: [00:03:20] Can you, Paul, tell you a bit about your background and journey, about your career?

Paul: [00:03:25] Yes, absolutely. I was lucky enough to work with you in the in the in the late 80s, early 90s, when I started my journey working for a well, what became a giant in the industry, Gulliver's Travel Agency GTA. And I was responsible for the for the procurement in Scandinavia and the Nordics and Baltics. And I was there for four years working very much on procurement for the hotels. And then in 1993, I had the opportunity to join Tumlare Corporation and open their London office, which I did, and built up the the UK market and the British market to the Nordics and then went back into the procurement area and responsible for the purchasing for Tumlare in the Nordics, in politics and in Russia for many years after that. Either the journey lasted actually about 27 years working for some large corporation, and the company actually grew organically as well and became a very much a European tour operation. So I went from looking after the north exactly to the whole of Europe. But there was always, always a focus and a passion for the Nordic region. So that that stayed with me from the beginning of the journey to the end in Tumlare, but that that really special relationship with the Nordics.

Satu: [00:04:47] Right.

Satu: [00:04:48] And how about you Andy?

Andy: [00:04:50] I met I joined Tumlare in ninety something or other. I can't remember what Paul and I in fact, it was when we just opened the London office and Paul and I shared an enormous office, and there was just the two of us sitting on one desk in this very empty office in central London, just off High Holben, and we were the very stars of the sort of London brigade, I guess Paul was in charge of purchasing, as he said, and I was in charge of international marketing. And my role was to sell the Nordics as a whole to all of the international markets. So I had responsibility for all of the sales team in all of the original originating markets, which included every market in the world with the exception of Japan.

Andy: [00:05:40] So it was quite a big brief. It is a great big area. And the company grew and grew and grew.

Andy: [00:05:46] And then I was made I was given an opportunity to do something else for another company. So I moved on to an organization called the Travel Corporation, which is obviously a very big in Australia that incorporates Trafalgar Tours and inside and Kon-Tiki.

Andy: [00:06:02] And again, in that role, I was responsible for selling the Nordics moved on from there to TUI, which is a lot the largest tour operator in Europe. But all of the time, all of all the work I've been doing was really selling the Nordics and selling so in the area. So very familiar with the region itself and also what the originates in markets such as Australia or New Zealand of the USA, for that matter. I was actually looking for when they travelled to the region.

Satu: [00:06:32] Right. And so they just recently, your Nordic tourism collective was born. So what is Nordic Tourism Collective?

Paul: [00:06:42] Well, the Nordic Tourism Collective came after quite a few pizzas and meetings over over a bottle of beer or two in terms of trying to build an organization and an association for the Nordic and Baltic tourism industry. And we thought that although the individual countries have done a fabulous job of promoting their countries worldwide to turn to the established, then to the emerging markets, we felt that there was a there was a space in them in the region to promote the Nordics as a region. So we came up with this idea of of building up an association where people can join and become

members and build up a network of suppliers based all around the Nordic suppliers could mean hotels, DMC, DMOs' transportation companies, whatever around the Nordic and Baltic region. And they weren't also have to be part of a family which included buyers, operators, travel agencies who were interested in promoting the Nordic and Baltic region. So we came up with idea that idea had had many discussions and many intense meetings in the British Library, figuring out how we were going to approach the trade in the industry and how they would how they would react to to Brits knocking on their door and saying, come and join a Nordic family. And then it was born from that.

Andy: [00:08:18] So just to echo that, I mean, I just like to say that it's interesting, particularly looking at looking at from Australia's perspective and working for the Travel Corporation as well, is that although when you're living in the Nordics, you regard obviously Finland is a very separate country to Sweden and Sweden is very much a separate country to Norway, et cetera, et cetera. But when you're travelling such long distances from from Australasia, for example, the very notion of just going to Finland perhaps for a week is not really an option, is it? Tends to be an all inclusive tour, which includes many of the other Nordic countries and therefore present in the Nordics as a whole seemed to make sense to us. But we couldn't see that that was being done in any shape or form by any of the tourist boards or any of the institutions who were working there. They would work perhaps in a bipartisan way. So maybe the Swedes would work with the Finns and the Norwegians would work the Danes. But there was never a joined up organization where the whole region was presented as a single entity. And that's sort of really what started us thinking of what really started the thought process going.

Satu: [00:09:28] Yeah, I totally understand that. I've been here many years working for the Finns. This is Visit Finland or Visit Denmark, but we were never able to do it as as a region. So then working with with the local wholesalers who specializing Nordics, that was the only way to do it. But I totally agree. That's exactly how it should be. But how do you think Nordic travel interests you to ugly ducklings?

Paul: [00:10:00] Oh, very good question, I guess that our faces are familiar in the region because we've been working there and taking part in many business opportunities in our previous positions. So we're, well, pretty well known in the industry. We built up a lot of friends there all over the the the countries from Iceland to Lithuania. I think reputation was one. Despite the ugly duckling faces, they could see that we had a kind of real

passion and interest and care for what was happening in the region. And so our first part of our journey, when we told the tourist boards and the key players in the region about the collective and would they be interested in being part of this network and developing as a Nordic region was very much to build up a case that that we did really genuinely believe that the Nordics as a region and the Baltics as a region has something very, very special in the tourism industry. So that was that was our mantra. That was our objective to get people to understand that whatever we looked like, wherever we're from, we do have this real, genuine passion to develop tourism, sustainable tourism in the region.

Satu: [00:11:27] So what inspires you in the Nordics? So, you know, what is it that you find intriguing? And what's this kind of you have a very special both of you a very special connection with Nordics?

Andy: [00:11:42] Paul? Well, I just feel for what it's worth, having worked in different markets around the world and having worked with different suppliers and buyers and institutions and organizations in different markets, I do find the Nordics a very refreshing place to work.

Andy: [00:12:01] I find that the their attitude to work is highly professional. And I but I also find that the also highly personable people and they're very egalitarian. And I find that and they're very honest and they're very straightforward and that's that. And so and so doing business in that environment is absolutely a pleasure. And I compare it with any specific other regions of the world. But you if you tend to have a meeting, you tend to be very honest in the meeting. And if someone says to you, yeah, we'll do that, then it happens. And that's not always the case in.

Paul: [00:12:44] Can I can I just follow that up?

Paul: [00:12:47] I think both of us feel very comfortable dealing with all all the nationalities that make up the Nordic region. And we've built up genuine friendships, real close relationships. And there is something about the people in the region that they really value relationships, collaboration, et cetera. And our whole concept of the Nordic Tourism Collective is collaboration and working together and building partnerships. And so it was kind of a really, really good fit. And the places where the places, the cities are

very cool, the countryside's are very different, are very beautiful. The seasons are so diverse and all that really inspires us to do business there, as Andy mentioned. And we do it with enthusiasm and passion because we really we really love it.

Satu: [00:13:59] It sounds all very nice and good and flowery and rosy. What about how do you know the challenge here is all that rosy?

Andy: [00:14:09] I'll tell you one thing that challenges us is the Nordic holidays. That's a big challenge. When we started our first challenge, we had, I guess, as Paul intimated earlier, was that we had to establish ourselves as a credible organization. So we. So who are these guys, what they're doing, what they're trying to do. And obviously, the idea that we're there to help and we're there to encourage and foster collaboration and cooperation was something we needed to communicate that we did together over. And we needed to make people understand what we're trying to do, build that trust and let them understand what we're trying to do. So it was it established that we started along the road and things were going very well. And so we had meeting after meeting and we would talk after talk and Zoom call after some call.

Andy: [00:14:56] We had started a sort of a momentum, really, really, starting with people who are these guys are doing really well that we should be working with these guys. Yeah, that's good. And then suddenly, middle of June, it's the summer holidays and everybody went on holiday. And that was our biggest challenge in year one. And this is where is everybody? Everyone's on holiday. And we didn't hear from anyone until the end of August. And that was a big, big challenge.

Satu: [00:15:24] Yes. No, it does shut down. You know, everybody goes to summer holidays, summer houses, etc., and nobody, you know, wants to talk to you. That's totally understandable. What about anything else you can think of?

Paul: [00:15:37] Well, I think I think that when we when we told our story and when we were telling the position of the collective to the national tourist offices in the main players, they were kind of thinking, well, you know what, what can you guys offer that we're not doing in our individual countries? And I think they realized that that's our position of bringing the Nordics together under one umbrella, so to speak, was an important and necessary thing to do. But we also did have a little bit of a credibility

mountain to climb in terms of two guys that have been in the industry working that for a long time. What can you offer that we can't? And the first thing we did before we even went to the Nordics was we agreed a partnership with an organization who have had offices in Brussels and London called the European Tourism Association ETOA. And we built up a partnership there. It's a very well established organization representing the suppliers and buyers from all over Europe and all global markets. And once we had established that and we agreed with them that anybody that in the future joins the collective would automatically be a member of the European Tourism Association. And we had this real serious, well established organization behind us as a partner. Then the conversations and many of them had already worked and were in relationships with it. So then it became a little bit easier for the discussions to flow and move on from there. So some of the walls came down maybe a little bit quicker than they would have done. So we're eternally grateful for that relationship, which actually we've built up very much over the last six months as well.

Satu: [00:17:22] That's a very smart move on your behalf. Definitely, you know, creates credibility for you guys. Now, how do you perceive Nordic model and thinking? I mean, all the Nordic countries are a bit different, but if you can kind of generalize a few few things or trends, how would you how would you describe them? How are they different than, say, in many other Western countries?

Andy: [00:17:46] Who wants to take that?

Andy: [00:17:47] Paul?.

Satu: [00:17:53] Honestly, Nordic, one of the Nordic things, it's honesty and truth and transparency.

Andy: [00:17:58] Well, as I said earlier, I think I think one of the some of the items that I highlighted a moment ago are very true.

[00:18:05] And that that is that's what sets the Nordics very separately and very much apart and pretty much on top of many other areas to do business is it's very honest, it's very open. It's very egalitarian. It's it's a refreshing area in which professionals to do work because, you know exactly where you stand with people and you are able to once

you've built that trust and once you've once you've actually sort of communicated your ideas, they are very responsive. They're very they give you lots of support. They give you their feedback to help you develop your ideas.

Andy: [00:18:43] And that's not necessarily something will happen in other parts of the world. It's really not. And it really is a two way, a two way conversation when you have meetings with with the Nordics, it's a very, very different experience to dealing with. Some other sort of areas of the world for sure, just to just to expand on that, fully agree.

Paul: [00:19:05] And, you know, Andy and I are not particularly motivated by, you know, fantastic cars and powerful positions in organisations. We like to deal with anybody, whether they're a director of a company or they've just started a couple of days ago. And that kind of flat structure and the humble attitude of the Nordics really, really appeals to us. And I think that is that is very different to many other parts of Europe and many other parts of the world, very informal way of doing business. It's it's it's going back to this genuine and relationships and and friendships that really, really is key in the region. And we do feel very comfortable. And it's much easier maybe than than than we would find if we were to do a similar organization in another part of Europe.

Andy: [00:19:58] Paul said, we have launched a number of partnerships with key organizations as parts of this whole this whole this whole process. The first one was it was the ETOA who who were very closely also in partnership with the ETC which is a European Travel Commission and the European Union, et cetera, et cetera.

Andy: [00:20:19] And one of the organizations we felt as though we wanted to get a little bit closer to was an organization called the Nordic Council. So the Nordic Council as a sort of is a is a quasi political organization where the rotating head of presidency, I'm not quite sure.

Andy: [00:20:35] I think Iceland have it at the moment and the rotating head of presidency. And they they they discussed pan-Nordic issues on a political level.

Andy: [00:20:46] So they may talk about forestry or they may talk about agriculture, et cetera, et cetera, because of a highly political organization. And we sort of thought, well, it would be good if they actually talked about tourism on a on on a Nordic level. And in

fact, we found out that there was someone actually who was responsible for looking at tourism on a Nordic political level. And this gentleman was based at one of his senior senior advisors was basically Copenhagen. So we managed after a long time of very many emails and a few telephone calls to have a meeting with the guy. So he said, come along to the to the to the it wasn't these sort of it wasn't the palace in Copenhagen, but it was a very, very, very, very impressive building on one of the canals. And almost in fact, it was opposite the museum. I think in the sense of sense of Copenhagen, they should be the eight o'clock or something. You know, we can have a quick meeting in the morning. So Paul and I rocks up there and all the doors were shut, everything was closed down. And we stood outside looking around, wondering what we're supposed to do. And this minister, to be fair, is not a minister, but is a very senior advisor in the institution, rocks up on his bicycle and his jeans and he said, hi, guys.

Andy: [00:22:05] And he sort of so he parks his bicycle by that by the front door, he open unlock the door.

Andy: [00:22:10] He went in. He said he would like a cup of coffee when said put the kettle on, made us two cups of coffee and then we sign and a meter and then had a highly professional meeting where he gave us the advice.

Andy: [00:22:23] He gave us a support. He talked to our ideas. We went with form some sort of strategy as to how we should approach this. And then he said, thanks, good to see you.

Andy: [00:22:31] And off he went. And that was fantastic.

Andy: [00:22:33] And that's really the Nordics in a nutshell. Me, it's high, high level of professionalism, combined with a certain degree of almost disregard for convention, if you like. It's a disregard for conservatism with a little see.

Satu: [00:22:51] Yeah, love that. That's a great story.

Satu: [00:23:11] Now, when we did talk about different Nordic countries and cultures, all five, so they are there are a lot of similarities, but they're also quite big differences. So

can you give some of your thinking or thoughts or observations about some of the countries and cultures, how they differentiate from each other?

Paul: [00:23:32] Yeah, I think I think, as you said, there are similarities in certain ways. And we've mentioned that the the the way they do business together and very informal and flat structure.

Paul: [00:23:43] But the countries themselves, the cultures themselves are also very different.

Paul: [00:23:48] And if you just look at the pure landscape of somewhere like Iceland or Greenland or Faro's are compared to are of the main areas in Sweden, Norway and Finland are massively different. You've got the mountains in Norway and Sweden. You've got the pretty much flat country of Denmark, are you? The night and day that the dark, the north or you could see the light. The north in the summer must be different in between them.

Paul: [00:24:21] And what what we find is that every single country in the Nordics is very, very proud of their own country and that they really believe they are quite different in many ways. They make jokes about each other. They make the Danes and always making fun of their Swedish and Norwegian friends and vice versa.

Paul: [00:24:46] The Finns get quite a little bit of of flak as well in terms of being very dedicated, very studious, very introverted sometimes where the Swedes are very probably a little bit more confident and maybe a little colder, you could say, but more confident Icelandic than the Danes, maybe a little bit more like the Western European people, a little bit more down to earth in terms of the sense of humor. And and maybe the Icelandic would only take two or three weeks holiday where maybe the but the Norwegian Swedes and Finns, you wouldn't find them in a month in July and August. So. And of course, the languages are Finland and to a certain extent, Iceland are very different, whereas the others have a lot of similarities and they can understand each other very well, even though they use that opportunity that they don't understand each other when they need to. But underneath it all, even though the landscape and the cultures are very different, there is a fundamental understanding that they are in the same region.

Paul: [00:25:58] As Andy mentioned, they are under the same sort of council of of Nordic ministers and political geographical area. And actually they really quite respect and liking each other underneath it all.

Satu: [00:26:12] I do agree. And and but also, I have to say decision making is quite different in its countries. I mean, Finns make decisions very different than Swedes I relate to to Danes. And I feel like my way of thinking in days where they were often thinking when it becomes a business decision is is very, very similar, though.

Andy: [00:26:34] I just like to say, if you're really interested in this or if anyone or anyone listening is very interested in this is an excellent book which is called When Cultures Collide and I can't remember off the top of my head, but I'm sure if you Google, you'll find it.

Paul: [00:26:47] But it's it's a sort of it's a business book, but it's really about how you conduct business in different countries. There's a whole section of the Nordics and there's a whole section about doing business in Finland or doing business in Norway, doing business in Denmark, for example. And it's sort of it's obviously full of generalizations because it has to be because that's the nature. But the thing about generalizations is that they generally tend to be true and that's why they call generalizations.

Andy: [00:27:13] But the one thing I do remember from it is that the the Finnish are very, very much more direct in terms of making decision making.

Andy: [00:27:20] But the person who the best person universally to hold a meeting or to to be a to be a committee, you know, to be at a meeting coordinator is a Norwegian, apparently, because the Norwegians are very strict, they're very moderate. They can they can they can take different views of people. They can make this and they can make decisions relatively quickly. So anyway, if anyone's interested, it's a great book and it's a great read, but they go, thank you.

Satu: [00:27:51] I, I look at look it up and I would put link in the in the notes and well Norwegians are great peace negotiators so you know, that definitely reflects to do how

they do things. So do you have Nordic heroes. Anyone that you think that you know something.

Satu: [00:28:10] You admire and why.

Paul: [00:28:12] I've got a couple I've got a couple of northern heroes, one is a little bit more famous than the other one is just a guy in our travel industry, in our tourism industry who's actually a Dane. His name is Hans Henrik Kjoelby And he decided that living in Denmark, he was very passionate about tourism. He decided that the Baltic states is a really, really untouched and interesting destination and region for global tourism. So he set up a company with a head office in Riga in the late 80s, early 90s, called via Hansa Tours and basically built up a fantastic business with opening offices in all three of the Baltic countries to a very successful level and build relationships and develop the business and became a real, real flagship of how you should do business and quality of the programs. The quality of their operation was excellent. And then he decided as an entrepreneur to develop the destinations and he opened up in Russia, in Moscow and St. Petersburg. He even opened and this one is just the classic.

Paul: [00:29:25] He even decided to open an office in Mongolia and Mongolia being one of the places at least the least visited and probably the most difficult places to do business.

Paul: [00:29:38] But he managed to build relationships, find somebody there that could handle it, and to have some kind of minimal operation in Mongolia and to have that on your portfolio was just was just awe inspiring for me. So having built this fabulous team up, I think about 100 staff across the region and Poland as well, he decided to have an alliance with one of the leading Nordic Scandinavian operators, Borealis, and they they merged a couple of years ago and have this Via Hansa Borealis organization, which is really a high and top class DMC in the region. And he's always somebody that has time for everybody, whether whatever you are in the business, whether he's somebody you would turn to and say, hey, have you got have you got a couple of minutes? I've got a situation. Can you help me? He always has time for people. He always cares with people. He's very, very good to work for. His team have been there forever. Unfortunately, Corona has has made things a little bit tricky. But they will, right. There's absolutely no problem. But he always inspired me as somebody

is how to build up a tourism organization in in the Nordic and Baltic region. He's one of my heroes. The other one is a little bit better known. Ingemar Stenmark, who is from the countryside in in central Sweden and had a skill that he was found himself living near the mountains, that he could ski a little bit and slalom quite well and worked extremely hard to become a very good slalom skier.

Paul: [00:31:20] And then the story unfolds that he becomes the best skier in the world, possibly, and arguably the best Slalom skier of all time. But he never saw the lights and the glamour and the glory of being a celebrity. He never forgot his roots. He never wanted to really enjoy doing long interviews and having the paparazzi after him. And he he always stayed very humble and genuine, which is one of the qualities we talked about before. And he went back to his roots and he still lives in the region where he grew up. He still has the same friends. He never really changed from when he became a world superstar. And I'll never forget, I had the fortunate opportunity to be invited by by a hotel chain in Sweden to ski for a couple of days. And he came with us and he was just a normal, normal guy. Everybody down the slope would see him. I would go, Oh, my God, that is Ingemar Stenmark. But he was just a normal guy. It just wasn't interesting that you're famous. He's a real hero.

Satu: [00:32:31] It's a nice story. Andy do you have heroes, Nordic heroes.

Andy: [00:32:34] I don't think so. I think I just I don't have a hero as such. I guess if I had to if I had to nail my colors to the mast, I'd have to say Bjorn Borg , because I was I was in tennis

Andy: [00:32:46] I still play a lot of tennis. And it was as I was as a kid, he was my hero because he had sort of long cool hair. He was like he was the he was a cool guy. Look at all girls followed him around. He was he just he did not get emotional. He just that used to probably at a apparently Bjorn Borg had a resting heart rate of twenty six. So I was told he was super, super fit and he had everything going for him. He was good looking, he was you know, he won five Wimbledon's on the charts or whatever it was that he inspired me to play tennis as a child. And I guess if there is a hero, but I've met so many no Nordic people over the years who in their own individual quaint ways have inspired me and really sort of I've just found as pollsters their support and that and the

help and the and the willingness to provide time to just just just help you with things. It just really, really lovely. And and that's one of the reasons that we were doing this today.

Satu: [00:33:45] I have to say, I was totally in love with Bjorn Borg and I was obsessed with him.

Satu: [00:33:53] And I once actually saw him live in Stockholm. And he he was he was designing a promotional thing in Ahlens the department store. And I just read from the newspaper and I just run there. And then I was there with the friend and my friend said, you're going to ask, you know, autograph. And I was so frozen, you know, with fear that I couldn't even go and ask his photograph. I shot. I did see him once.

Satu: [00:34:19] But if he was my big love when I was a teenager, yes,

Paul: [00:34:23] I can we can we turn the tables for you for one question? Who's your Finnish hero?

Satu: [00:34:29] Oh, there's so many.

Satu: [00:34:34] Well, you totally threw me off, I have to say. Yes, well, I have to say that I do admire Finnish designers.

Satu: [00:34:45] And I think, you know, somebody like Alvar Aalto, I'm such a huge fan. He's such a brilliant master of design and everything. What he did. So I mean, but so many others. But I think I would say now out of Alvar aalto definitely is one of those and one of those people I really admire. You know, I have like ten Aalto vases at home and I have a big poster of him in my bedroom. We were doing here when I was with VisitFinland and we were doing our Aalto anniversary promotion.

Satu: [00:35:17] So funny question. I haven't thought about it.

Satu: [00:35:20] Now, if we think about Nordic tourism collective, if you need to say three things that you bring value, first of all, for Nordic travel industry and but also like the suppliers globally, what would they be?

Andy: [00:35:37] Opportunity, cooperation and sustainability, something like that off of the top of my head, yeah.

Paul: [00:35:46] I was bringing putting sustainability in the forefront for everything that's going to happen to Nordic tourism in the future. We feel very lucky to be involved with that. And the fact that we're going through this this pandemic at the moment and everybody's retreating a little bit and the industry is changing before our very eyes. That is is is one thing that we cannot avoid. And it's it's a very tough situation at the moment. But sustainability, Markoe words will be the number one issue in the tourism industry when we start getting towards recovery and the Nordics and the Baltics are in the prime position to showcase and be the beacon of of how sustainability will look in the future. And to be part of that tourism angle on sustainability is very, very exciting for us. And we're in discussion with many partners on how we can how we can showcase this. And and we do plan to to have events and activity to really drive this sustainability notion and the region very much in the future.

Andy: [00:37:03] I think one of the things the interesting things is there is the very notion what we found working with with the Nordics over the last year and a half and certainly now as well as we're in in this in this terrible situation currently and is the notion of the collaboration has become much more wide, wide world understood and accepted as a as a business proposition.

Andy: [00:37:25] So I trained initially as an economist and sub and then went on to Business-to-business, that is, et cetera, et cetera.

Andy: [00:37:33] But one of the key mantras in business is this notion of competitive advantage. So you have to do something better or different to your competitor in order to create an advantage that you can sell your products at the disadvantage of your competitor. That's competitive advantage. It's a very straightforward economic concept that seems to be almost like becoming passé now. And I think that the new by word or the new the real where that the world, the business world is now starting to think, which is exact. On the lines of what we're proposing and what we do with the collective is the notion of collaborative advantage and the collaborative advantage dosage, is that the idea that by working together you can achieve more as a collaboration that you possibly can as an individual on your own? And I think that sort of that's a summary of what that

really in a nutshell, is what we're trying to do. We're trying to get people to work together in collaboration, to achieve objectives and to create opportunities and to to to move, move, move the whole area forward in areas where they would actually be physically unable to do that on their own because they just couldn't understand. But this is a good example. You can't be sustainable on your own. Everybody has to do it. It has to be a joint thing. So everyone has to unite and everyone has to work together to achieve any notion of sustainability. So I do it that that. So I think I think collaboration, cooperation, sustainability is really sort of sums up what we're about.

Paul: [00:39:11] And all those are connected to the word partnership. And we mentioned our partnership with ETOA, but we're lucky enough to build partnerships with the international tourist offices in the region, the key players in the region and many other associations who will be focusing on sustainability, EU issues, whatever, whatever. We're building up partnerships with partners in Asia with with us to things that we're trying to build up partnerships because we believe that the bigger the network, the closer the partnerships you have in this industry, the more chance we'll have to succeed in our in our key mission of driving business and opportunity to the region. So this collaboration, as Andy alluded to and partnerships, is what the collective is all about.

Satu: [00:40:07] Well, couldn't could not agree more. I totally agree with you. Now, when people would like to learn more about you guys and what you do, where where can they find more information?

Andy: [00:40:19] Just go to our website, Nordic Tourism Collective, dot com and even even a couple of pictures of me and Paul are on there so they can see how little I have and how how handsome Paul is.

Andy: [00:40:33] And they can they can see they can read about what we do.

Andy: [00:40:37] They can they can see all of the partners that we have, all the members, our Nordic members, all our hotels are the DMC's and DMO's out there, Merza venues, attractions or people who are members. They can see all of our worldwide source partners. So we have members around the world who are helping us collect data and collect information. That's the stories on our website. So if anyone wants to take a look, it's Nordic Tourism Collective dot com.

Satu: [00:41:04] Well, thank you very much for sharing your journey. And I wish you all the best with would you and the Nordics and the travel industry. And let's hope in this new norm, while the Nordics really will be one of the destinations that everybody wants to it wants to travel. So thanks again and have a great day there in London.

Paul: [00:41:23] Know we echo that. And thank you very much. Opportunity to have a great thanks to and thanks for keeping the Nordic summit on everybody's mind and on the map. We really appreciate everything you do and all the best to you.

Satu: [00:41:34] Thank you.