



POWERING TRAVEL | SEASON 3 | EPISODE 3

## Inspiring 2024 travel with tech, experiences, and growth

### What to listen for:

With 2024 comes a new year of travel — and of opportunity. In this episode of Powering Travel, host Brandon Ehrhardt talks with guest Ariane Gorin, president of Expedia for Business, about unlocking these opportunities with new focuses on growth, loyalty, and more.

Listen in as Brandon and Ariane dive into the ways that new technology, partnerships, and experiences are defining travel in 2024. You'll learn about increasing demand across the globe as Expedia Group expands into more regions — and you'll hear how the One Key™ loyalty program is empowering more travelers to see the world.

Whether it's by inspiring travelers to book during once-in-a-lifetime events like the Paris Olympics 2024 or leaning into the latest travel trends and insights (hello, set-jetting!), you'll finish this episode ready to take action on a new year of growth alongside Expedia Group.

### Introduction:

[00:00:04] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Travel providers are the backbone of the travel experience. In this brand-new season of Powering Travel, we'll dive into industry trends, hot topics, and actionable advice to help business leaders continue evolving and enhancing travel experience one trip at a time. Welcome. My name is Brandon Ehrhardt, and you are back with us. This is the Powering Travel Podcast, brought to you by Expedia Group. This episode we have a doozy. It was the one that I was really looking forward to all year, and I am back in the interviewer chair for this one. I had a chance to chat with Expedia Group's president of Expedia for Business, Ariane Gorin. She was very generous with her time. We covered a wide variety of topics that are top of mind for both her and me right now. And for those of you who are not familiar with Ariane, let me tell you a little bit more about her. She is the president of Expedia for Business, and she is responsible for Expedia Group's global B2B business. Previously, though, Ariane was president of Expedia Business Services, which comprised Expedia Partner Solutions and Egencia, the leading digital travel management platform, before its sale to American Express Global Business Travel in 2021. Ariane joined Expedia Group over 10 years ago, where she was vice president of market management for Europe, Middle East, and Africa and rapidly expanded that the hotel network in that region. Prior to joining Expedia Group, Ariane spent 10 years at Microsoft in various sales, distribution, and marketing roles. Let's jump into the good stuff. Here's our conversation with Ariane Gorin. Ariane, it's great to have you on the podcast this season. Our listeners have seen you on stages worldwide speaking about Expedia for business, but can you give our listeners a quick summary of your area of the business and what you're focused on?

[00:01:57] **Ariane Gorin** Let me start, Brandon, by just saying thank you for having me. I've been listening to your podcast and envious of everyone else who's gotten to be on them. I'm very happy to be here and I'm looking forward to our discussion. To answer your question, I'm the president for Expedia for Business, and my team here at Expedia is made up of thousands of our teammates who all share the same mission. We're here to empower our partners to grow their businesses and to deliver great travel experiences, because we believe that when the traveler wins, we all win. Our team wakes up every day determined to support our partners all over the world who distribute their travel products on

our platform, who advertise with us, and who power their businesses with our inventory and technology solutions. So, really, it's a business that is a technology business, a distribution business, and an advertising business.

## Inspiring loyalty One Key:

[00:02:48] **Brandon Ehrhardt** And some exciting things happening all across that business, one of which this year was the launch of the One Key loyalty program. It's been a huge focus of the business of late. In fact, we dedicated a season finale of last season to the topic of loyalty. With something as innovative as One Key, a true first in the industry to bring these categories together and have the ability to earn on air and hotel and vacation rentals, can you clarify for the audience today how One Key is complementary and not a competitor to our partners' loyalty programs?

[00:03:24] **Ariane Gorin** We've been very pleased with the launch of One Key. It's been recognized by a few publications. It won the Simplicity and Loyalty award with the Points Guy. It was the winner of the Good Housekeeping 2024 Family Travel Award. So, we know the program is gaining traction, and this is really a program where the focus is for the everyday traveler. The reality is that 83 percent of travelers only take a few trips a year, and they may never earn status or meaningful rewards from existing loyalty programs. And that's really where One Key fits in. What it means is that our partners — our supply partners, hotels, and airlines and the like — now have access to this new segment of travelers. It's travelers who maybe aren't the road warriors, but it's people who maybe are going to book a vacation rental on Vrbo and then want to use the One Key cash they earn to stay, for example, a short stay at a hotel or to book an air ticket. So, we think it's really it can be complementary, as you said. One Key launched in the U.S. in July of 2023. And during 2024 there are going to be additional markets. And so we're excited to bring this rewards program outside of the U.S.

[00:04:41] **Brandon Ehrhardt** So, speaking of One Key, in that global approach outside of the United States, what's the strategy right now for the brand to penetrate markets where it traditionally hasn't been a large part of the market share? And how does One Key play a role in that?

## Expanding global reach:

[00:04:54] **Ariane Gorin** First, I will say I am as we're talking, I'm sitting in London. I've lived in Europe for over 20 years. For people who know me, I'm very passionate about how did we at Expedia Group grow our business outside of North America. And I'm a big believer in the magic of travel. It's a big market out there. And so, the more that we can help travelers around the world realize it, whether it's coming to the U.S. going away from the U.S., or traveling around Europe or Asia, it's what we want to be doing. And it's true that outside of the U.S., we've got a strong presence in Europe. We work with a huge breadth and depth of different partners across the regions, whether it's hotels, or airlines, car rental companies, and activity providers. Our brands of Expedia and Vrbo and Hotels.com, they really each have a distinct personality, and they appeal to different types of travelers, whether they're looking for a package deal, a short-term rental, or a weekend break in the city. And so, part of our strategy and growing outside of the U.S. is with these brands. Obviously, beyond our own brands, we also power sites and partners' businesses with our white label template and our rapid API technology or our travel agency technology. And that business, actually, is quite large outside of the U.S. So, we'll work with regional players like Despegar, which is a large OTA in Latin America, or Traveloka, which is an Asia-based OTA, powering them with the supply that we have around the world. So, if you're a hotel, for example, in California, we might be able to bring you demand from a traveler in LatAm through Despegar, and you'll see the benefit from that. I think this idea of growth in regions around the world for all businesses is important, and one of the reasons is the continued growth of middle class and the middle class around the world. I was reading recently that in Asia, the expectation for the growth of the middle class from 2020 to 2030 is going to be from 2 billion to 3.5 billion. The scale of that, it's just massive. And just to give you an idea, the middle class in the U.S., in America, is going to grow from 647 million in 2020 to 689 million. For the whole industry, the question is, as there's this massive growth in middle class, it means that people are going to be spending on travel, and how can we at Expedia Group help bring that demand to our

partners? Same thing in the Middle East. If you look at, two of the top 10 airports in the world are in the Middle East, it's Dubai and Doha, and you're seeing more travel coming through that. We invest in global brands in order to be relevant for travelers all over the world, and then bring more demand to our supply partners.

## Unpacking travel trends:

[00: [00:07:54] **Brandon Ehrhardt** So zooming out, one thing that I love about working in travel is I always get to learn new vocabulary words. Season one I learned what forest bathing is, and that's just when you walk through the forest. I was the first time I read that in a script, I was like, what am I reading? But Expedia Group also does a lot of great research that uncovers some of these trends. What are some of your favorites that we've uncovered?

[00:08:19] **Ariane Gorin** Brandon, I'm just like you. I love the travel trends, and I'll share just a few that were my favorites. One is set jetting. Set jetting was a trend we spotted a couple of years ago, and it's basically this idea that travelers are inspired by shows or films that they've seen, and it makes them want to go to the destination. We actually found that more than half of travelers say they've researched or booked a trip to a destination after seeing it on a TV show or a film, and that that was actually even more influential than social media. We think coming up in 2024, Paris will continue to be hot because season four of Emily in Paris is coming out. There's the Scottish Highlands, thanks to the remaining seasons of Outlander. And I love this not just because, as a Californian who lived in Paris for many years, I've had friends tease me that it's Ariane in Paris show. There's another one that we found which is called destination dupe, and these are places that are a little unexpected, a little under the radar, a great value, but they're just as special as the tried-and-true destinations that people think about or are talking about. And so, a great example would be the island of Paros in Greece, which is an alternative for the popular Santorini. They both have amazing Greek charm with iconic blue-domed churches and whitewashed buildings, but you'll find fewer crowds, and especially in an era where there's a lot of thinking and work going on to reduce overtourism and to think about sustainability. I think this theme of destination dupes is a great one. And then the last one we found is dry tripping. This is the idea of people going on trips, maybe they don't want to drink alcohol when they're on trips or mocktails, going somewhere they can do dry tripping, which my French husband tells me she is not interested in that trend, but it's one we found and one that I will embrace.

[00:10:19] **Brandon Ehrhardt** I love it. I think of the three, set jetting is the one that just, I can, whenever I watch a show, I find myself googling what is this actual hotel? I won't lie. When we were watching White Lotus this past season, I was doing some searching on Expedia trying to plan this trip. My wife, she really wants to go to Italy. We may, we may try and find a way to see if we can visit where they shot White Lotus season two.

[00:10:45] **Ariane Gorin** It makes you dream.

[00:10:47] **Brandon Ehrhardt** It does. It does. It's great to really inspire you to travel, to see a new destination, or see an amazing property that you want to go visit.

[00:10:56] **Ariane Gorin** Completely. And they say that a lot of the happiness when you're planning a trip is in that planning and dreaming phase. And so, I think it's cool to see this trend, this trend of it's just something more that adds to the fun and inspiration of the planning phase.

## How our tech helps:

[00:11:10] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Let's dive back in to kind of some of the regional focuses. You talked about, really some of the attention that you're spending both sitting in London, but also working to improve our partners' business in Europe. So, are there any noteworthy wins that you want to highlight in the region? Anything where you feel like Expedia Group is really bringing a lot of value to the table for partners that you wanted to highlight?

[00:11:32] **Ariane Gorin** Yeah, I think what I would call out is some of our partnerships with airlines here in EMEA, and obviously we work with a lot of airline partners, distributing their inventory through our brands. So, bringing them travelers. But we're really unlocking opportunities where we're powering them with our technology. So, we're helping them when they have travelers coming to their own brand, their own websites to actually sell something more, like hotels. This year we're signing, expanding, some big airline relationships here in EMEA, Ryanair, Icelandair, Iberia Airlines, and Turkish Airlines. It comes from what we call this 360-degree approach to the relationship with the airlines. I think a few years ago it was a lot about them distributing through us. We've now developed some great advertising products that they can work with us on. And as I said, these hotel technology products, for example, with Ryanair, we're now powering their site, Ryanair Rooms, which allows their customers to book hotels. Turkish Airlines is extending something called Air Member Only Deals to European points of sale, and they'd been doing it in the U.S., but it's where their loyalty members or our loyalty members can access better deals on Turkish Airlines flights, which means that they're able to attract travelers who are in higher tiers of our loyalty program. Brandon, we're also working with some destination marketing organizations and car suppliers in the region to help them extend their reach and help them target the travelers that they want to bring using our advertising solutions. Because if there's one thing that, you know, that period that feels so long ago, the pandemic showed us is the importance of tourism to local economies. And so, the way that we work with destination marketing organizations, or DMOs, to help them reach their goals of bringing international visitors into their countries, of having people come and visit one city but then spread across other cities, is something that that we think that is valuable that we bring.

[00:13:43] **Brandon Ehrhardt** It's awesome. I think just from my traveler perspective, some of the points you made with the airlines, the great pieces, you can get this Air Member Only Deals as a traveler, you can earn loyalty points on the airline and earn OneKeyCash depending on ....

[00:13:57] **Ariane Gorin** It's a double dip.

[00:13:57] **Brandon Ehrhardt** OneKeyCash. Yes, exactly. It's a double dip. So much great value for the traveler. And to your point, it covers so many different lines of business here. It's not just about lodging. We talked about air and car and what media solutions are doing. So, moving ahead. Looking ahead. We're just in the first part of 2024 right now. Tell me what's on the horizon for the balance of this year, and what are you most excited about?

## Growing in 2024:

[00:14:21] **Ariane Gorin** You know, Brandon, what always excites me is growth. And I think when I look this year at the growth that's going to come from bringing back more air capacity from APAC, the growth that's going to come from a big once-in-a-lifetime cultural moment like the 2024 Paris Olympics, the growth that's going to come from international tours by artists like Taylor Swift. I think what excites me is working side by side with our partners to help travelers make memories through all of that.

[00:14:55] **Brandon Ehrhardt** I've got to ask, she's the hottest act in the world. We've seen the impact she's having on RevPAR. Taylor Swift favorite song?

[00:15:04] **Ariane Gorin** It has got to be Out of the Woods.

[00:15:07] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Out of the Woods. I like it. Out of the Woods of 2023 and running towards a lot of new opportunities in 2024.

[00:15:13] **Ariane Gorin** Running, running, running.

[00:15:15] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Which is funny because I think my favorite Taylor Swift song is Getaway Car, so I'm not sure what that is. I don't know if we're running from something, Ariane.

[00:15:21] **Ariane Gorin** Getaway Car, Out of the Woods. What are we running from? I'm running towards growth, Brandon.

### Final thoughts and key takeaways:

[00:15:26] **Brandon Ehrhardt** Running towards growth. Ariane, one question that we ask everyone, and spoiler alert, I just ask for inspiration for my own trips. But I've got to ask you, where are you heading? What are you excited about? Where are you traveling to in the world?

[00:15:40] **Ariane Gorin** Our next big family trip is to Egypt, to Aswan in Egypt. Taking the kids, my husband, mother-in-law. And we're going to go soak in the local culture. Have amazing views on the Nile. I'm so excited.

[00:15:55] **Brandon Ehrhardt** That's going to be an incredible trip. Can't wait to hear more about it. This was fantastic. I really appreciate you taking time out of your day. It's great to have a conversation with you on what's coming next year. Some of the things that we've uncovered with trends. Before we go, any words of wisdom for our audience before we depart?

[00:16:12] **Ariane Gorin** Oh, yeah. I don't know if it's a word of wisdom, but I guess I would say if you're listening to this, you probably work in the travel industry, and we all have good days and bad days. I personally find so much meaning to working in this industry where we help people make memories. So, I think to all of us, if we can just all remember every day the meeting and what we do, we'll be able to take on those tough days.

[00:16:36] **Brandon Ehrhardt** I love it. Ariane, thanks so much for joining us. It was a pleasure to have you.

[00:16:40] **Ariane Gorin** Thanks so much, Brandon.

[00:16:44] **Brandon Ehrhardt** There you have it. That's insight you generally have to pay for, one of the most senior leaders and one of the most impactful leaders that we have at Expedia Group bringing you the latest. So honored to have some time spent with Ariane. And she's someone who I've admired and looked up to for many years of my career at Expedia. And every time she comes to the town of Chicago, I try and corner her for a coffee or a walk. She's always super generous with her time as she was today. I think if you listen back to that episode, you're gonna find insights you can't find anywhere else. I hear it directly from the leaders of Expedia Group. So, a really, really strong interview. Happy to bring it to you. And as always, let us know what you think of the podcast by emailing us at [PoweringTravel@Expediagroup.com](mailto:PoweringTravel@Expediagroup.com). That's PoweringTravel, all one word, @Expediagroup.com. But we also have a new form of the website, for the brand-new website, I should add. You can find that at [partner.expediagroup.com](https://partner.expediagroup.com). Really nice look and feel to the new website and you can give us feedback on the podcast. Who do you want to hear from? What topics do you want to see on next season that I'll be right there? And of course, if you have a few seconds, please be sure to rate and review on your podcast platform of choice. That's going to help people like you and me find our show. Thanks so much for listening. We'll see you next time on the Powering Travel Podcast, brought to you by Expedia Group.