PRESS RELEASE

05/12/2021

REGION SUD AND WAZE: A GLOBAL AND REVOLUTIONARY INNOVATION FOR TOURISM TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

After a year of testing, Waze - the world's largest community-based traffic and navigation app with over 14 million users in France - and France's 2nd largest tourist destination, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, have joined forces to better manage the flow of visitors to sensitive nature sites and traffic and congestion during peak travel times. Drivers may have already seen an advertisement on Waze at lunchtime, highlighting a restaurant near their route to encourage a stop or a money-saving detour. This type of message can also be used for other purposes, like promoting an alternative route to a popular tourist destination that saves you time and money.

"I have set the CRT a mission to develop our tourism economy, which accounts for 10% of regional jobs, while minimizing its negative impact on our natural environment. Our priority is preserving our protected natural areas without isolating them or prohibiting access", said the President of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Regional Tourism Committee (CRT).

"Too many people are in the same place at the same time when there are other magnificent places to discover nearby. Our whole innovative system has been designed to resolve these issues and we have found the right partners at the right time: Waze and CI-Media!", said Loïc Chovelon, General Manager of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur CRT.

"We are delighted to support the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, provide drivers with a seamless experience and elevate a good cause", said Mathieu GABARD - Head of EMEA Waze Local.

1 - From concept to roll-out

To address the problem of congestion in sensitive natural areas, the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur CRT approached Waze and its local partner, CI-Media, in Spring 2019. Waze has over 14 million monthly active users in France, providing a huge target audience of tourists.
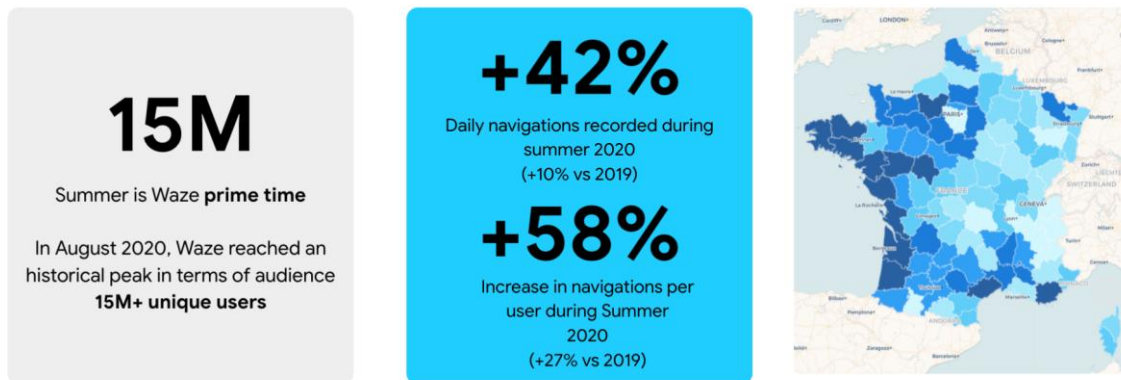
Last summer, four sites were selected for this pilot: the Saint Julien beach and the Blanc Martel trail in the Verdon region, the Ochre trail in Roussillon, and the Provencal Colorado in the Luberon region. The operating principle is simple: using Waze Ads formats to inform app users of the high volume of traffic at a particular site and direct them to alternative solutions. These include the proposal of an upstream parking lot with a free shuttle service to get to the desired site and avoid traffic jams during the last few kilometers. Or even suggesting other less visited tourist sites nearby.

The results of this first pilot, conducted between June 5 and July 31, 2020, proved the success of the experiment: 325,000 drivers were reached by the device set up around the 4 experimental scenarios, and more than 28,000 navigations to the proposed alternative solutions were "prompted" following exposure to the messages.

2 - The partners involved

Following the success of the first pilot, 8 national or regional nature parks – the Calanques, Ecrins, Mercantour and Port-Cros national parks, as well as the Alpilles, Préalpes d'Azur, Sainte-Baume and Verdon regional nature parks – have joined forces with the CRT and Waze. The success of this innovation is based on 3 criteria:

- Local experts who can propose credible user-centric solutions.
- The quality of the alternative scenarios and the advertising messages produced, which must be simple and clear.
- The reactivity of both the natural areas managers involved alerting and the Waze teams to activate the advertising messages.

Initiated and led by the CRT, which is co-financing the system, several consultation meetings were held in recent weeks with the company CI-Media, which provides the link between Waze and the partner natural areas. Each Park then mobilized stakeholders in its territory to establish the most appropriate scenarios to address local issues of overcrowding. Once the scenarios are approved, parks inform the Waze and CI-Media teams when a natural site reaches its saturation point. With an almost immediate response, informative messages are then activated on the app for users located near the site.

3 - How does it work?

The strength of the solution resides in showing that responsible tourism does not necessarily require a "demarketing" policy. Marketing and advertising can also be used to relieve congestion at very popular tourist sites. The challenge for each natural area involved in the initiative is to propose alternative solutions that are best suited to the local context.

Case Study: The Gioberney Site in Ecrins National Park: The PACA region will collaborate with Waze to reduce heavy congestion in Ecrins National Park and instead promote its House, located at La Chapelle-en-Valgaudemar. Using takeover banner ads to promote its shuttle bus system and pins to show the House's location, the region will attract more tourists on-the-go, minimize heavy traffic and increase visits to the House.
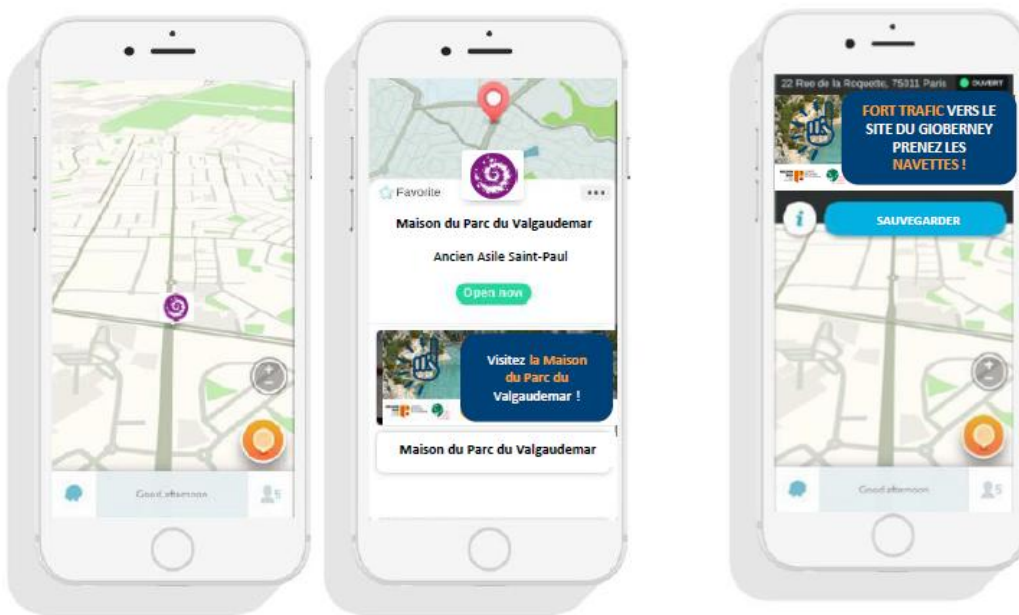
Pins campaign to increase the visibility of the Maison du Parc du Valgaudemar

Takeovers campaign to encourage people to take the shuttles to access the Gioberney site

CRT PRESS CONTACT: Audrey Salor a.salor@provence-alpes-cotedazur.com M+33 (0)7. 86.59.42.84