

## Staycation: A Brief Wondrous Life

Staycation, the much-hyped media buzzword, died last night after a summer-long battle with overuse. Its exact age was unknown but the term was believed to be five years old.

The neologism was found lifeless in an article touting “Last Minute Summer Staycations!” and pronounced dead shortly after. As the news spread, a small crowd of editors and budget travelers gathered at a Broadway newsstand. Some wept softly as they placed flowers at a makeshift memorial where a teddy bear held a sign reading, “Always in our heds.”

Staycation rose to prominence early in spring and became the concept du jour in publications and blogs that enjoy using common foreign phrases like du jour. The child of economic worries and the media’s love of pithiness, Staycation urged anxious travelers to forsake more costly and ambitious vacation plans for time off focused on local attractions and close-to-home adventures.

Staycation had labored in obscurity until December when a brief mention in the New York Times brought new attention. Soon it was everywhere. By late summer a Google search for Staycation came up with 486,000 results topping the total of Locavore, the 2007 New Oxford American Dictionary word of the year, by nearly 200,000 hits.

“Staycation was no *uber*, at least not yet,” said one magazine professional who asked not to be identified. “But the potential was there and now we’ll never know. It’s just so sad.”

“Using 20-20 hindsight, I’d call it a perfect storm. Obviously, we should have seen this one coming from a mile away,” said one of the newsstand mourners, Tab Palatino, editor at Your Best Travel Magazine Ever.

His publication had run articles featuring the concept in its last four issues, including the August story “101 Staycations To Try Before You Die.” Shaking his head as he looked at the layout for an upcoming special report titled, “Staycation: What *Really* Happened,” Palatino, said, “I hate to see it thrown under the bus. Staycation was the man.”

Others familiar with Staycation’s final days say editors ignored clear warning signs. Recessionista, a close friend of the term and a frequent companion on the magazine subhead scene, said that a weary Staycation had eerily predicted that it wouldn’t survive through Labor Day and the end of the summer travel season.

Nor was Staycation the only one suffering from fatigue. So too were readers. As early as July, back-to-back posters on the Buffalo News website wrote, “[Staycation] makes me wanna barf” and “I hereby nominate “staycation” as the most annoying and over used word to hit the English language in decades.”

Sources said such criticism deeply wounded the modest Staycation, whose sole mission was to empower and inspire travelers during tough economic times. For a while certainly,

that simple message resonated with editors eager to connect with their readers even as they cut editorial travel budgets during a period of declining revenues. Staycation became the “it portmanteau” said Palatino and as publicists and headline writers repeatedly seized upon the concept, the attention finally became too much.

In a Tweet, Recessionista wrote, “U cud c it. StayC ws mentally and editorially xhausted. But the dmand wz there and when u r hot, it’s hard 2 just say no. Late. = ( ”