

# Agents Advancing

## DATE:

**Tuesday**  
**27 April 2010**  
**09:30 - 17:00**

## VENUE:

**Strand Palace  
Hotel**

**372 Strand  
London  
WC2R 0JJ**

**Nearest  
Undergrounds:  
Covent Garden  
Charing Cross**

In the excitement of the online world, developments in mobile, the introduction of social media and so on, the role of the travel agent has simply not been on any conference agenda. Yet, agents are still playing a major role in advising on and selling the travel industry's products.

Initially spurred on by the no frills airlines, consumers have been educated to buy travel online and yet, in times of crisis - such as airline strikes, flu epidemics or travel companies going bust, consumers have turned to agents for help and guidance.

Arguably no sector of the industry has been more affected by the Internet and advancements in consumer technology.

With widespread adoption of the web at the turn of the Millennium, many industry observers were predicting the death of the travel agent. Whilst many agents have adapted to survive,

they have seen their fellows that have stuck with their 20th Century business models fall by the wayside.

Current thinking is that there is still a strong role for agents to play. Technology companies have been developing new tools that have allowed agents to raise their efficiency and remain competitive whilst still providing consumers with the service they demand. New business models have seen agents growing profitably. Agency organisations and groupings have provided independent agents with support services that they could never afford to provide for themselves.

TTI's Spring 2010 conference, Agents Advancing, examines how travel agents are evolving to remain relevant in the 21st Century. Hear about the issues they are facing - strategic, legislative & technological.

## THE SPEAKERS

**John McEwan**  
Chairman  
**ABTA**

**Julia Lo Bue-Said**  
Director, Leisure  
**Advantage Travel Centres**

**Tim Wright**  
Commercial Director - UK and Ireland  
**Travelport**

**Tim Loring**  
Head of Travel Agent Product Solutions  
**Comtec Group Ltd**

**Barry Whittaker**  
Managing Director  
**Tzell UK**

**Chris Roe**  
Sales and Distribution Director  
**Virgin Holidays**

**Mike Greenacre**  
Managing Director  
**The Co-operative Travel**

**Chris Amenechi**  
Senior Director International E-commerce  
and Distribution Planning  
**Continental Airlines**

**Richard Kelly**  
Head of Business Development  
**Amadeus UK and Ireland**

**Victoria Sanders**  
Managing Director  
**Teletext Holidays**

**David Moesli**  
Deputy Director, Consumer Protection Group  
**Civil Aviation Authority**

## THE SPONSORS

TTI wishes to extend its warm thanks to the following companies for kindly sponsoring this event.



**09:30 Registration and Coffee****10:00 Welcome from the Chairman & TTI Update**

Tony Allen, Chairman, TTI

**10:10 Keynote: Agents Advancing**

In a career spanning over 40 years in travel, John McEwan has seen many developments taking place as travel agents have adapted to an ever-changing trading environment. John will give his vision of how agents are moving forward to remain relevant and profitable in an increasingly dynamic marketplace.

**John McEwan**, *Chairman, ABTA*

**10:30 Can the Independent Agent Survive?**

As the industry becomes increasingly high-tech and tour operators distribute direct as well as via the retail trade, independent agents' businesses are coming under pressure. Can they survive on their own or is it now an absolute necessity to join a larger grouping? If being part of a consortium is the future, what are the benefits and how does an agency maintain its own unique identity when it is part of a group?

**Julia Lo Bue-Said**, *Director, Leisure Advantage Travel Centres*

**10:50 Ask Alex**

In order to reduce call centre costs, Continental Airlines developed Ask Alex, a revolutionary web site avatar that will answer many commonly asked customer questions. Hear how this software agent came to be developed and how successful it has been in reducing the load on Continental's call centre.

**Chris Amenechi**, *Senior Director International E-commerce and Distribution Planning Continental Airlines*

**11:20 Coffee****11:50 Technology Super-Panel**

Technology for travel agents has developed in leaps and bounds. The GDSs and specialist travel technology suppliers have developed tools of the trade that make a real difference to efficient and effective travel agency operations. This technology super-panel will bring you up to date with the latest developments that are helping agents to gain real competitive advantage.

**Tim Loring**, *Head of Travel Agent Product Solutions Comtec Group Ltd*

**Richard Kelly**, *Head of Business Development Amadeus UK & Ireland*

**Tim Wright**, *Commercial Director - UK and Ireland Travelport*

**Roberto da Re**, *Chief Executive Officer Dolphin Dynamics*

**12:50 Buffet Lunch****13:50 Keynote: Do we need travel agents?**

With tour operators, airlines, hotels and every other travel company reaching out to customers online, is there really any need for travel agents? What role should they be fulfilling? Can they still add value to travel transactions? How should they be evolving to meet the needs of the 21st Century traveller?

**Mike Greenacre**, *Managing Director, The Co-operative Travel*

**14:15 A Tour Operator's Perspective**

How can travel agents best work with tour operators? What does a tour operator want from its agent intermediaries? Are all agents equal in a tour operator's eyes or are some more valuable than others. Hear a tour operator's perspective on the evolving role of the travel agent.

**Chris Roe**, *Sales and Distribution Director Virgin Holidays*

**14:40 Reform of the ATOL Scheme**

The Department of Transport has consulted the travel industry on reform of the scope of the ATOL Scheme. The consultation period is now closed. In this session you will hear about the proposals made in the consultation and learn about the trade and consumer responses. A full response from Government is expected later in the summer.

**David Moesli**, *Deputy Director, Consumer Protection Group, Civil Aviation Authority*

**15:05 ATOL Reform Panel Discussion****15:25 Coffee****15:55 New Business Models: Corporate Travel**

US business travel agency, Tzell is planning to expand in the UK this year. It is bringing its particular brand of homemaker corporate travel management to the UK. Whilst homeworking is well established as part of the leisure travel agency scene, it has not so far been introduced into corporate travel. Hear how Tzell UK will capitalise on this new business model.

**Barry Whittaker**, *General Manager, Tzell UK*

**16:20 New Business Models: Retail Agency**

At a time when some are scaling back their agency businesses, Teletext Holidays is building its own retail chain. Last October, it announced a partnership with Tesco to open 20 in-store shops within two years. The shops will be innovative with window screens, plasma displays and projectors to create a high-tech image. Learn how partnering with a major retailer can be a profitable business model.

**Victoria Sanders**, *Managing Director, Teletext Holidays*

**16:55 Chairman's Summary**, Tony Allen, Chairman, TTI**17:00 Close**

Moderator: Paul Richer, Genesys - The Travel Technology Consultancy

(It may be necessary, for reasons beyond our control, to alter the content or timing of the programme.)

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- Others £295 + VAT (£346.63).

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