

Third WTM Vision Conference - London Hailed a Success



The third WTM Vision Conference - London was hailed a success by the travel and tourism industry.

Almost 200 senior executives from across the industry attended the event at the CBI Conference Centre in London on Wednesday 25 May to hear a premier line up of speakers address the industry's key issues.

The event, moderated by ABTA Chairman John McEwan, kicked off with Caroline Bremner, Head of Travel and Tourism at Euromonitor International, revealing exclusive research on the UK inbound and outbound markets.

She told delegates, who received a free copy of The Travel Industry Global Overview report worth £1,000, the UK outbound market receipts will return to pre-recession levels by 2014 (\$38.6 billion) but it would be 2017 before departures reached 2008's 66.9 million.

Former Selfridges CEO Peter Williams followed, offering his unique insight into the current state of the wider retail sector in the UK. ASOS Senior Independent Director Williams said all retailers - including travel companies "need to work hard to make customers feel good about spending their hard-earned cash".

A panel session discussing the UK outbound and domestic market concluded the conference. Dominic Paul, Managing Director Royal Caribbean, said the agency community had responded well to recent cuts in commission from the cruise sector.

Matthew Walls, Marketing Director EMEA, hotels.com, said the UK business was seeing good year-on-year growth, with the global hotels.com performing well because it was able to track and respond to changes in demand patterns.

Shearing CEO Denis Wormwell joked that "coach holidays are the sausage roll of the holiday choice buffet," suggesting the sector is often overlooked but it a valid part of the UK travel sector.

Tui Specialist Managing Director Clare Tobin explained the division was still interested in providing city breaks, but that durations were increasing. Twin centre breaks in Italy and multi-city breaks in the US were popular with its upmarket clients.

Furthermore, event sponsor Leire Jimenez, Head of Sales at event sponsor Mapfre Assistance, told the audience that its recent purchase of insureandgo signalled a big push into the UK trade and consumer market.

World Travel Market Chairman Fiona Jeffery said: "WTM Vision Conference - London was a great success following the expansion of the brand to Dubai and Milan this year. There is such a need for a mid-year market intelligence conference for the industry that we plan to expand WTM Vision into two more countries next year."

WTM Vision Conference - London was organised in association with Kingly Event Management.

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