



PRESS RELEASE

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A host of stars open Travel Counsellors' Conference in Manchester

Travel Counsellors' Conference 2009 got off to a roof raising start with an energetic opening performance from Britain's Got Talent father and son duo and finalists 'Stavros Flatley'. The crowd were then wowed the same evening with a special performance X-Factor star Rhydian Roberts, who performed at the gala evening on Saturday night.

Travel Counsellors' annual conference took place at the 'Manchester Central' convention centre at the weekend (Dec 4-6). The 1,100 attending delegates included over 600 of the company's Counsellors, including agents from the company's overseas operations in Ireland, the Netherlands, South Africa, Australia, South Africa and Canada, with partners and head office staff also in attendance.

On the Friday evening delegates enjoyed an elaborate welcome bash, as guests were entertained by award winning Irish comedian and television presenter Dara O'Briain. There were also performances from a troop of British street dance champions, as well as the opportunity to partake in Travel Counsellors' own casino night.

During the conference sessions on Saturday 5 Dec, which were also open to agents from outside of the company, the crowd were delighted by surprise guest presenter, Amanda Lamb, from TV travel show 'A Place in the Sun', who welcomed on stage a host of guest speakers including key industry figure and renowned journalist Simon Calder and young entrepreneur, 17 year old Louis Barnett, who spoke to the crowd about and how he founded and built world renowned chocolate company 'Chokolit' at just 12 years old.

Travel Counsellors founder & Chairman David Speakman was first up on stage and told the crowd; "The theme of this year's conference is 'Commit to Success'. Forget the reports of doom and gloom – use this opportunity to learn from the recession so you can look into 2010 even better and stronger. Each and every one of you can commit to your success. It's all about self believe and positive attitude. In your own business you rule the world. And we here to support you every step of the way."

Agents heard from head office management over the course of the weekend including sessions from David Speakman, Managing Director Steve Byrne, Sales Director Malcolm Hingley and IT Director Paul Speakman. They were told about the company future plans and initiatives including the developments within the company's own Phenix dynamic packaging system and how agents can focus on adopting the company's 'system of success', a proven formula that focuses on how agents can best utilise the support and tools provided by the company to help them grow their businesses.

The company's referral 'pioneers' were also congratulated at the conference; these are the Travel Counsellors that have referred fellow travel professionals to the company, with top referrer TC Becky Stephenson, who has introduced three new agents to the company this year, winning a luxury holiday for two to Jamaica.

Further highlights included an evening of glamour at the company's exclusive gala dinner on Saturday evening, with the company's top performers being recognised at the event.

The event also saw a record number of suppliers in attendance, with over 150 exhibiting at the special Pow Wow session, where agents were able to meet directly with representatives from a host of tourist boards, hotels and airlines and learn more about their products and destinations. This included headline sponsors Royal Caribbean, Celebrity Cruises and Azamara Cruises; Emirates Tour UK and Dubai Tourism and Commerce Marketing.



In his final parting speech David Speakman told the crowd of Travel Counsellors; "I am proud of each and every one of you for what you have achieved over the best 12 months. And looking forward, with all the support and tools we give you to succeed, you have the power to be even better."

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About Travel Counsellors: Travel Counsellors is the world's largest home-based travel company with turnover at the end of its last financial year (Oct 31 2009) of £255 million. Founded in 1994 it currently has over 1,100 travel consultants who work from home with the support of over 170 staff at the company's UK headquarters in Bolton and overseas offices. The company operates in the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, South Africa, Australia, Canada and the US. In the UK, the Travel Counsellors Trust financially protects everything booked by the customer free of charge. Travel Counsellors was the winner of the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in 2003-2008, the technology category of the 2005 CBI Growing Business Awards and was voted Travel Agent of the Year by readers of the Guardian, Observer and Guardian Unlimited in 2006, 2007 & 2009.

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