

DR SUNSHINE TO HELP BRIGHTEN THOMSON HOLIDAYS

Submitted by: TUI UK

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Dr Robert Mighall, aka Dr Sunshine, has joined forces with leading UK travel company Thomson to help the company better understand how the Sun plays a part on its customers state of mind - and help ensure that the company offers sunshine holidays (<http://www.thomson.co.uk>) abroad that genuinely offer that all important rest and relaxation...

For many years, Thomson has been listening to its customers' feedback with a view to making holidays that much more special. With a heritage of offering differentiated experiences to suit all tastes and budget's, from holidays in Spain (<http://www.thomson.co.uk/destinations/europe/spain/holidays-spain.html>) and Cyprus (<http://www.thomson.co.uk/destinations/europe/cyprus/holidays-cyprus.html>), to further afield holidays in Cape Verde (<http://www.thomson.co.uk/destinations/africa/cape-verde/holidays-cape-verde.html>) and Barbados (<http://www.thomson.co.uk/destinations/caribbean/barbados/barbados/holidays-barbados.html>) the company's 'Innovation' department is now looking at the reasons why taking a holiday abroad is good for you – and that's where the relationship with Dr Sunshine was born.

Robert, a self-confessed sun worshipper, has even written a book called Sunshine. The book attempts to explain the reason behind the British fascination with the sun. Research for the book has taken Robert to many sunny destinations, allowing him to be seen as an expert in sunshine.

To herald his collaboration with Thomson, Robert Mighall commissioned a survey to see just how big a role the sun plays on our psyches and holiday habits. The survey shows that the sun plays a more important role in our lives than we perhaps believed, with:

- 97% of people feeling that the weather is important to them in their holiday choice
- Three quarters thinking sunshine makes them feel happy and only 3% don't think that sunshine affects their mood
- 92% of people stating that a holiday abroad to the sun is simply the best way to beat stress, indicating that sunshine really does make people feel good
- 73% of Thomson customers consider at least one foreign holiday as essential each year
- Sunshine is a huge factor in general, strongly affecting the self-reported mood of 70.41% of the sample, bringing happiness to 75% (five times the other possible emotions)

"The survey results clearly show how sunshine is a genuine tonic for UK residents, illustrating the essential role it plays on their minds and bodies and the key ingredient to providing happiness and relaxation," explained Dr Mighall. "Sunlight triggers the hormone serotonin (the malfunction of which is behind SAD), which is responsible for regulating so many vital functions in the body, from sleep patterns to appetite and libido. With only the weekends or summer holidays (<http://www.thomson.co.uk>) offering Brits a chance to see the sun, the UK sees holidays abroad as second nature to a country with the least reliable weather in the world."

And, with the British Summer's of the last few years proving a bit of a damp squib, and the economic downturn showing no signs of abating, Thomson believe that the only way of adding almost guaranteed

sunshine to your life is to seek a holiday abroad this summer.

“Inviting Robert to become our very own Dr Sunshine is another step in Thomson’s commitment to building holidays with our customers in mind”, said Luke Gaskins, General Manager of Thomson’s Innovation Team. “Even without Robert’s input, we know that people need escapism, that little ray of light to give them something to focus on and look forward to that can be found by hopping on a plane and heading abroad for some guaranteed sunshine. Our collaboration with him will help us develop even more great holiday experiences. After all, by taking a holiday in the sun, you really can switch off, forget about your every day worries and relax – now that’s truly special.”

Thomson offers a range of sunny destinations around the world, from:

Madeira (<http://www.thomson.co.uk/destinations/europe/portugal/madeira/holidays-madeira.html>) to the Maldives (<http://www.thomson.co.uk/destinations/indian-ocean/maldives/maldives/holidays-maldives.html>), Cyprus (<http://www.thomson.co.uk/destinations/europe/cyprus/holidays-cyprus.html>) to Cuba (<http://www.thomson.co.uk/destinations/caribbean/cuba/cuba/holidays-cuba.html>) For more information on the range of holidays offered visit <http://www.thomson.co.uk>

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Notes to Editors:

Dr Robert Mighall is the author of Sunshine, the first book that tries to explain why Brits are such sun lovers, and traces the ‘enduring association between sunshine and happiness’. Published by John Murray.

Robert Mighall and Luke Gaskins, General Manager of Innovation for Thomson, are available for interviews. For more information or to schedule an interview contact Hannah Burden at Thomson on 01582 644 626 / hannah.burden@thomson.co.uk

*The survey commissioned by Dr Mighall in association with Thomson was based on replies received from 300 respondents, all of whom have travelled to a foreign country in the past six months. Full results are available on request.

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