

SCOTTISH BUSINESS TRAVEL COMPANY SIGNS TECHNOLOGY DEAL WITH SOFTWARE GIANT

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Agreement could slash travel costs for public and private sector

A Scottish corporate travel company has secured a major commercial coup after becoming the first in the UK to offer a new travel management system that could slash travel and expense costs for the public and private sector.

Business Travel Solutions, part of the award winning Barrhead Travel Group – Scotland's most successful independent travel agent – has agreed a unique commercial tie-up with ComBTAS, an international business travel technology specialist.

ComBTAS has developed a new Travel Management System, used extensively by the Israeli Government and major corporations including Siemens and telecoms giant Alvarion, that reduces travel and expense costs, cuts fraud and waste, and helps users reduce their carbon footprint.

The UK business travel market is worth more than £25 billion a year, according to the Institute of Travel & Meetings, but almost half of all spend is unmanaged. Industry experts suggest that £1.5 billion is wasted every year as a result of staff booking their own business travel.

The ComBTAS system offers budget holders greater control of the travel booking process, allowing them to monitor corporate travel spend, reduce unnecessary travel and manage budgets more effectively.

Typically, organisations can save at least 15% on their travel costs, with some reporting savings of up to 30%, according to ComBTAS

Other key features include pre-trip reporting, expense management, online booking and management reporting. One of the key benefits of the system is its versatility – the package is entirely bespoke to suit the client's needs, and users can opt to select some or all of the various tools available, depending on their requirements. The system can also be accessed remotely using a smartphone or laptop.

The software also helps organisations reduce their carbon footprint by finding the most efficient green travel routes. Users can also track their carbon impact over the long term and, if necessary, take action to offset their emissions.

Business Travel Solutions is the first corporate travel agent in the UK to provide the new system.

Stephen McGuire, head of corporate travel, believes the software will prove attractive to cost conscious businesses and public sector bodies.

He said: "We are delighted to be the first UK business travel management company to work in partnership with ComBTAS, one of the world's leading business travel technology companies. Their cutting edge software has helped governments and corporations around the world substantially reduce their travel and

expense costs, some by up to 30%.

“At a time of economic uncertainty, that is an important incentive for cost conscious businesses and public sector bodies. This technology allows those organisations to manage their travel budgets more effectively and reduce wasteful spend. With around £1.5 billion wasted every year on unnecessary travel, the potential cost savings are significant, and there are obvious benefits too in terms of reducing carbon emissions.”

The ComBTAS deal is a major boost for Business Travel Solutions, which has seen new business sales double in the past year and has ambitions to capture a growing share of the UK corporate travel sector.

The business travel firm manages the corporate travel needs of major blue chip companies, government bodies and academic institutions and employs 25 people in Glasgow and Belfast.

Best known for its award winning holiday business, Barrhead Travel is Scotland’s most successful independent travel agent, with 33 branches and more than 500 staff, and one of the fastest growing in the UK with sales of over £130 million.

Barrhead Travel Group chief executive Sharon Munro said: “Barrhead Travel is an established and trusted name in the Scottish holiday market, with branches in almost every major town and city, and a reputation for service and good value. We are also an increasingly important player in the UK business travel market, with a growing portfolio of corporate clients. The agreement with ComBTAS gives us a unique competitive advantage, and means that we can offer added value to new and existing clients in Scotland and across the UK.”

For more information on Business Travel Solutions go to www.businesstravelsolutions.com

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Media enquiries:

Stephen McGuire, Business Travel Solutions
0141 242 1290

Donald Morrison, New Horizon Media (PR agency)
07915853129