



ENGLAND'S GREAT WEST WAY®

Great West Way Connections

**Making the most of working with the Travel Trade
prior to attending Great West Way Marketplace**

Tuesday 18 October 2022

[Meeting Recording Link](#)

Passcode: ffY9jq&r

Attendees:

Florence Wallace	Great West Way	Sarah Hind	Great Western Railway
Fiona Errington	Great West Way	Joana Ferreira	Roseate Hotels
David Andrews	Great West Way	Helen Chick	Westonbirt
Sarah Jeffrey	Great West Way	Tracey-Ann Walpole	Corsham
Iain Terry (Chairman)	Royal Collections Trust	Jen Edmondson	Bowood
Vera Lett	Tour Partner Group	Karen Roebuck	Visit Thames
Ranjiv Bhalla	Veenus / Vesperience	Eloise Gordon	Whatley Manor Hotel
Roisin Donnelly	ETOA	Dalene Lazarus	HI Salisbury/Stonehenge
Robbie Kennedy	Best West. Angel Hotel	Robin Witshire	De Vere Tortworth Court
Emma Griffiths	Best West. Angel Hotel	Anna-Karin Hanson	English Heritage
Sarah-Jayne Beasley	Blenheim Palace	Paul Upton	First Travel Solutions
Max Rawlinson	Visit West	Helen Berryman	Berkeley Castle
Vicki Smith	House of Frankenstein	Lucy Grier	Brunel's SS Great Britain
David Gardner	First Travel Solutions	Graham Horn	Tours2Order
Lewis Collins	Bishopstrow Hotel & Spa		

1. Welcome and Introduction

2. Great West Way Travel Trade Update

Please see [Activity update for April – October](#) for details about distribution of trade directory, PR, communication, trade engagement, Official Tour Operator update etc.

Key points to note include, registering an interest to attend the following forthcoming events/exhibitions:

- Britain & Ireland Marketplace, London 27 January
- Excursions, Twickenham 28 January – from £600 to stand share (based on 4 pax)
- Interested in Nordics – speak to Flo – event in Feb
- Explore GB – free – virtual 27 Feb – 2 March
- ITB Germany 7 – 9 March – from £700 stand share (based on 3 pax) Deadline 25 Nov

ACTION: Please contact [Flo](#) if you are interested in any of the above.

3. Introduction to Working with the Travel Trade and Great West Way Marketplace

Flo's presentation can be seen [here](#). It covers the following:

- Why Target the Travel Trade
- Understanding the travel distribution system
- How Great West Way can help - a strategic programme of Tactical Travel Trade Activity
- Great West Way Marketplace
 - Facilitating buyers and suppliers to do business together
 - Hybrid format to maximise buyer attendance, 4 x Discovery visits
 - Summary of bookings – as of 26/10/22
 - Buyers virtual – 31 confirmed
 - Buyers Discovery visits – 25 confirmed
 - Buyers from the following countries attending **virtual event** eg. Domestic, US, Netherlands, Italy, Denmark, Belgium, South Africa.
 - Buyers from the following countries attending **Discovery Visits** eg. USA, Canada, Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium, Italy, South Africa.
 - Supplier attendees: 29

4. Making the most of working with the Travel Trade

Official Tour Operator Speakers:

Vera Lett, Group Marketing & People Strategy Director, Tour Partner Group,
vera.lett@tourpartnergroup.com

Please find below some notes from Vera's presentation:

- Tour Partner Group is a Destination Management Company, with a primary UK focus for Frequent Independent Travellers (FIT), small groups, groups and meetings and incentives. TPG work with B2B tour operators and some travel agencies in over 40 active source markets. USA plus central Europe are key. However, there are increasing numbers from Latin America and Asian markets.
- TPG are destination experts in market.
- TPG have been working with Great West Way for years, contracting Great West Way product including transport, attraction, accommodation etc.
- TPG recognise there is lots of variety along the route and are interested to build relationships and work closely with suppliers.
- TPG give customers ideas – they work together to package the suitable product, which the in-market tour operator sells either B2B or B2C in market.
- Booking time is much shorter now but lead times are important to understand eg. Germany needs information a year and a half in advance of a visit. Therefore, TPG need price information early to ensure product can be included.
- TPG marketing included fortnightly newsletters fortnightly and promotion of programmes via social media channels. Germany are the only market that still require a printed brochure. TPG also attend trade shows.
- Why Great West Way?
 - There is big demand for pushing business outside of London
 - Pushing the extraordinary variety of what this region in England has to offer.
 - Pushing off season business.

- TPG need supplier support as they build the whole programme (excluding flights), bundling products including accommodation, dinners, attractions and experiences etc.
- Sustainability is increasingly important to TPG and customers. TPG are keen to know what your businesses are doing to be more sustainable. They are careful not to promote a green product if it's not truly sustainable. Sustainable products are likely to be included in more programmes.
- They are keen to partner with the industry, to align and work together to ensure England is competitive against other international destinations.
- Partnerships with suppliers are essential and TPG can offer insights into source markets.
- TPG understand the staffing constraints but are now booking for next season. To be included they need the following:
 - Flexibility for cancellation deadlines
 - Trade rates in advance / approx. rates / increased rate information

Ranjiv Bhalla, Director, Veenus Group, Contact: Ranjiv@veenus.com , (0)1753 943330

Ranjiv spoke about insights on 2 markets:

- The groups market. There is a higher end of the group market. Characteristics include active seniors over 65, well - travelled globally and now want to engage more. First generation of post pandemic seniors are very much online. They accept travelling in a group of 20 – 40 but want to be treated as individuals. Veenus want to give them something new and memorable and they are willing to pay more plus they have a higher ancillary spend.
- Upscale market. The ultimate experience seeker – work hard/play hard. Looking for life affirming experiences and shareable content (savvy on the socials). They like interactive and immersive experiences. Age profile – older millennials and upwards mid/late 30s. They will travel in small groups of 4 – 10 pax.

What is an experience?

- Private access to a property or person
- Going behind the scenes or out of hours
- Meet the owner, curator, head gardener, legend

What does Veenus need from you?

- Creative inspiration – what can you provide over and above what you normally offer to tell your story?
- Collateral – visuals (video/photos etc.)
- Rates and terms

Trade Organisation Speaker:

Róisín Donnelly, Senior Manager – Suppliers & Partnerships, ETOA, Contact: rdonnelly@etoa.org, 07881 370 633

Roisin spoke about how ETOA have enjoyed a successful relationship with Great West Way over the years and continue to do so. She also covered information about ETOA and points worth noting prior to the Marketplace event.

- ETOA Membership is made up of buyers and suppliers.
- Buyers ranging from large volume operators to niche FIT
- US market showing pent up demand, Japanese market beginning to show very positive moves
- When completing profiles for workshops ensure that you best describe your product, use the all the space available include details on core business, sustainability, coach/car parking etc
- Your business can help solve a gap/problem for the customer, whether it is meal stops, accommodation, attractions, find out what the gap is, help solve it
- Research the company you are about to meet, check their website, profile, understand what they specialise in.

Roisin then gave a demonstration of the Marketplace matching system.

ACTION: Please contact any of the speakers directly if you are interested in working in partnership with them.

Tips from Flo when you receive the Marketplace appointment preference requests:

- Research the buyers and look at what else they are selling in England. Ask yourself how you can fit into these programmes?
- Cross reference with Great West Way Official Tour Operators – these can be seen [here](#) and the existing [bookable programmes](#).
- Contact [Flo](#) to ask for help

5. Top Tips for working with the Travel Trade from our speakers

Top Tips from Vera

- Knowing what you have to offer / clearly define your product offer and experience you can offer the trade.
- Working in partnership with the trade to tweak/amend product offer as necessary
- Timely communication and flexibility

Top Tips from Ranjiv

- Create you Hero Product, either on or off line
- Enjoy delivering the experience that no one has seen or done before
- Frustration – proposal sheets incomplete
- Positive – Veenus enables suppliers to access their platform to add their own content narrative.

Iain identified supplier challenges including correcting marketing narrative errors and issues relating to insufficient accommodation in some areas of the UK.

6. Questions & Answers

Flo reminds everyone that Great West Way is here to help and stresses the importance of regional DMOs who can help promote your business/destination. If Ambassadors provide Great West Way with information on their trade product offer, we can communicate this via our channels eg. website, newsletters, travel trade directory etc.

Graham from Tours2Order had a question about cancellations due to 3 x 10-day tours recently cancelled due to not enough clients. Ranjiv mentioned that key communication to suppliers about possibility of tours cancelling was essential. Vera explained that operators should know booking numbers and be able to report these on a regular basis to suppliers. There will be a break-even number and operators may try to negotiate lower rates to lower break even number to enable tours to run. Its also an opportunity to focus on additional marketing of specific tours to help them sell.

Details of the next meeting will be issued in due course.

ACTION: If you have any questions regarding working with the travel trade or in relation to the forthcoming Marketplace event please contact [Flo](#).