



VIRTUOSO® ANNOUNCES THE WINNER OF ITS INCUBATOR SHOWCASE AWARDS AND SEEKS NEW TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS FOR THIS INNOVATIVE PROGRAM

LAS VEGAS (August 11, 2015) – International luxury travel network Virtuoso® made two significant announcements during its Virtuoso Travel Week event taking place this week at the Bellagio Resort & Casino in Las Vegas. First, based on the success and overwhelming industry response to the program, Virtuoso is seeking start-up travel technology partners for its 2016 Incubator program. And of the 10 companies currently involved with the program, Virtuoso announced ITeXplorer as the winner of its “Best Overall” Showcase Award, based on feedback from its travel advisor members who had an opportunity this week to review some of these leading applications in travel innovation.

Unveiled in early 2015, Virtuoso Incubator helps developers of some of the most promising new travel technology tools gain real-world insight into what travel advisors and agencies need, enabling them to refine their products and business models.

As part of the innovative program, more than 70 Virtuoso travel advisors in six countries test these Incubator technology solutions in real-life scenarios and provide valuable feedback. Through that, travel technology entrepreneurs and investors learn about the needs of Virtuoso member agencies and advisors, and how to best serve those needs. Once through the testing phase, Incubator participants then go under review for full partnership status within Virtuoso’s network.

“With \$3 billion being invested annually in travel technology, we knew Virtuoso could influence the industry to solve problems for our travel agencies and advisors,” said David Kolner, senior vice president, Global Member Partnerships for Virtuoso. “Virtuoso Incubator is finding the hottest tools out there and working with developers to provide our agencies with the very best technology in the industry to enhance their client interactions and streamline their practices.”

Interest in the 2015 program was strong, with Virtuoso capping the number of participants at 10. The network recently transitioned two participants – itinerary management solutions Axus and TripScope – to preferred vendor status. As preferred vendors, Axus and TripScope offer exclusive features and pricing to Virtuoso advisors as well as integrate Virtuoso-specific content such as negotiated hotel amenities into their apps. Axus and TripScope join UMapped in Virtuoso’s suite of preferred itinerary management tools.

Virtuoso Incubator will continue to foster eight partners during 2015:

- Itinerary management companies Quest and Tripwing
- Mobile gifting app Bizu
- Mobile hotel check-in tool CheckMate
- ITeXplorer, an agency productivity tool
- Digital marketing solutions provider Passport Online
- TripBAM, which offers hotel rate change and compliance monitoring
- Travel knowledge monetization platform Yonderbound

After a year in the program, Virtuoso will extend Incubator participation for another year, transition the company to preferred partner status or part ways if a fit is not found.

For its 2016 program, Virtuoso is particularly seeking tools that assist travel agencies in advisor productivity and client servicing. Applications will be reviewed this fall by internal teams and the Virtuoso Technology Committee.

For more information on Virtuoso Incubator, including how to apply for consideration, visit virtuoso.com/incubator.

###

About Virtuoso:

Virtuoso® is the leading international travel agency network specializing in luxury and experiential travel. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 370 agency members with more than 9,800 elite travel advisors in 30 countries throughout North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia-Pacific and the Middle East. Drawing upon its preferred relationships with 1,700 of the world's best hotels and resorts, cruise lines, airlines, tour companies and premier destinations, the network provides its upscale clientele with exclusive amenities, rare experiences and privileged access. More than (US) \$14 billion in annual travel sales makes Virtuoso a powerhouse in the luxury travel industry. For more information, visit virtuoso.com.

Media Contacts:

Misty Ewing Belles
Director, Global Public Relations
Virtuoso
202.553.8817
mewing@virtuoso.com

Lauren Wintemberg
Account Manager
Alice Marshall Public Relations
212.861.4031
lauren@alicemarshall.com