



VIRTUOSO®  
SPECIALISTS IN THE ART OF TRAVEL

## VIRTUOSO® FLASH SURVEY SHARES ADVICE FROM EXPERT TRAVEL ADVISORS ON DEALING WITH BUMPING FROM OVERSOLD FLIGHTS

**NEW YORK (May 24, 2017)** – A new survey by global luxury travel agency network [Virtuoso®](#) imparts advice from professional travel advisors on how to cope with airline disruptions, including the much reported-on bumping situation that occurred on board United Flight 3411 in April. Virtuoso advisors recommend a multifaceted approach to protecting passengers from being bumped involuntarily, and insights on what to do if passengers unexpectedly find themselves in that situation.

Respondents to the newest Virtuoso Flash Survey reveal their top tips for guarding against bumping:

- Establish status with a specific airline and fly it or within its alliance partners whenever possible
- Reserve seat assignments as soon as the flight is booked
- Check in online 24 hours before the flight to reconfirm seats
- Avoid sitting in the very front or back rows of Economy Class as these seats may be displaced in the event of an equipment downsize on domestic U.S. flights. The last row is often reserved for families traveling with small children as well.

Virtuoso's travel advisors say that bumping passengers against their will rarely happens, and only 30 percent of respondents said it had happened to their clients. However, should passengers find themselves in this situation, the network's expert advisors suggest the following:

- Insist the airline rebook the next available flight, even on another airline
- Comply with the request, but politely ask for more compensation than what the airline is offering
- Contact their travel advisor for assistance
- Ask for a credit card-issued gift card instead of an airline voucher, especially if not a frequent traveler

“It’s unfortunate that we’re seeing a rash of these stories lately because our findings show that for all the tens of thousands of passengers who fly daily, only a tiny percentage of them have ever been involuntarily bumped,” says Terrie Hansen, senior vice president of Marketing for Virtuoso. “When an incident does occur, it captures enormous public attention because with any travel mishap, the viewing public immediately imagines ‘this could happen to me, too’ and it’s an unsettling feeling. One of the key reasons we recommend booking with a professional travel advisor is the consumer advocacy they provide. With travel it’s not a matter of *if* something will go wrong, it’s *when* – there are simply too many variables that are beyond anyone’s control. Having an advocate with a vested interest in the success of the trip is invaluable. It might not prevent the situation from happening, but it’s certainly reassuring to know here’s a knowledgeable and well-connected expert to call and help fix it.”

While 28 percent of respondents said that their clients have asked them to book other carriers as a direct result of the United Airlines incident, the majority have not. Reasons cited for why people will not move away from any particular airline in the wake of a publicized situation include:

- Certain airlines dominate specific routes and airports, leaving clients to feel like they're without other viable options
- The airline's schedule best suits their travel plans
- Clients have status on the airline or its partner airlines, and do not wish to establish loyalty with another carrier or alliance
- Clients understand involuntary passenger bumping is not limited to any one airline

For more information on Virtuoso, including connecting with a professional travel advisor, please visit [www.virtuoso.com](http://www.virtuoso.com).

###

#### **About Virtuoso**

**Virtuoso®** is the leading international travel agency network specializing in luxury and experiential travel. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 800 travel agency partners with more than 15,200 elite travel advisors in over 45 countries throughout North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa 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 (U.S.) \$21.2 billion in annual travel sales makes Virtuoso a powerhouse in the luxury travel industry. For more information, visit [www.virtuoso.com](http://www.virtuoso.com).

#### **Media Contacts:**

Misty Ewing Belles  
Managing Director, Global Public Relations  
Virtuoso  
Phone: 202.553.8817  
Email: [mewing@virtuoso.com](mailto:mewing@virtuoso.com)

Lauren Wintemberg  
Account Director  
Alice Marshall Public Relations  
Phone: 212.861.4031  
Email: [lauren@alicemarshall.com](mailto:lauren@alicemarshall.com)