



VIRTUOSO® TRAVEL WEEK INTRODUCES THE CONCEPT OF “HIGH-TEAM” AND FOCUSES ON BEING MORE HUMAN IN A TECH-DRIVEN WORLD

Luxury Travel’s Most Prestigious Event Sets a New Record with 6,515 Attendees

LAS VEGAS (August 11, 2019) – This week global travel agency network Virtuoso® is holding its **31st annual Virtuoso Travel Week**, luxury travel’s answer to Fashion Week. From August 10 to 16, thousands of Virtuoso’s travel advisors, the most successful sales force in the industry, have come together to seek out the latest offerings in luxury experiences by meeting with the network’s preferred partners. With seven percent growth in attendance, a record-breaking 6,515 travel professionals from 107 countries will spend a week at Bellagio Resort & Casino, ARIA Resort & Casino and Vdara Hotel & Spa in Las Vegas, where they will conduct a staggering number of one-to-one appointments – almost 280,000 of them, totaling more than 1.4 million minutes or the equivalent of 2.7 years.

Building better human connections between Virtuoso’s travel agency members and preferred partners is the cornerstone of this legendary event, with the goal of creating more tailored travel experiences for clients at its core. When Virtuoso Chairman and CEO Matthew D. Upchurch took the stage on August 11, during the event’s Opening Ceremony, it made perfect sense that his message focused on showing humanity in a world overrun by technology.

His address followed keynote speaker Chip Conley, founder and former CEO of Joie de Vivre Hospitality, Airbnb’s Strategic Advisor for Hospitality + Leadership and founder of the Modern Elder Academy, who talked of Virtuoso’s legendary reputation of being high-touch, but he called the power of the network **“high-team.”** In Conley’s estimation, it makes sense that travel advisors have become “Life Experience Guides,” as people’s biggest regret is not having enough meaningful time to create once-in-a-lifetime memories with the people they love most. With Virtuoso advisors serving as the world’s most discerning, high-touch Life Experience Guides, they can deliver on their clients’ unrecognized needs. According to Conley, we are poised to witness a **new sharing economy**, with an exchange of information across five generations in the workplace for the first time. It will create an intergenerational collaboration between seasoned professionals who act as mentors to new entrants, benefitting both as they bring their own perspectives to the workplace.

Upchurch added that the “high-team” concept not only connects the network’s travel agency members and partners, it also creates a through-line to customers who value travel differently. “High-team” places the emphasis on being more human, which is profitable and hard to replicate, and for the group’s preferred partners, it plays a significant role in fighting the commoditization of products. Upchurch highlighted data from a joint study conducted with YouGov showing that travelers in the same income category, when advised by Virtuoso advisors, spend two times more than non-Virtuoso-advised clients and three times more than completely unadvised clients. Virtuoso clients also listed their advisor as their most influential source of making travel decisions – beating out friends and family for the first time. He noted trust is why referrals are still the number one source of business for advisors.

Speaking of the ubiquitous nature of technology, Upchurch remarked, **“If dehumanization is growing at an exponential rate, we better be exponentially more human. Human-centric business – doing business based in trust – is an innovation in this time.”**

Upchurch also spoke of success as a combination of competency and chemistry. The only way to compete with algorithms is to be what they are not – more human – by showcasing personality and deepening communication. New technologies, such as **Virtuoso Wanderlist®**, support and provide a platform for the human touch. Describing Wanderlist as more than technology, he spoke of its ability to provide a framework and greater context around travel; it’s an anticipation engine that is fun, yet also leads to deeper and more meaningful conversations. As the program rolls out and more advisors complete Wanderlist training, the consumer response continues to escalate.

Citing that innovation is often about recognizing patterns that are occurring naturally, Upchurch stated, “If Airbnb is aiming to be Lifestyle Curators, we are going to do all we can to help you be Life Experience Guides. We believe it is the Guide that can best meet many of our customers’ unmet and unstated needs. A Guide is high-tech, high-touch and high-team – a Virtuoso Advisor. And the Wanderlist experience is designed to support that Guide.”

Speaking about Virtuoso’s powerfully diverse global network, Upchurch also noted it has added 14 travel agency members in Greater China over the last year, **bringing the total to 23**. The common theme amongst travelers from all regions is the craving for authentic service that offers them hyper-personalized attention. Delivering that service comes from a myriad of ways, including drawing upon the strength that comes from the cross-collaboration of 20,000 travel advisors in more than 50 countries.

During the Opening Ceremony, Virtuoso honored some of the standout performers within its network of over 1,000 travel agency member locations:

- **Top Virtuoso Network Production:** Protravel International – New York, New York
- **Top Production – Latin America/Caribbean:** Viajes Intermex – Mexico City, Mexico
- **Top Production – Asia/Pacific:** Goldman Travel Corporation – Bondi Junction, Australia
- **Top Production – Europe/Asia/Middle East:** Grand Luxury Group – Paris, France
- **Top Virtuoso Air Production:** Travel Experts, Inc. – Raleigh, North Carolina
- **Top Year-Over-Year Growth (Percent):** Quintessentially Travel – London, United Kingdom
- **Top Year-Over-Year Growth (Revenue):** Direct Travel – Paramus, New Jersey
- **Highest Production per Advisor:** Churchill & Turen, Ltd. – Naperville, Illinois
- **Most Engaged Virtuoso Agency:** Cruises Etc. Travel LLC – Fort Worth, Texas

To learn more about Virtuoso, visit www.virtuoso.com. For a visual infographic of Virtuoso Travel Week, click [here](#).

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About Virtuoso:

Virtuoso® is the leading international travel agency network specializing in luxury and experiential travel. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 1,000 travel agency partners with 20,000 elite travel advisors in 50 countries throughout North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. Drawing upon its preferred relationships with over 1,800 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.) \$26.4 billion in annual travel sales makes Virtuoso a powerhouse in the luxury travel industry. For more information, visit www.virtuoso.com.

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