



## **Fact Sheet**

### **Dubai: Training the Trade**

The Government of Dubai, Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (DTCM) is committed to meeting the needs of its partners in the travel industry. The DTCM has developed a number of initiatives to ensure the travel trade as regularly provided with updated information on the emirate and trained to increase bookings, raising awareness levels of Dubai's diversity to its partners in the global travel industry.

#### **The Dubai Expert Online Training Programme**

The DTCM provides online training through its comprehensive Dubai Expert programme. Originally launched for travel agents and tour operator reservations staff in 2005, the programme was extended in late 2006 to include new user groups including airline & hotel staff; members of travel and tourism associations, institutes & professional bodies; destination management company staff; commerce organisations with Dubai links; MICE organisations; students of tourism & travel; and media.

#### **How Dubai Expert works:**

##### **Registration:**

- Online registration is provided free of charge at [www.dubaieexpert.co.uk](http://www.dubaieexpert.co.uk).

##### **Training Online:**

- The comprehensive, interactive content of the online training material includes hyperlinks to useful websites plus downloadable modules containing essential information about Dubai.
- Trainees progress through 18 modules across two levels. A 70 per cent pass mark is required on 10 questions in order to progress to the next module maintaining high levels of product knowledge.

##### **Training Offline:**

- After completing a module, agents can download the content in PDF format and either save it on their personal computer or print out a hard copy for future reference.

##### **Ongoing Communication:**

- Following feedback from our Dubai Experts, four weekly messages were replaced by one monthly online newsletter with supporting microsite ([www.dubaiupdate.co.uk](http://www.dubaiupdate.co.uk))
- Product information, updates and offers are provided through the website's online message board and regular Dubai Update e-newsletters. Communication helps maintain the executives' motivation



during the training, and then continue to foster their interest in the destination after their training has been completed.

#### **Completion of the programme:**

- Completion of the programme provides agents with a Dubai Expert status logo on a pdf which they can include on email signatures / websites to display their status, plus silver and gold certificates after levels 1 and 2 respectively.
- It also secures a clear advantage in winning sales, access to privileges from suppliers including airlines and hotels, inclusion on a “Find A Dubai Specialist Travel Agent Near You” referrals list on our consumer booking website ([www.dubaitravelmarket.co.uk](http://www.dubaitravelmarket.co.uk)), and eligibility to be considered for future familiarisation visits to Dubai.

Dubai Expert provides a solid platform from which to boost trainees’ selling power. Currently, over 7200 travel trade executives are registered for the programme. The success of the programme has enabled the DTCM to revise its objectives now to increase completion levels in 2010 to 70 per cent compared to 2009 figures. In tandem with this, the significant year on year growth of visitors to Dubai from the UK and Ireland acts as an indication of the success of the programme and the trade’s ability to sell Dubai effectively.

Positive feedback/testimonials from partners and trainees include the following:

#### **Lisa Whitaker, Head of Call Center Sales, Virgin Holidays**

*“This comprehensive and user-friendly online training programme has proven to be invaluable to many of the team within our UK Sales Center. As a result we now include this training programme (Dubai Expert) as a mandatory part of all new starters initiation into the sales center. 10 months after starting this initiative we noticed a significant increase in the confidence and capabilities of our sales agents when discussing Dubai and its environs with agents/public on the phone.”*

#### **Gavyn Andrews, Selective Travel Management**

*“I have completed the training course and have to admit I found it very very exciting. I think it is a fantastic and very worthwhile course and I am glad my agency asked me to complete it.”*

From June 2008, following feedback from Dubai Experts, the DTCM launched a monthly online newsletter to replace the weekly email messages. The newsletter is available at [www.dubaiupdate.co.uk](http://www.dubaiupdate.co.uk) where subscribers can control the information they receive.



## **Dubai Update**

Dubai Update is an online digest of travel, tourism, economic, industrial, commercial and other news specifically aimed at UK and Ireland based organisations, or individuals with an interest in Dubai. It is available free of charge for users in the UK, Ireland and Dubai who wish to keep up to date on major developments in the emirate and the DTCM.

Two distinctly themed versions of the e-newsletter are available to interested parties – tourism and commerce – each one brimming with relevant content. And with no passwords, costs or restrictions users have access to both newsletters, as well as to useful background information such as past issues, press releases, DTCM contact details, exhibition listings and visitor statistics. New additions to the site now include a downloadable image library, the DTCM's training presentation, suggested copy for marketing activities, on-line documentation for the DTCM's familiarisation trips, cruise information and on-line collateral ordering.

Travel trade interested in being kept updated with news about Dubai and the DTCM, can now register to receive the monthly e-newsletter at [www.dubaiupdate.co.uk](http://www.dubaiupdate.co.uk).

## **Familiarisation Trips**

Top scoring Dubai Expert graduates are eligible for consideration to experience Dubai first-hand. During 2009 some 200 Dubai Expert graduates from the UK and Ireland reinforced their learning by attending DTCM familiarisation trips to Dubai. During these visits, workshops are held with Dubai-based suppliers (airlines, hoteliers, ground handlers) and leading professionals from new developments such as Dubailand and The Palm islands who inform attendees about their latest projects. Beneficially for the suppliers involved, the agents have already gained destination knowledge and demonstrated their commitment to selling the destination by completing the comprehensive training course.

## **Partnership Events**

The DTCM is working with 16 key tour operators in 2010 to host a series of Dubai Partnership Events for up to 750 of its top selling travel agents who are provided with training by the DTCM and the tour operator. All travel agent attendees are provided with details of the Dubai Expert training programme after a comprehensive presentation to encourage sign up / completion. The Partnership Events take place across the UK and Ireland and the format enables the DTCM and the tour operator to give the attendees a training presentation, followed by a selection of interactive quizzes and events throughout the evening with exciting prizes.



### Other Training Tools

The DTCM also produces and provides a library of tools and regularly updated support materials to ensure agents are fully-briefed about all that is happening in Dubai. These range from brochures and specialist travel trade manuals, to special interest brochures, promotional DVDs, summaries of new developments, factsheets, images and, of course, Dubai Update. In addition to the online training programme, on-site sessions can be arranged at travel agents and tour operators' offices when attendees are also encouraged to sign up to the Dubai Expert programme to further increase their knowledge.

