



## **Travelport's e-evolve Summit explores the future of MEA travel industry** First event of its kind gathers over 100 decision-makers from 17 countries

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The future direction of the travel industry in the Middle East and Africa was subject to extensive discussions by more than 100 industry experts from 17 countries at a Travelport-organised summit this month.

The latest Travelport e-evolve summit focused – for the first time – on key matters affecting Travel Management Companies (TMCs), with debates ranging from the economic outlook to the future of airline distribution and other relevant topics.

Conceptualised as a ‘travel industry masterclass’, the event – held in Cape Town on 19 and 20 November – set out to find strategic solutions to key industry-related issues and break through frontiers to explore the opportunities of tomorrow.

“The e-evolve TMC Summit was a first for Travelport and for the industry,” said Rabih Saab, President and Managing Director, Middle East and Africa, Travelport. “It’s the first time we have brought together so many experts to explore the future of the travel industry in the Middle East and Africa. Travelport, as a key business services provider to the travel industry, is uniquely placed to understand the challenges faced by both – travel suppliers as well as providers – and it was fantastic to see both sides come together to debate the big issues affecting TMCs and find innovative solutions for the future of travel in our region.”

Over the two days, the Summit explored a number of topical themes and some of the key conclusions to come out of the event included:

- Point of sale technology should empower travel agents to sell more efficiently and give them the choice of how they want to sell their products. Travelport’s next generation point of sale tools such as Travelport Smartpoint and Travelport Universal Desktop are already helping agents achieve this – as was demonstrated through a customer case study, which showed that using Travelport Universal Desktop has seen their business productivity improve by 15%.
- More efficient distribution through GDS channels is a key priority for regional Low Cost Carriers (LCCs). Wider distribution in new markets and building product positioning and awareness were cited as key pillars for effective distribution by Brian Kitchin, Executive Manager, Sales and Distribution, for kulula.com. His view was



supported by Travelport, which hosted a dedicated session during the Summit on the future of airline distribution. With a focus on merchandising opportunities through the GDS channel, the session underlined Travelport's commitment to work with carriers to enable them to distribute all of their products in any way that they choose.

- Intelligent search is all about providing the best-informed choice, fast. A dedicated session looked at how Travelport's high performance search already delivers industry-leading relevancy, and what the future holds. Travelport is leading the way in semantic search and, in partnership with a third party developer, is currently developing a mobile voice recognition application powered by natural language search and voice-recognition technology. The Summit audience was even wowed with a live preview demonstration.

"This summit was about pushing boundaries in order to really think about the future opportunities in our industry," commented Saab. "Through this event, Travelport provided industry leaders from the Middle East and Africa with the perfect platform to share experiences and best practises, and be truly innovative in their views and future actions.

"Travelport has always been committed to pushing the limits of innovation through our approach to business and development of cutting-edge products, and this event once again underlines our commitment to the travel industry."