Travelport wins 'Best Air Rail Distribution Solution' at The GARA Awards

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Travelport Smartpoint Airport Express plugin incorporating Heathrow Express recognized as industry first

Travelport, a leading Travel Commerce Platform has won 'Best Air Rail Distribution Solution' title, alongside Heathrow Express, at the Global AirRail Alliance (GARA) Awards. Its Airport Express plugin launched earlier this year, allowing travel agents to book airport express services, which operate frequent and fast rail services between airports and local cities. The solution offers increased revenues and a more effective end to end service.

The innovative new plugin has been developed by a UK-based company Developer Connections Ltd, which is part of Travelport's Developer Network. This unique service is the first of its kind and Heathrow Express, the launch partner and first customer to be connected, was also fully involved in the development of the solution.

Heathrow Express is the air-rail service which carries 17,000 people a day between London Paddington and Heathrow Airport. With a journey time of 15 minutes, it's the quickest way to travel to central London from Britain's busiest hub airport.

The GARA Awards are an annual programme, developed to recognise the effort, best practices and results of the global air-rail community. This coveted award recognises clear vision, design and a strategic plan that will significantly improve the air-rail passenger experience.

On awarding the prize, the judging panel commented: "Travelport's project indicates an excellent attempt to address the long standing ticketing challenges between travel agencies and suppliers. This remains one of the industry's big issues – it is pleasing that Travelport is so dedicated to pursuing this matter."

Stephen O'Hara, Travelport's Director of Rail, commented: "Travelport is delighted to have won this coveted title at the prestigious GARA Awards. We are pleased that the judging panel recognised this innovative plugin which is simple for an Airport Express operator to connect to and is available to agents through the travel agency point of sale, Travelport Smartpoint. This new solution is part of our open platform strategy for third party developers, Travelport Marketplace, which delivers expansive content and improves customer service."

Fraser Brown, Heathrow Express Director, said: "We are always looking to improve our customer experience at Heathrow Express. Our aim is to give passengers a seamless experience between the airport and central London. The Heathrow experience begins and ends at Paddington, with our train service. We are pleased that Travelport's Airport Express plugin has been recognised. The plugin helps us achieve our goal of seamless travel, as well as enabling us to reach many more potential customers booking through travel agencies."