

Canada is a world of possibilities for conference and incentive buyers

Although Canada is a well-established destination for British holiday travellers, it is still largely untapped by conference, convention and incentive buyers.

However, this year, Tourism Canada (the federal government's tourism promotion branch) has decided that it is time to place Canada firmly on the map as a natural choice for conventions and conferences that are organised from the UK.

As a result, a promotion program — Contact Canada 86 — has been launched to increase awareness of the different venues and activities that Canada can offer to UK group travel buyers.

One of the key elements of this new promotion effort is a brochure entitled 'Turn Over A New Leaf and Take a Look at Canada.' It highlights the range of opportunities that Canada presents for incentive and conference organisers, and it takes the unique approach of presenting Canada as a single destination rather than as a series of provincial or regional ones.

Directory for UK planners

To give prospective buyers more specific information, Tourism Canada will also be issuing a new 60-page facilities directory written specifically for incentive and conference planners in the UK.

This publication — and the brochure — will be

supported by an audio visual package and by Tourism Canada's participation in industry trade shows.

Among the points that Tourism Canada will be stressing are:

- All major cities in Canada are easily accessible by air from Britain.
- Canada offers a highly developed and sophisticated range of domestic travel facilities.
- All major Canadian cities and towns are connected by internal air services; also, VIA Rail Canada operates an extensive inter-provincial rail service.
- In addition to offering sightseeing, theatre and sports facilities, Canada provides a range of innovative program opportunities, such as panning for gold, eating caribou steaks at the North Pole, whale watching, white water rafting down a Rockies canyon, and so on.
- Canada's convention centres are purpose-built and can accommodate meetings of up to 12,000 people.
- Hotel facilities are world-class and range from resort properties, and small intimate hotels to large internationally-owned properties.
- Presentation, staging, lighting and professional conference production services are available throughout Canada.



Imperial Life plans incentive trip to Canada

There has been a rapid rise in the use of sales incentive schemes in the UK, which has done much to stimulate improved company performance. And the use of travel as one of the most effective rewards for superior performance has been demonstrated time and time again.

However, organising an incentive travel program for a group of successful sales people — particularly those who are already well-travelled — is a challenging task. It is one that Tim Atkin, Managing Director of Events Management, has been doing for more than 13 years.

He has made his reputation by putting together some of the most attractive incentive trips-of-a-lifetime, and one of his current projects features an incentive trip to Canada.

Right now, Atkin is working with the British staff of Imperial Life — a leading international insurance company — on an incentive scheme for its life underwriters.

'My brief,' Atkin says, 'was to formulate a program that would be both relaxing and unforgettable; and let's face it, there are few places in Europe that your average holidaymaker is not familiar with.'

'What better place than Canada to send 25 go-getting company people. It's somewhere they'd regard as an interesting and unusual destination, and one they can wax lyrical about for months after.'

'After all, Canada is multi-faceted. It's a country that's managed to marry the sophistication of towns and cities with the rugged charm of totally unspoiled countryside. This gives me a good combination to work with for an incentive program.'

Twelve days have been allocated for the Imperial Life trip, so the program had to be carefully planned to allow the participants to see a lot, but still have time to relax.

Imperial Life's winners will visit Toronto and Montreal, which Atkin believes will 'impressively set a cosmopolitan pitch for the program.'

'It should give the party a taste of the cultural diversity which they will experience in Canada' he says. 'Montreal has its share of ethnicity, but it is nevertheless predominantly French. Toronto, on the other hand, has entire communities of Greek, Chinese, and Ukrainian peoples — among others — whose different national identities make the city a centre of international culture and cuisine.'

In between sampling Toronto's culinary delights, the group will be treated to an afternoon of baseball, a unique view of the city from the top of the CN Tower, and a visit to nearby Niagara Falls.

The Imperial Life winners will also head out west to Vancouver for a visit to Expo 86, and then double back to Jasper National Park in the heart of the Canadian Rockies.

There, Atkin believes, the canyons, glaciers, waterfalls and mountains should 'have even the most experienced travellers in the party just shooting through their rolls of film.'

To help the participants get an advance flavour of Canada, Tourism Canada recently held a reception for them at Canada House in Trafalgar Square. There, they were shown an audio-visual presentation which highlighted the events and activities that await them in Canada.