



# CASE STUDY

Sustainability Champions Training Programme at TUI UK & Ireland



# ABOUT TUI TRAVEL PLC

**TUI Travel PLC is one of the world's leading leisure travel groups, with over 220 trusted brands in 180 countries and more than 30 million customers. The MAINSTREAM sector is the largest in the Group in terms of its scale and scope, financial performance and number of employees. The Mainstream sector is comprised of instantly recognisable brands, leading tour operators, approximately 1,800 retail travel shops and a fleet of 138 aircraft.**

TUI UK & Ireland, part of TUI Travel and home to the brands Thomson and First Choice, is one of the Travel Foundation's key partners. Funds are raised via customers donating £1 per person to the World Care Fund (WCF) when they book a holiday. The money raised by the World Care Fund supports sustainable tourism projects and a significant proportion is donated to the Travel Foundation to help deliver transformational projects around the world. TUI UK & Ireland works closely with the Travel Foundation to support the integration of sustainability principles into its operations.

## ABOUT THIS CASE STUDY

**TUI Travel has a vision is to make travel experiences special by providing holidays that cause minimal environmental impact, respect the culture and people of destinations and offer real economic benefit to local communities.**

Engaging customers in sustainability is vital if TUI UK & Ireland are to achieve this vision and retail colleagues are a critical part of this as they interact with customers on a daily basis. Historically, engagement levels in retail have been variable and Thomson and First Choice were looking to address this by up-skilling and inspiring the retail sales force and appointing Sustainability Champions to become ambassadors within retail.

The overall objective of the project was to raise awareness and understanding of sustainability within the retail division. This case study focuses on activity from July to December 2013 when the Travel Foundation's Sustainability Champions Training Programme was introduced at Thomson and First Choice within its retail division.

## ABOUT TRAVEL FOUNDATION TRAINING

Read on to learn from TUI Travel's experience and understand how a bespoke training plan from the Travel Foundation could help your business to reach new heights. Whether you're concerned with improving product quality; attracting, retaining and motivating colleagues; or improving the value of your brand, the Travel Foundation offers a tailor-made solution to suit you.

If you'd like to discuss your training needs with us, please contact the Travel Foundation team at [admin@thetravelfoundation.org.uk](mailto:admin@thetravelfoundation.org.uk) or call us on Tel: +44 (0)117 9307170

# ABOUT THE SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS TRAINING PROGRAMME

The programme was developed in partnership with the Travel Foundation, as a way to engage retail colleagues in sustainable tourism, provide an opportunity for staff development, increase knowledge of projects funded by World Care Fund donations and to raise customer awareness.

"My aim is to enhance and develop the knowledge of our retail teams with sustainability, as well as truly winning the hearts and minds of around 5000 retail employees. We have developed many training sessions which have proved effective, but felt a need to continue to enhance our knowledge and engagement further.

We pitched for a Sustainability Champion in all of our 29 regions; this person would lead, engage and develop their region's knowledge with all sustainability initiatives. I've been overwhelmed with the support and dedication our Champions have shown. We took them on a sustainability trip to Turkey, educating them on our Sustainable Holidays strategy and immersing them in projects which support local communities. We made a film of this trip which was shown at the Retail Managers conference and then cascaded to all retail employees. Truly outstanding engagement was achieved and the programme proved to be an excellent way to improve knowledge across all retail teams. We continue to engage our Champions to ensure consistent messages are delivered to retail."

JILL CARTER, HEAD OF SALES, THOMSON AND FIRST CHOICE



## The World Care Fund (WCF)

As part of its sustainability strategy TUI Travel is committed to investing in projects which drive environmental and socio-economic improvements in key destinations and replicating them elsewhere. TUI UK & Ireland raises money for sustainable tourism projects by asking customers to make a donation to the World Care Fund when they book.

## Greener & fairer holidays



TUI Travel has made a commitment to deliver 10 million 'greener and fairer' holidays by 2015. This is measured by the number of customers staying in hotels with credible sustainability certifications, such as Travelife. Backed by ABTA, Travelife is an international certification scheme for hotels and accommodations that helps them to improve how they manage their environmental and social impacts, such as the way their energy or water consumption, or how they treat the people they employ or the local community where they operate.

# WHAT WERE THE BENEFITS OF THE SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS TRAINING PROGRAMME?



**5000**

retail staff trained



**90%**



of the stores  
visited showed  
an overall  
improvement  
in sustainability  
knowledge

**30%**

**Travelife**  
Sustainability System

increase in awareness  
of Travelife awards and  
what they mean

**36%**

**INCREASE IN WORLD  
CARE FUND KNOWLEDGE**



**CONSISTENT INCREASE  
IN WORLD CARE FUND  
CONVERSIONS**

**28%**

increase in the  
overall confidence  
when talking about  
sustainability



**37%**

increase in sustainable  
tourism knowledge



**28%** increase in green product knowledge

# HOW WAS THE SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS TRAINING PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTED?

**STAGE 1**  
MYSTERY SHOPPING

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**STAGE 2**  
SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATIONAL TRIP TO TURKEY

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**STAGE 3**  
ONE DAY TRAINING PROGRAMME

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**STAGE 4**  
ROLL OUT OF THE TRAINING

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**STAGE 5**  
ONGOING COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK AND MAXIMISING THE IMPACT

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## STAGE 1 - MYSTERY SHOPPING

### To collect baseline information

**One of the most important aspects of any training programme is to understand the impact that it has for those taking part. This was vital for us in order to gain an insight into the effectiveness of the programme as a whole, and to inform ongoing staff development programmes.**

- A mystery shopping exercise was undertaken at 29 stores, representing each of the Thomson and First Choice Travel Agent's regions.
- The first round of mystery shopping took place prior to the training day in July 2013 and was repeated after the training had taken place in December 2013.
- The mystery shopper results, combined with data for the WCF conversions were used as measures of success for the Sustainability Champions Training Programme.

# STAGE 2 - SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATIONAL TRIP TO TURKEY

Each year retail colleagues go on educational trips to learn more about the product. We looked at how we could bring sustainability to life through an educational trip focusing purely on sustainability for the 28 selected Champions.

## Key features of the trip included:

- Visits to see the sustainable tourism projects first hand in resort, something that had not previously been part of an educational trip.
- Visits to Travelife awarded hotels to learn about environmental best practice, local procurement policies and working with the local community.
- The Champions experienced three excursions in the area and learned about sustainability features and how the excursion provider ensures that they are beneficial to the local communities.

'A real one off experience, not only did I get a lot out of visiting the country but I also learnt so much about sustainability, what it means and how different parts of the business get involved with different things' SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION



# STAGE 3 - ONE DAY TRAINING PROGRAMME

Following the successful trip, a training day was developed to support the champions to:

- Build relationships
- Communicate with their teams
- Deliver 'greener and fairer' training to the rest of the retail team
- Understand their role as a Sustainability Champion

The delegates attending the training included three Divisional Sales Managers, 29 Regional Sales Managers and 28 Sustainability Champions from across all areas of retail.

Champions were presented with a Sustainability Champion pin badge to wear on their uniforms



'The day was very informative and encompassed a lot! I feel much more confident about speaking to other people about sustainability now. At first, sustainability within TUI seemed quite overwhelming! So this session has definitely improved my knowledge.'

SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPION



# STAGE 4 - ROLL OUT OF THE TRAINING

'Greener and Fairer Holidays' was designed as a 'train the trainer' programme to be cascaded to all Thomson and First Choice retail staff. Due to the size of the organisation the train the trainer session needed to be rolled out in stages so that each level of the organisation would be trained at the same time (see the diagram below).

The training was completed across the whole of the UK in November 2013 taking place in the weekly training session, with approximately 5000 retail staff being trained.



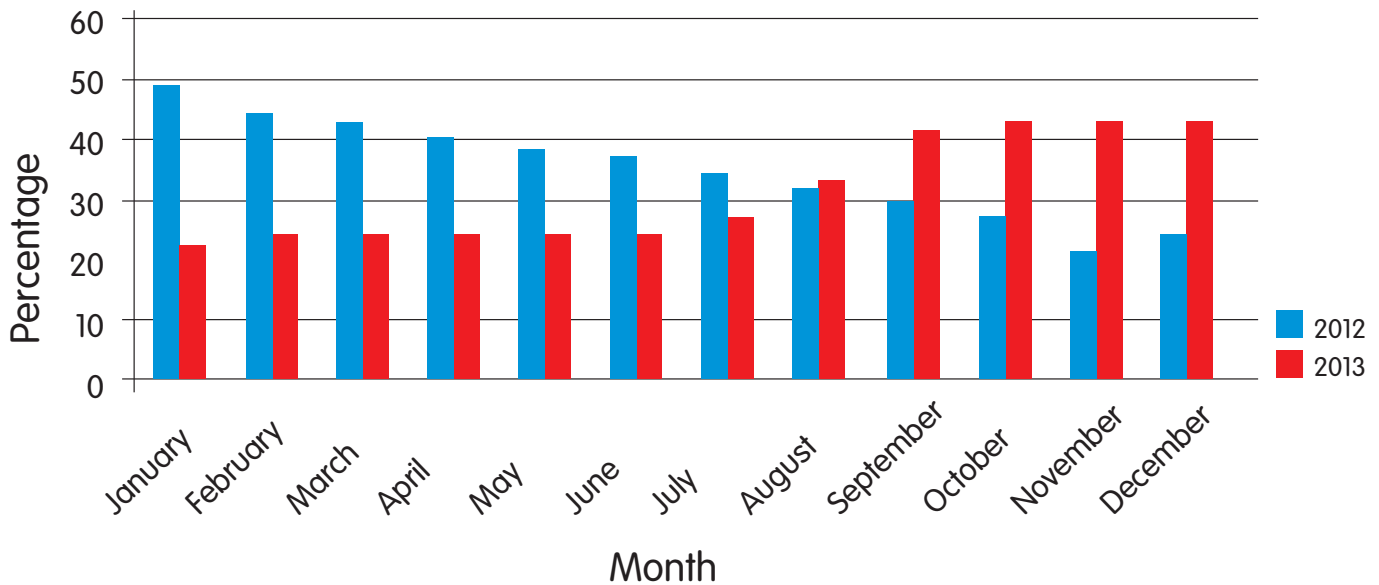


# STAGE 5 - RESULTS

## World Care Fund (WCF) conversions

WCF conversion rates have risen significantly since the Sustainability Champions Training Programme started in July 2013. The graph below shows the conversion rates and the positive impact that the training has had on the conversion figures. This trend is continuing into 2014.

World Care Fund Conversions 2012 v 2013



The Travel Foundation's Taste of Fethiye programme is an example of a project that retail staff are focusing on in conversations with customers

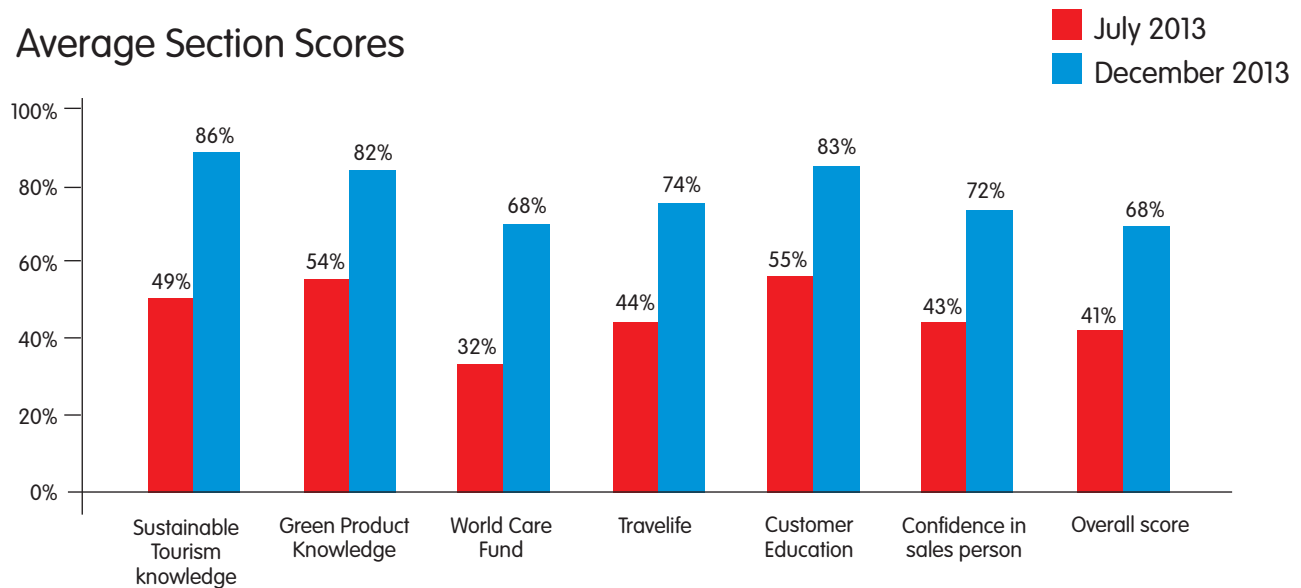


## Mystery Shopping Exercise

The mystery shopping exercise provided the Travel Foundation with a way to assess each region. By using an independent mystery shopping company they were able to gain a true measure of sustainability knowledge both before and after the training, and the results have been significant.

We were able to get a measure in each area shown on the graph below.

### Average Section Scores



### Comments from mystery shoppers

*"The agent spoke positively about green holidays. She proactively spoke about the benefits to the environment and local people and also the fact that being more environmentally aware would mean protecting the area for the future.."*

*"The staff member mentioned a community project that had been taking place in Mexico and a current project Taste of Fethiye in Turkey, which was working with local communities and farmers.."*

*"The salesperson said to look for the Travelife symbol when choosing a hotel. This symbol would be an indicator that the hotel was caring for the environment and local business and the community."*

*"It was highlighted to me about the importance that I used and bought locally made and sourced products. Also that I respected energy and water wherever I went in that country. He also added that I should use public transport, respect the local environment and wildlife and eat local food and drinks."*

# MAXIMISING THE IMPACT OF SUCCESS

The sustainability trip to Turkey proved to be a successful way to teach and inspire a small group of people about sustainable tourism. However, it is not logistically possible to take every retail advisor on the same trip. Therefore, Thomson and First Choice needed to inspire retail colleagues in other ways.

## Film

While the Champions were in Turkey, a film was made about their trip; this was launched to 800 delegates at the TUI UK & Ireland retail conference in November 2013 and then cascaded out to other retail colleagues.



## Induction Training

Thomson and First Choice have developed a sustainability e-learning module for new starters and the film is featured within the module. This will ensure that the key messages are being delivered from the moment that the person joins the organisation.

## Educational trips with sustainability embedded

Each year over 20 educational trips are planned for retail colleagues; an ideal opportunity to feed in sustainability messages. Specific sustainability questions are now included in the educational workbooks for the delegates to research and answer. These include questions around hotels, resorts and excursions. Sales advisors on each educational trip receive a sustainability information sheet which encourages them to look at the Travelife featured hotels, gives information about Travel Foundation projects in the area plus sustainable excursions and how to encourage customers to get out and about when they are on holiday. Where possible and relevant, delegates will undertake excursions with a sustainable link.

## Training

Finally the Travel Foundation and TUI Retail are building on the success of 2013 and additional training is scheduled to be rolled out across the retail division in July 2014.

# INSPIRING STAFF AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE

By appointing a Sustainability Champion in each Retail region, colleagues have been inspired to learn more about greener and fairer holidays and the part they play in delivering TUI UK & Ireland's Sustainable Holidays Plan goals.

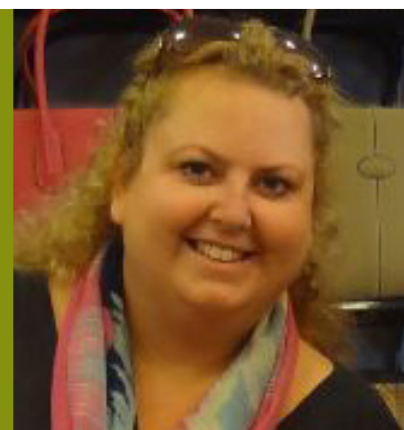
## Customers

The training has provided retail colleagues with the knowledge and confidence to talk with conviction about sustainability to their customers including:

- Guiding them towards a Travelife awarded hotel and pointing out a few key features of these hotels, such as environmental and local community benefits.
- Talking enthusiastically about Travel Foundation projects and encouraging donations to the World Care Fund.

"By taking the Champions on a journey in Turkey and showing them sustainability first hand we have been able to inspire a group of people who are able to influence the rest of their region. This has ensured that our sustainability messages are embedded throughout the Retail Division, and customers are educated about the difference they can make whilst on holiday which will ultimately lead them to having an enriched holiday experience."

JAIME VAUGHAN, REGIONAL SALES MANAGER



"Our destination sustainability strategy focuses on supporting our hotels to achieve greener and fairer certifications such as Travelife and investing in projects which preserve the environment and support local communities. We rely on our Retail colleagues to bring this to life for our customers by promoting our Travelife-awarded hotels and encouraging donations to the World Care Fund which we invest in sustainable tourism projects. Working with the Travel Foundation to engage with our network of Retail Sustainability Champions and give them the tools to train

their colleagues has been invaluable. One of the greatest benefits of working with the Travel Foundation is the access it gives to physical, financial and expert resources, which would be impossible for an individual company to replicate and this initiative is a great example of this."

JANE ASHTON, GROUP DIRECTOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR TUI TRAVEL PLC

# SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS TRAINING PROGRAMME IN YOUR BUSINESS

**The Sustainability Champions Training Programme was developed in partnership with TUI UK & Ireland to achieve their objectives of raising awareness and understanding of sustainability within their retail division.**

The materials and training developed can be adapted to suit any business and will help you to inspire and motivate your staff to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with colleagues and customers.

The Travel Foundation can assist in adapting the materials in order to provide a bespoke training programme that can take into account:

- the size of your organisation
- the training programmes you already have in place
- your sustainability aims and objectives
- the way in which you fundraise for the Travel Foundation

**To find out how a Sustainability Champions Training Programme could benefit your business, please contact the Travel Foundation Industry programmes team on Tel: 0117 927 3049 or email [julie.middleton@thetravelfoundation.org.uk](mailto:julie.middleton@thetravelfoundation.org.uk)**

*Get in touch to find out more!*

