VIRTUOSO®'S TRAVEL TECH SUMMIT EXPLORES THE CURRENT STATE AND FUTURE OF INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY DURING VIRTUOSO TRAVEL WEEK

LAS VEGAS (July 31, 2024) – Virtuoso®, the leading global network specializing in luxury and experiential travel, is hosting its third annual Travel Tech Summit during the 36th annual Virtuoso Travel Week on Saturday, August 10, at ARIA Resort & Casino. Dedicated to innovation within the luxury travel industry, the Travel Tech Summit is a one-of-a-kind event that focuses on using smart technology to elevate and enhance human connection, rather than replace it. The core aim of this year's summit is to give Virtuoso members and partners access to thought leaders who will share their views on the future of travel technology, as well as best practices on adopting technologies to further enhance business back home.

The summit is led by tech entrepreneur, investor and Virtuoso board member Gilad Berenstein, who will open the discussion by sharing updates about the state of the travel tech ecosystem, key themes and trends he's following in the development of AI, the "travelization" of finance, social commerce, the connected trip and more.

"In the three years since we've introduced the Travel Tech Summit, we have seen Virtuoso members and partners widely adopt innovations that have been showcased at the event," said Berenstein. "Giving momentum to innovation is key to driving the travel technology industry forward, which is why our goal for the summit is always to present ideas that are ready for action today combined with those that spark conversation about the future."

He will be joined by Shane O'Flaherty of Microsoft and Richard Kerr of Bilt, who will also share their own work and learnings within key travel tech niches. Additional technologists, corporate innovators, venture capital investors, industry analysts and pioneers within the Virtuoso network will take the stage, too. A fireside chat with academic leaders Dean Michael Chen of Florida International University's School of Hospitality and Professor Christopher Anderson of Cornell's School of Hospitality will cover the valuable connection between business, technology and academics, as well as what students are currently learning as future leaders of the hospital industry. Carolyn Corda of Deloitte returns, and she will share data collected by Deloitte surrounding the impact of AI on consumers and their evolving expectations from brands.

A panel of Virtuoso travel agency owners will focus on data, AI and how best to incorporate both into the luxury travel business. Attendees will later hear from a panel of venture capital investors – Cara Whitehill of Thayer Ventures, Betsy Mule of F-Prime and Meryem Aydin of Amadeus Ventures – to discuss nascent innovations they believe are driving the luxury travel sector forward.

For a peek into the ongoing digital transformation at Virtuoso, Senior Vice President, Digital & Consumer Products Travis McElfresh will highlight the development and significance of the Virtuoso Technology Ecosystem, discuss recent trends and partnerships, and explore how these innovations enhance the experience for member agency owners, advisors and preferred partners.

"It's long been our belief that there is no single solution when it comes to technology, that it boils down to addressing the specific need of the business owner," says Virtuoso Chairman and CEO Matthew D. Upchurch. "We saw a gap in technology development, with the emphasis always on the big players rather than spotlighting innovation that enhances human connection. The goal of our Tech Summit is to do just that, bring forward innovators and thought leaders to share solutions that allow travel advisors to focus their energy on their clients – while also presenting new ways of doing business."

Finally, the *Startup Showcase* will return. Fifteen startup businesses will provide a deep dive into what innovation looks like in real-time, allowing attendees to be early adopters and advocates of future technologies. Startups will be divided into three deep dive sessions as outlined below, and attendees will be able to engage in two showcases of their choice. Information on the participating businesses follows.

Startup Showcase Participants & Groups:

Advisor, Agency and Hotel Technology and AI

- Mindtrip will give a deep view into the utilization of Generative AI. As one of the most written about Generative AI trip planning services, Mindtrip helps travelers discover and plan trips, all with a focus on proprietary content, data and insights from a given agency, advisor or creator.
- Trip Boutique is laser-focused on one-to-one AI recommendations based on a specific traveler, advisor, agency and their individual trip preferences and insights. Different from the generic recommendations that can be provided by GenAI, Trip Boutique is purpose-built for advisors and agencies who want the power of AI, but strictly within their own knowledge and content.
- GuestOS is using AI for customer service in a unique and differentiated way. Their AI learns about a hotel or other travel offering by reading content, data, and past interactions with guests, in order to provide highly specific answers and recommendations to travelers.
- TravelWitz showcases fascinating AI technology, in addition to their booking engine, to help with package recommendations and yield management. TravelWitz will show attendees how to use AI to create additional value for travelers while earning more commission and optimizing the entire booking flow.
- Travel Genius exemplifies a unique use of AI. Travel Genius uses Computer Vision to scan a property, ship or any other type of physical space, to provide highly detailed information that can be used to answer specific questions and inform travelers of the realities and details of their trip – anything from the feel to the ambiance, the furnishings, mobility questions and other needs. This creates an opportunity to use AI to answer questions that most travel providers have historically struggled to answer at scale.

Social Commerce, Visual AI and Virtual Reality

- Joyned, an early pioneer in the arena of Travel Social Commerce, enables travel companions to plan together on a given travel website, keeping travelers engaged with a given brand. Joyned is pioneering a new concept called Social Revenue, which goes much deeper than other Gen 1 Social Commerce platforms.
- GreetHer is a trip discovery and planning platform that utilizes a local 'Bestie' to help female travelers dream, discover and plan. Once on the ground, the Bestie is there to support, answer questions and provide advice to help maximize the trip.
- @Hotels is the leading travel seller on social media and a true innovator in travel discovery and storytelling, proving that the conventional wisdom that travel bookings do not happen on social media is flat out wrong.
- Globe Thrivers is a platform that enables organic communities of travelers to be formed with all the social tools needed and expected by the Zillennial Traveler. With both B2C and B2B elements, agencies and travel brands can learn from Globe Thrivers' organic approach to the next generation of traveler.
- Feeel uses Virtual Reality, along with 2D technology, to help a travel advisor or their client get a real 'feel' for the property they will soon visit. Feeel will share how to use VR and imagery to tell a story that engages and increases conversion rates and traveler satisfaction.

Travel Perspectives and Optimization

- Wheel the World is the world's leading travel startup focused on access for the market of travelers with disabilities. They will share their story and innovation on how they combine modern tech and age-old hospitality to better care for travelers.
- Intimacy Moons is a travel and retreat company that focuses on a segment of the market of travelers who wish to gain mental and psychological wellness through travel. They will share insights and innovation to show how to care for travelers who want more than a good time from their trips.
- Winnow helps hotels and other venues where food is served to tackle sustainable reduction of waste; a critical mission for an ever-growing segment of travelers who care deeply for sustainability. Winnow will demonstrate another example of Computer Vision AI and show how they create the Win Win Win: happier travelers, improved economics and a positive impact on the world.
- Swayed is one more example of Computer Vision used alongside other types of AI to help hotels and other travel operators better understand their physical spaces and how travelers utilize them. This provides data and insight at scale, helping companies better understand the why and how of travelers' needs and perspectives. They will share how to collect new types of data and how to use that to improve physical spaces.

For more information on Virtuoso, its global network of world's best travel agencies, advisors and partners, or developments within the organization, visit www.virtuoso.com.

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About Virtuoso
Virtuoso® is the leading global travel agency network specializing in luxury and experiential travel. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 1,200 travel agency locations with more than 20,000 travel advisors in 54 countries throughout North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. Drawing upon its preferred relationships with more than 2,300 of the world's best hotels and resorts, cruise lines, airlines, tour companies and premier destinations, the network provides its upscale clientele with exclusive amenities, rare experiences and privileged access. Normalized annual sales of (U.S.) $28-$32 billion make Virtuoso a powerhouse in the luxury travel industry. For more information, visit www.virtuoso.com.

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