

Business travel expenditure under control

Innovative new rail travel booking tool from Raileasy



Worth £1 billion, the UK's rail business travel market is a substantial one. And according to George Sikking, MD of leading online retailer of train tickets Raileasy, it's one that is likely to grow as the development of electronic retailing and ticketing gathers pace. However, Sikking considers the percentage of rail tickets bought online to be relatively small when compared to other transport modes. "Amazingly," he said, "the 21st century

business traveller still uses the railway station to purchase their tickets. That's probably the most expensive way to buy them and frankly, in the present economic climate, that's wasteful. "Business travel is a major part of any organisation's overhead budget it makes sense to manage it properly." To that end, Sikking is launching *Raileasy4business* - a new, easy to use UK rail online booking engine for the corporate, governmental and travel management company (TMC) markets.

Exploiting the technological advances in travel management, *Raileasy4business* makes its debut at the 2011 Business Travel and Meetings Show at Earls Court Exhibition Centre between 8-9 February. "*Raileasy4business* combines Raileasy's easy to use booking tool with all the travel policy setting and management reports an organisation might need," explained Sikking. "We teamed up 12 months ago with system creators and travel booking tool experts Dataflexnet to develop the system, having seen an opportunity in the market that was not being delivered by the existing suppliers," he added. "It's aimed at corporate as well as government managed travel expenditure but is equally effective in any organisation looking to keep a tighter rein on travel spend. "I invite anyone with responsibility for travel budgets to register on the site at www.raileasy4business.com and see the innovative yet simple elements that will make a rail business traveller's life easier."

The site allows members to create a *Raileasy4business* account through their bank. Individual corporate parameters, including type or class of ticket, time of travel and payment method can be established to better manage not only budgets but also carbon footprint by choosing rail, for example, over the car. The booking

tool checks single and return prices automatically and then displays fares for journeys in price order. It will produce a number of reports, including those showing how much is being saved by getting users to book in advance and buy the discounted advance purchase fares, which are only available up to the day before travel.

Ever since it began selling tickets online in 2007, Raileasy has been leading the field in the development of innovative ways for the business traveller to buy the best value rail tickets. Raileasy was the:

- first to simplify the rail ticket purchasing process;
- first to display the cheapest appropriate fare;
- first to launch a whole suite of mobile and iPhone ticket buying apps.

Sikking explained that these innovations have hastened the market's development and made a net contribution to the growth of rail travel. "By widening the opportunities to buy rail tickets either online or through smart phone apps thousands of new customers, many of whom would never before have considered travelling by train, are now doing so. "We are firmly on the side of the rail industry," he added, "its success is our success. So, we are working hard to develop the technology and opportunities to enable businesses and individuals to buy tickets at the best possible price at a time and manner that's convenient to them. **"If we all pull together, we can all win."**

