



CANADIAN VIRTUOSO SPECIALISTS EMBARK ON THE FINAL FRONTIER

VIRGIN GALACTIC SELECTS VIRTUOSO CONSULTANTS AS FIRST ACCREDITED SPACE AGENTS IN CANADA

LONDON, UK (June 12th, 2006). Today Virgin Galactic, in conjunction with Virtuoso, proudly announce the five travel consultants who will train to become “Accredited Space Agents” – the first *and only* consultants in Canada allowed to reserve seats aboard Virgin Galactic’s suborbital space flights. Please find consultants’ names and agency affiliations listed at the end of this release.

When Virgin Galactic was ready to bring their pioneering travel venture to the North American market, they recognized the important role that travel agents would play in the sales process and they sought to work with just one agency network – Virtuoso – whose consultants are renowned for selling experiential travel. In August 2006, Virgin Galactic named leading travel company, Virtuoso, as their exclusive retail travel group for North America. Since then, the two organizations have been working together to match the right consultants with this unique program, appointing 47 US consultants in December before turning their attention to Canada.

“Canadians are renowned for their adventurous spirit, especially when it comes to travel, so it made sense for us to appoint travel consultants in Canada who could bring this ultimate adventure to their clients” said Carolyn Wincer, Head of Astronaut Sales for Virgin Galactic. “The Virtuoso consultants we selected embody the adventurous and entrepreneurial spirit needed to represent Virgin Galactic. Their passion for space travel, combined with their talent for selling unique experiences, makes them ideal candidates while ensuring their sales success with this new level of space tourism.”

This select group of consultants will travel to Vancouver in early July to take part in a comprehensive education program in their quest to become “Accredited Space Agents.” During this training they will learn about spaceflight technology, G-Forces, weightlessness and all aspects of the Virgin Galactic customer experience. Once accredited, agents can begin reserving seats, with the first flights currently scheduled to launch during 2009. Overall, participants will make a five-year commitment to the program, which includes marketing and sales support in addition to training.

“Travel is about making dreams a reality and for many, especially Baby Boomers who were impressionable children when man first walked on the moon, going to space is the ultimate dream come-true,” says Matthew Upchurch, CEO of Virtuoso. “By becoming ‘Accredited Space Agents,’ these consultants will continue to set themselves apart, reinforcing their position as innovators in the life experience business and living up to our hallmark: We Orchestrate Dreams.”

To date, the world has seen fewer than 500 astronauts, but with the launch of Virgin Galactic spaceflights that will soon change. Together with Virgin Galactic, Virtuoso’s “Accredited Space Agents” are poised to turn the dream of going to space into a reality for their clientele. The once-in-a-lifetime experience includes Astronaut training, G-Force acclimatization and a sensational spaceflight lasting over two hours. At US\$200,000 per ticket, Virgin Galactic’s flights are a mere fraction of the \$20 million price tag associated

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with the space trips taken by a handful of private individuals who have trained for six months to join the Russian government space programme.

And while Virgin Galactic's technology makes space travel more attainable for the general public, it takes a talented and skilled luxury travel consultant to sell a trip to space.

Wincer says of the group, "Virtuoso was our first choice for North America. As the leaders in luxury travel, we knew Virtuoso's members would understand and embrace this new opportunity. Their consultants possess three key assets that make them the ideal ambassadors for Virgin Galactic: they are at the forefront of exciting trends in travel; they are adept at selling exceptional experiential travel; and, they have a roster of clientele that are ideal candidates for space travel."

About Virgin Galactic

Virgin Galactic is a company established by Richard Branson's Virgin Group to undertake the challenge of developing space tourism for everybody. It will own and operate privately built spaceships, modeled on the history-making SpaceShipOne craft. These spaceships will allow affordable sub-orbital space tourism for the first time in our history. Virgin Galactic will run as a business with the sole purpose of making space travel more and more affordable to people throughout the world.

Virgin Galactic Three-Day Experience

After three days of exciting preparation, bonding and training, passengers will board the spaceship, which climbs to 50,000 feet while attached to a specially designed carrier aircraft – an intrinsically safer way to launch than vertically from the ground. From here, the spaceship releases from the carrier and climbs vertically, reaching the speed of sound in 10 seconds and over three times the speed of sound in under 30 seconds, all while powered by an innovative hybrid rocket motor that offers a cleaner and safer method of space launch.

Traveling at almost 3,000 miles an hour, the G-force surge will push the would-be astronauts back into their seats as they head into the black sky to a maximum altitude of about 70 miles above the earth's surface. When the rocket motor shuts down, everyone on board will experience the silence of space and the magic of weightlessness. They will be able to see the curvature of the earth and up to 1,000 miles in any direction. They will also see the thin blue line of the atmosphere protecting Earth.

Passengers will experience the wonder of weightlessness for 4 or 5 minutes before the spacecraft returns to Earth, passing back through the atmosphere without the heat build-up traditionally associated with spaceflight, thanks to the unique wing feathering technology. It then glides back to Earth to make a normal runway landing.

About Virtuoso

Virtuoso is the industry's leading luxury travel network. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 300 agencies with more than 6,000 elite travel specialists in 22 countries in North and South America, the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand, as well as over 1,000 of the world's best travel providers and premier destinations. Independent travel agencies receive sales, marketing and technology support, as well as exclusive services and products, as a result of their membership in Virtuoso. The network's member agencies generate over \$4.2 billion annually in travel sales, making the group the most powerful in the luxury travel segment. Their relationships with the finest travel companies provide the network's affluent clientele with exclusive amenities, rare experiences and privileged access. Virtuoso is also the exclusive travel provider for World Elite™ MasterCard®. For more information, please visit www.virtuoso.com.

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Virtuoso / Virgin Galactic Canadian Accredited Space Agents

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