



Resilience & Vision

Conference 2026

inspire | Independent
Travel Associates

MANCHESTER



Castlefield Rooms, Manchester | 25th June 2026

Welcome to your 2026 conference



There are moments in business when you pause, look at the people around you, and feel genuinely proud of what you've built together. For me, this conference is one of those moments.

Resilience & Vision isn't just a theme, it's a testament to who you are and who we are, collectively.

As independent travel agents, you've faced disruption that would have stopped others in their tracks. You adapted, you persevered and you continued to deliver exceptional service to your clients. That takes real strength, and it deserves to be recognised.

At ITA, we've always believed that independence doesn't have to mean isolation. The strength of this community lies in how you support one another, share knowledge and grow together and that's what sets us apart. You're not running your businesses alone; you're part of something bigger, and Conference 2026 is our celebration of exactly that.

We've designed this day to deliver real, practical value from sessions on technology and business growth to honest conversations about the challenges and opportunities ahead.

But beyond the programme, I hope you'll take time to connect with your peers, reflect on how far you've come, and look ahead with genuine optimism.

I also want to thank our partners. Days like today simply do not happen without you. Your support has always gone far beyond just one day. Many of you have supported me and ITA for many years, and I have never forgotten that or taken it for granted. Thank you for being such a constant part of the ITA family.

Manchester feels like the perfect setting. A city built on hard work, reinvention and community, values that mirror our own.

Thank you for being part of ITA. I can't wait to spend the day with you.

inspire

Lisa Henning
CEO

AGENDA



Resilience & Vision
Conference 2026
inspire | Independent
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09:30 - 10:30

ITA arrival with welcome refreshments

10:30 - 12:00

Conference Sessions

12:00 - 12:15

Break with refreshments & a chance to catch-up on your emails

12:15 - 13:35

Conference Sessions

13:35 - 13:55

Pre-lunch drinks with our Partners

13:55 - 14:55

Lunch & catch-up on your emails

14:55 - 16:35

Power Up with our Partners

16:35 - 16:45

Partner prize draw

16:45 - 17:00

Stuba & Conference closing remarks

17:00

Post Conference drinks

Your Inspire Team



Sam Fisher

Head of Business Development and Training

What Inspires Sam...

My family is my greatest inspiration and the reason I work hard every day, creating special memories with my small but mighty team at home. I'm equally inspired by the incredible colleagues and ITAs I work alongside, whose resilience never fails to amaze me in an industry full of twists, turns, and the occasional caffeine emergency. This industry stole my heart at 16, and honestly, I still love what I do just as much today. I'm truly grateful to everyone who has played a part in this journey.



Alice-Victoria Whalley

Travel Success Manager

What Inspires Alice...

My biggest inspiration is my dog, Barbara - my number one. She greets every day with pure joy and reminds me to do the same. She teaches me to lead with kindness, love wholeheartedly, and that a treat can fix anything. She's been my constant through everything and sparks happiness more than she'll ever know. I'm also inspired by my family, my biggest cheerleaders. I'm so lucky to have a supportive network around me. They've taught me the value of hard work, helped me keep perspective and encouraged me to grow, create and most importantly, have fun along the way.



Stacey Wilson

Onboarding & Travel Success Manager

What Inspires Stacey...

My inspiration is creating a life that feels full, full of memories, laughter, opportunities and moments that matter. My family and three children are my biggest motivation and the reason behind everything I do. I work hard because I want to give my children amazing experiences, show them the value of ambition and kindness and prove that you can build a career you love without losing sight of what's important. Travel inspires me because it brings people together, creates lifelong memories and reminds us to enjoy the journey, not just the destination.

Your Inspire Team



Claire Dutton

Head of Product, Commercial and Marketing

What Inspires Claire...

My inspiration in life is myself. That may sound cheesy, but I've overcome divorce, cancer, and the sudden loss of my husband of 20 years at a young age. My motto in life is "sink or swim," and I've chosen to keep swimming. Some days are harder than others, but you have to keep going, face challenges head on, and remind yourself you've survived worse. It may not always work out, but you keep trying, find joy where you can, and learn along the way. If something doesn't work out, you move on stronger and wiser.



Chris Meddows

Product Manager

What Inspires Chris...

Personal - Becoming a father this September has completely reshaped my perspective. My biggest motivation is creating the best opportunities for my growing family and ensuring my wife feels supported every step of the way.

Work - Travel has always been a major inspiration for me, so being able to combine work and pleasure is key. I'm driven to deliver the very best products on the market while continuing to grow, improve, and explore new opportunities.



Henry Archer

Marketing and Product Executive

What Inspires Henry...

My inspiration, particularly at work, is derived from a myriad of things; my mum's support, my brother's incredible work ethic, wanting to live independently without financial burden, a Yorkshireman's spirit to 'crack on' and get the job done, but most importantly... I need to work to afford holidays, Lego and football away days! I enjoy my job, have a good laugh with the team I work with and aim to always be supportive to you ITAs - you inspire me to innovate everyday!

Your Inspire Team



Eleanor Eccles

Social Media Executive

What Inspires Eleanor...

My inspiration is my mum and dad. They came from very working-class backgrounds and worked incredibly hard to give me everything I could ever want. Growing up, they taught me the value of independence and that if you want something in life, you work hard for it. I've been doing this job since I was 16 and have always tried to follow in their footsteps with the same determination and work ethic. A quote I always live by is "you only live once" - a reminder to make the most of every opportunity and experience life to the fullest.



Brad Mayson-Cooper

Marketing Manager

What Inspires Brad...

Inspiration comes from everywhere, particularly when I'm not actively looking for it. It can come from a conversation, a change of scenery, a good idea, or just seeing how other people approach life. I'm not driven by one big passion. It's about noticing small things that make me think differently, laugh, or keep going. Inspiration is usually found in everyday moments.



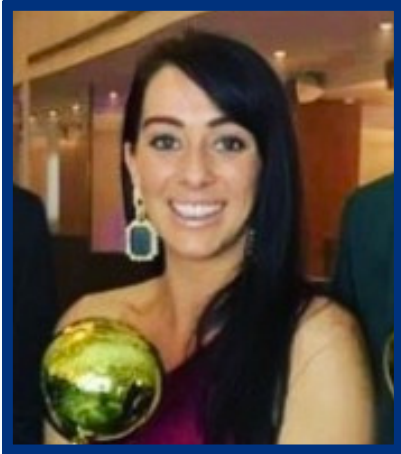
Lindsay Miller

Business Support Manager

What Inspires Lindsay...

I am inspired by my Gran and my Mum; they shaped the work ethic I have today. My Gran, who everyone says I'm the "mini me" of, was strong-willed, outspoken, and fiercely independent. She raised four children while travelling the world with my Grandad's job, often alone in foreign countries, while later working full time. My Mum has been through so much herself yet still supports others through difficult times. Their resilience, compassion and determination taught me the importance of hard work, kindness and always showing up for people, no matter the circumstances.

Your Inspire Team



Freya Sutcliffe

Head of sales & BD – Reward & Recognition

What Inspires Freya...

My beautiful daughter is my greatest motivation, my driving force, and the reason I push myself every single day. No matter how difficult or challenging life can become, she gives me the strength to get up every morning, face obstacles head on, and create the very best future possible for both of us. I am a strong believer in the saying, “Your life doesn’t get better by chance, it gets better by change.” To me, this means embracing growth, stepping outside of your comfort zone, and never being afraid to evolve into a better version of yourself. Success is not simply handed to us; it is created through dedication, mindset, and the willingness to keep moving forward, even when the path ahead feels uncertain.



Alexis Coles-Barrasso

PR and Communications Manager

What Inspires Alexis...

I have spent more than 30 years telling the stories that make the world want to travel – and my passion for it burns brighter today than ever. After 17 remarkable years at the heart of Thomas Cook, I launched my own travel PR consultancy, building a thriving business with wonderful clients including Inspire. But travel has never been just my career; it is one of my greatest loves. From the moment my two daughters were old enough to explore, I made the world their classroom, filling our family life with adventures, discoveries, and memories crafted beautifully far from home. For me, travel is simply everything.



Lauren Docker

Director of HR, People, and Culture

What Inspires Lauren...

My little girl is my greatest inspiration. She motivates me every day to be the best version of myself and to lead by example. I want to show her that being a good Mum and having ambition can go hand in hand. Life is about working hard, believing in yourself and striving to achieve your goals no matter the challenges. Working at Inspire allows me to do this, to show up as my true self and work alongside inspiring colleagues who encourage and support me every day. If I can inspire my daughter to grow up confident, determined and kind then I know I’m doing something right.

Your Inspire Team



Richard Buxton

Chief Financial Officer

What Inspires Richard...

What inspires me on a daily basis is seeing the development of colleagues and their progression in their roles and becoming better versions of themselves, this being through education and osmosis of passing knowledge down and continuous support. Seeing colleagues challenge themselves and progressing in their roles is incredibly rewarding and also invaluable to the business. Ellie Pumpkin Chops (my goldendoodle) also inspires me!



Fiona Grundy

Travel Accounts Manager

What Inspires Fiona...

What inspires me is life itself, the good, the bad, the amazing and the not so amazing. It is our life experiences that shape who we are, and that help create the very memories that are in our hearts and minds. These in turn inspire me to do what I can to help others create special memories, and if I can help one person turn a not so good memory into an amazing one, I will keep being inspired



Crystal Hunter

Accounts Administrator

What Inspires Crystal...

I am inspired every day by my two children, who motivate me to be the very best version of myself. Their love, kindness and unwavering support make me incredibly proud and drive my passion for helping others. Professionally, I am deeply committed to ensuring every Independent Travel Associate's client journey is exceptional. I pride myself on being diligent, thorough and leaving no stone unturned to deliver the very best experience and support possible. Building trust, creating meaningful relationships and making a difference are at the heart of everything I do.

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BLOGS

Packed with travel inspiration, our destination guides and blogs are ready for you to explore, share and turn into engaging content for your own marketing.



5 Trending Honeymoon Hotspots



Astro Tourism in Africa



The 26 Best Places to Go on a Rail Holiday in 2026

EVENTS

Stay connected and inspired with upcoming ITA Events, Awards, training sessions, webinars and social media workshops designed to help you grow your business and sharpen your skills.

Event	Date	Location
Agent Achievement Awards	9th July 2026	London
ITA Social Media Workshop	10th July 26	Teams Meeting
CLIA Expeditions Showcase	24th – 27th July 26	Svalbard
North East Region ITA Coffee Morning	6th Aug 26	TBC
ITA Social Media Workshop	11th Aug 26	Teams Meeting
Advantage Summer Social	3rd Sept 2026	London
Advantage Summer Social	10th Sept 2026	Manchester
ITA Social Media Workshop	11th Sept 26	Teams Meeting
ATAS Conference	21st – 22nd Sept 26	Silverstone
TTG Awards	23rd Sept 26	London
Southern Region ITA Coffee Morning	8th Oct 26	TBC
ITA Social Media Workshop	12th Oct 26	Teams Meeting
WTM	3rd – 5th Nov 26	London
ITA Social Media Workshop	11th Nov 26	Teams Meeting
ITA Social Media Workshop	11th Dec 26	Teams Meeting
Advantage Big Celebration Lunch	TBA Dec	London
ITA Christmas Event	TBA Dec	TBA

MANCHESTER



Manchester is a city of innovation, creativity and character. From world-changing discoveries to iconic music and sporting history, it's a destination packed with culture and energy, and the perfect backdrop for this year's conference. The **Manchester Bee**, seen across the city, represents the resilience and community spirit Manchester is known for.

Often described as the birthplace of the modern world, Manchester has played a major role in shaping history. The world's first modern computer was developed here by **Alan Turing**, while groundbreaking research at The University of Manchester led to the **splitting of the atom**. The city was also home to the world's first **inter-city railway**.

Manchester has long been a city that leads change, playing an important role in the **suffragette movement** and becoming a symbol of diversity and inclusion through the famous Canal Street district.

The city is equally famous for its culture and entertainment. Manchester's legendary music scene produced globally recognised artists including **Oasis** and **Take That**, while iconic venues such as The Hacienda helped shape British nightlife and music culture.

Sport is another huge part of Manchester's identity, with **Manchester United F.C.** and **Manchester City F.C.** recognised worldwide. The city has also featured in beloved TV shows including **Coronation Street** and **Queer as Folk**.

And of course, Manchester also gave the world **Vimto**!





ALICE & STACEY'S TOP TIPS!



START SMALL

Instead of trying to do everything at once, focus on just one meaningful task.

THE 10-MINUTE RULE

If you're avoiding something, commit to just 10 minutes. That's it. You'll often find momentum kicks in once you begin.

NON-NEGOTIABLE 3

Pick 3 key tasks each day that directly grow your business. Keep it simple, focused, and achievable.

TIME BLOCKING

Structure your day into focused themes instead of juggling lots of things at once. One focus = better results.

QUICK WINS EARLY IN THE DAY

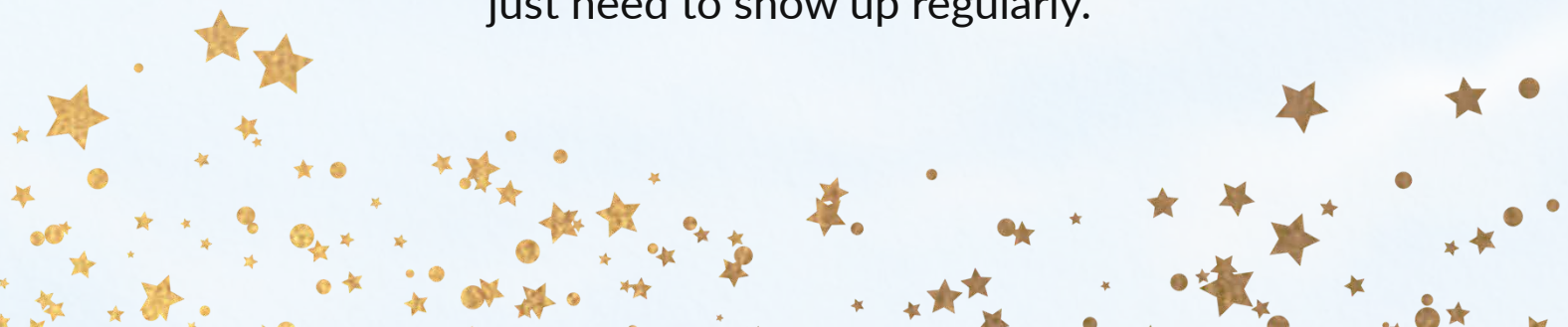
Start with something easy but productive to build momentum and confidence straight away.

TRACK ACTIVITY, NOT JUST RESULTS

Don't measure success by bookings only. Also track things like follow-ups, conversations, visibility, consistency, engagement and new skills learned.

STAY CONSISTENTLY VISIBLE

You don't need perfect content - you just need to show up regularly.





ALICE & STACEY'S TOP TIPS!



USE EVERYDAY NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Business comes from natural conversations too, not just marketing. Think: school gates, sports clubs, coffee shops, community groups and local events.

REVISIT EXISTING BOOKINGS

Look for upgrade opportunities in current bookings – room/seat upgrades & added experiences.

SELL THE EXPERIENCE EMOTIONALLY

Help customers imagine the experience, not just the price. Break costs down in a way that feels clear and achievable.

RESPOND QUICKLY

Even if you don't have all the answers yet, acknowledge messages quickly so people feel looked after.

CREATE A FOLLOW-UP SYSTEM

Most bookings don't happen after the first interaction - they need nurturing. Use tools like: Spreadsheets, diaries, calendar reminders, Trello or notes apps to stay on top of it.

SMALL TOUCHES MATTER

Build loyalty through thoughtful personal touches: Pre-departure check-ins, printed tickets, small gifts, welcome-home messages, review requests, birthday messages and reminders to rebook.

RECONNECT TO YOUR "WHY"

Remember your reason for doing this - your purpose, goals and long-term vision.





ALICE & STACEY'S **TOP TIPS!**



AVOID COMPARISON

Don't compare your everyday reality to someone else's highlight reel.

STAY CONNECTED

Keep in touch with your BDMs & fellow ITAs. Connection reduces isolation and builds resilience.

MAKE YOUR QUOTES STAND OUT

Add value beyond price - show the experience, not just the cost.

SWITCH UP YOUR WORKSPACE

A change of environment can refresh your energy and focus.

REST & RESET

Give yourself permission to pause. Rest is part of progress too.

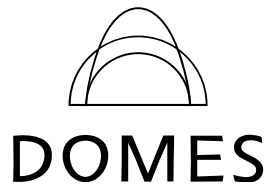


POWER-UP WITH OUR PARTNERS



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POWER-UP WITH OUR PARTNERS

The logo for KUONI, featuring the word "KUONI" in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

Adam Morris
Trade Partnerships Manager

Adam.Morris@kuoni.co.uk

The logo for Newmarket HOLIDAYS, featuring a stylized orange "N" inside a circle above the word "Newmarket" in a serif font and "HOLIDAYS" in a sans-serif font.

Ryan Readman
Partnerships Manager

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The logo for "not in the guidebooks", featuring the text "not in the" in a serif font and "guidebooks" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a red heart shape behind the text.

Vicky Edwards
Business Development Manager

Vickyedwards@nitgb.com

The logo for railbookers, featuring the word "railbookers" in a bold, sans-serif font, with "rail" in yellow and "bookers" in white on a dark blue background.

Raj Mistry
Head of Trade Sales and Development - UK

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The logo for RATE HAWK, featuring a stylized black hawk head icon to the left of the words "RATE HAWK" in a bold, sans-serif font.

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POWER-UP WITH OUR PARTNERS



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