

Sir Richard Branson to Accept Special Award at TIA's Travelcom

2008-02-05

Travel Industry Association To Present Inaugural Steve Fossett Innovation Award To Sir Richard Branson At Travelcom Show In April

The Travel Industry Association announced today the creation of the first-ever Steve Fossett Innovation Award. Named for Fossett*, legendary aviator, explorer and pioneer, the honor will be presented each year at TravelCom to recognize a worldwide travel industry leader who has broken new ground, pushed boundaries and revolutionized the industry, leaving a legacy of long-lasting beneficial change.

The inaugural award will be presented to Virgin Atlantic Founder, Richard Branson, who will accept the award in honor of Steve Fossett, who was his close friend and fellow pioneer. The presentation will take place during the TravelCom08 show for eCommerce and marketing professionals being held in Chicago April 8-10.

'In presenting the first Fossett Award, TIA recognizes Richard Branson's own pioneering spirit in every aspect of his life,' said Roger Dow, President and Chief Executive Officer. 'Blazing trails throughout the world in almost every business imaginable, Branson has pushed every norm, daring to challenge the industry to do better. Building Virgin Atlantic Airways from scratch in 1984, Richard has never stopped in his relentless combination of combining the best in product and service, establishing a model that the industry couldn't help but try to follow.'

In accepting the award, Branson will pay tribute to his friend Mr. Fossett, and share his thoughts on innovation in a 'fireside' chat with Forrester Research's Henry Harteveltdt, Vice President & Principal Analyst for Airline and Travel Industry Research, and TIA's TravelCom08 Co-Chair.

With the theme, 'Destination Unknown: Predicting Tomorrow's Travel Environment,' TravelCom08 will feature senior executives from prominent companies addressing topics critical to ensuring a high return on eCommerce and marketing investments. They will offer insights on the latest multi-sensory Internet experience, social networking, reaching customers on the move, merchandising, the hidden world of search, and much more.

Among the featured speakers will be:

Michelle Peluso, President and Chief Executive Officer for Travelocity, and Executive Vice President of Sabre Holdings

Jeffery Boyd, President and Chief Executive Officer of Priceline.com

Steve Barnhart, President and Chief Executive Officer of Orbitz Worldwide

Suzie Reider, former Chief Marketing Officer for YouTube and now the company's Director of Advertising

Lynne Biggar, Senior Vice President and General Manager - U.S. Consumer Travel Network for American Express

For more information and to register for the show, visit www.tia.org/TravelCom.

**Note: Fossett was reported missing on September 3, 2007 after the plane he was flying over the Nevada desert failed to return. Despite over a month of searches by the Civil Air Patrol and others, Fossett has not been located. Prior to disappearing, Fossett had become one of America's best-known adventurers. For more than a decade, he pursued world records in sailing, ballooning and other outdoor activities.*

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The URL for this story is:

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