

Traveltalk spoke to several of the NTIA winners straight after they received their awards. Once they'd got their breath back, here's a selection of what they had to say.



WHO: Christian Hunter, Chief Executive Officer, Travellers Choice
AWARD: BEST TRAVEL AGENCY GROUP (50 STORES OR MORE)

Q: What does this award mean to you?

A: It means everything. It is a great acknowledgement of not just the group but our individual members all around the country and for the hard work that our team does every day of the week.

We really are focused on supporting our members to grow their businesses – they are independent owner-operators who are very small in the big scheme of things when you look at the size of the industry as a whole but collectively they really do pack a punch and we're so proud of all of them.

Q: What do you think swung it for you with the judges?

A: We just talked about what we do. We've done a lot of good things in the last 12 months and introduced some new services to really try and enhance what we can do to support our members and maybe that was what got us across the line.

Q: Is there anyone you'd like to thank?

A: I'd like to thank all of our amazing team. We've got less than 20 full time employees across the whole business so we're not the biggest but everybody plays such an important part.

Q: Where does Travellers Choice go from here?

A: Well hopefully back here next year! We're always looking to grow the business, to add more value to our members and to bring new members into the group and I'm sure this will help us along the way.

Q: How important is a night like this for the travel industry?

A: It's amazing and I don't think there's another industry that does it quite like this. We've got fierce competitors in the room but everyone leaves that at the door and it's a celebration of the industry and it's great to see so many friends from within other retail networks as well as the rest of the trade.



WHO: Kathy Millett, TravelManagers, Clarendon, WA
AWARD: BEST MOBILE TRAVEL ADVISOR

Q: Tell us a bit about yourself and what this award means to you?

A: I've travelled since I was born. I was born in Africa and I've been on the move ever since. Winning this award means everything and I'm just blown away. It was both humbling and awe-inspiring to receive the award in front of all these people. There are so many people who are probably better than me but to be in the right place and the right moment has just been incredible.

Q: You clearly love being a travel consultant.

A: I've been in the industry for an awfully long time. It is the experience and the personalisation and I just love what I do.

Q: Is there anyone you'd like to thank?

A: TravelManagers, because they have been amazing. I used to work in a bricks-and-mortar agency, which was great, but due to circumstances I had to go mobile and it's been the best thing that I ever did.

I'd also like to thank my family: they've put up with the tears and the tantrums, the bad days and the good days, and they've travelled with me.

Q: What is the TravelManagers difference?

A: Personal. We are the personal travel managers and we deliver.

Q: Will you be back next year?

A: That's a good question. I have reached the pinnacle and I am really, really happy.

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