

Prevention of Fraud in Travel – PROFIT

About PROFIT

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WHO IS PROFIT

PROFIT is the short name for Prevention of Fraud in Travel. The founder members include:

- ABTA,
- British Airways,
- The Civil Aviation Authority,
- Cooperative Travel,
- Davenport Lyons,
- Global Travel Group,
- Hays Travel,
- Teletext, and the
- Travel Trust Association

BACKGROUND

The members of PROFIT came together in 1999 to tackle fraud within the travel industry. Our remit is to design fraud out of the industry and educate the trade and public on how to avoid being defrauded.

PROFIT is a not for profit organisation which undertakes counter fraud advice and work for the whole travel industry.

For many years the organisation worked behind the scenes, however, it was realised that we could be more effective if our work was more publicly known and so the official launch of PROFIT was in the amphitheatre at New Scotland Yard in 2009.

Amongst the speakers at the launch were, Commander, Nigel Mawer (Met Police); (Detective Chief Inspector, David Clark (City of London Police); Andy Auld (Serious & Organised Crime Agency); The Chair of the Parliamentary All Party Identity Fraud Group, Nigel Evans MP (Con. Ribble Valley), Mike Monk (ABTA Head of Finance); and convicted fraudster Elliott Castro. This was the first time a convicted criminal had ever been asked to speak at New Scotland Yard.

OPERATION STERLING

PROFiT is a founder member of Operation Sterling, the Metropolitan Police initiative which covers the top industry sectors within the UK aimed at designing fraud out of these sectors through best practice and sharing information.

This successful initiative has been highly effective at identifying and eliminating fraud in sectors such as property letting, cars, and recruitment.

http://www.met.police.uk/fraudalert/sterling_forums.htm

PROFiT's WORK

Trade Awareness

During 2009 PROFiT undertook a nine month trade awareness campaign through our travel press partners Travel Weekly. This campaign highlighted the main fraud issues within the travel industry for the first time.

Trade awareness continues through a number of channels including trade alerts, secure blogs, and sector communications.

<http://www.travelweekly.co.uk/Articles/2009/02/05/23982/fraud-awareness-month-your-guide-to-fraud-in-travel.html>

Operation Neon/Operation Chilton

PROFiT gathered the basic evidence and supported the Metropolitan Police for Operation Neon/Operation Chilton which resulted in the biggest travel fraud prosecution ever undertaken in the UK.

Our support included the provision of Police vetted staff and fundraising to pay for the investigation and prosecution.

<http://www.profit.uk.com/profit/neon.asp>

UK Threat Assessment of Organised Crime

Since 2008 PROFiT has contributed to the travel section of the UK Threat Assessment of Organised Crime produced by the Home Office.

Olympics

PROFiT also works with Operation Podium, the Metropolitan Police unit tasked with dealing with fraud at the London 2012 Olympics. We have assisted in modifying the advertising and licensing regulations to make them workable and carried out a lot of work to counter ticketing fraud.

HAJJ Fraud

During 2010 PROFiT founder members identified a problem with the UK participation in the annual HAJJ pilgrimage.

Working with the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau we established the nature and scope of the problem and also some issues with the recording and action by Police of complaints.

The result was a press release and guidance note issued jointly with the City of London Police which has improved Police awareness and provided guidance within communities on how to avoid fraud.

<http://www.profit.uk.com/profit/attach/Hajj.pdf>

Villa Fraud

Following the Morairoway fraud of 2009 PROFiT was asked to lead on finding a solution for the villa industry to the fraud problems affecting the sector.

Working with organisations based across Europe, PROFiT is currently establishing industry standards to minimise fraud. In addition we have founded a villa counter fraud group which allows villa companies to help each other keep fraudsters out.

PROFiT produced a guidance note and press release which was widely picked up by the mainstream press.

http://www.profit.uk.com/latest/attachment/PROFiT_press_release_161210.pdf

Airline Tickets

In 2011 working with European Airlines and IATA, PROFiT produced a guidance note and press release that dealt with the fraud issues surrounding the issuing and use of airline tickets.

http://www.profit.uk.com/updatefiles/attachment/PROFiT_press_release_27.10.11.pdf

Other

PROFiT has contributed to many press and media pieces including working with the BBC`s Fake Britain (Dominic Littlewood).