



MEDIA RELEASE

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## ***Hunter points Travellers Choice towards a data rich future***

18 November 2017: **As the travel industry becomes even more competitive the ability of independent travel agents to build and manipulate rich customer databases is going to be increasingly critical to their survival, warns Travellers Choice Managing Director Christian Hunter.**

Addressing Travellers Choice's 2017 Annual Shareholders Conference in Perth, Hunter told the group's member shareholders that their agency's customer database was arguably its most valuable asset.

"We are in an era where data is king and the more you know about your customers, their likes and preferences, their families, hobbies, their travel plans and bucket list items, the better positioned you will be to provide them with relevant and targeted marketing," Hunter claimed.

Successful agents would require the ability to draw on their understanding of customers' preferences to speak personally to them with strategic promotions rather than a shot-gun approach.

He said retailers such as Woolworths were already pursuing such a strategy by using reward cards to gather vast amounts of information from simple customer transactions, enabling them to craft marketing that aligned or predicted individual customer's shopping habits.

"How well do you really know your customers? Does your marketing activity speak to them on a connected level, or is it more likely to be speaking at them? The only way we can do this effectively and consistently, is through the collection of data to create those really deep insights."

Hunter said TC Mail, the group's new email marketing platform – officially unveiled at the Shareholders' Conference – could help drive the process forward by allowing members, with support from the Company's marketing team, to drill down into databases and create highly-targeted campaigns.

Agency networks were not exempt from "the data issue" and would need to evolve from de-centralized organisations to integrated operations in which information was efficiently gathered at every touch point and fed back into a central nervous system.

"As independent agents, our members are not required to provide onerous sales information and we do not have the capacity to pull any level of sales report, so we are highly reliant on supplier sales reporting for our management information.

"I think we do a pretty good job once we have the information and our internal reporting to members has come a long way in recent years, but it could be better. The information we have is often historical and we can be reactive, but it is difficult to be predictive."

Hunter said there was also an opportunity for Travellers Choice to more effectively tap into its members' collective knowledge and experience, enabling agents to support one another by sharing ideas and insights, as well as providing one-on-one mentoring.

"Imagine the scenario where we are able to operate like a genuinely integrated system, where we have access to real-time sales information, where customer databases are so detailed we can drill down to fine detail and produce marketing activity that can predict and shape the market. Imagine members proactively supporting one another to make every business within the group even more successful.

"That is where I would like to see the group get to in the future and where I think we need to be in our continual drive to add more value to members' businesses."

For more information on Travellers Choice please visit [www.travellerschoice.com.au](http://www.travellerschoice.com.au).

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