

## Benefits of Membership

### Marketing

The Guild can provide more cost effective marketing than most companies could afford individually. The services of our Members are promoted in many ways, including:

#### Web-site

Every Member has a full page illustrated entry on [www.coach-tours.co.uk](http://www.coach-tours.co.uk). As well as providing a profile of your business, we offer a hyperlink to your own site and your e-mail address.

We have recently redesigned and re-launched the site and are actively marketing it via search engines and in other ways.

#### Exhibitions and Shows

The Guild used to take a fully manned stand at a number of key trade shows including the World Travel Market, International Group Leisure & Tourism Show and Confex (the international show for conference and event organisers). In 2005 a decision was taken to suspend show exhibiting (due to costs and poor hit rates) and to trial a more aggressive marketing via the website. That policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and we may resume exhibiting if it is seen as cost-effective. In 2008 we will be exhibiting at the Group Leisure & Travel Trade Show.

#### Specific campaigns

The Guild undertakes specific marketing exercises from time to time. For example, we designed a leaflet specifically for the school travel market and mailed 16,000 copies to schools in each Member's catchment area.

#### Directory

A major marketing tool is the directory of Members, now in an easy to update format based around an attractive A3 sized map. Copies are mailed to all the contacts made at trade shows and on our own mailing list.

### Benchmarking

Could I buy supplies more cheaply? Are my coaches as fuel efficient as others? What tax-free drivers' allowances will the Inland Revenue agree to? Those are just some of the topics discussed at the Guild's annual 'Think Tank' – a private, frank and open discussion of some of the key issues facing coach operators today. Open to all Members who contribute data, the Think Tank is one of the most popular Guild activities. Many Members say they have saved much more than their annual Guild fees through ideas gained in these sessions.

## Best Practice

Another valuable Member benefit is the 'Best Practice Guide', a ring binder of ideas, forms etc contributed by Members. Covering a diverse range from recruitment ideas through medical questionnaires, safety cards, driving licence checking aids to marketing ideas.

The first guide was issued in 2003 and Members receive regular updates. A wide selection of guides are also available on line from a private Members area on this web site.

## Mutual Aid

Guild Members are expected to assist other Members, eg if a breakdown occurs in their area. All Members provide contact details and a list of facilities available, such as toilet drops or parking.

## Training

The Guild offers a number of important training aids:

*Drivers Hours* – an easy to use 8 page guide to the law with a testing package to check that your drivers know what they can and can't do! Our 2007 Guide was published before the law changed in April 2007 and some 10 months before VOSA's own guide!

*The Trip* - this acclaimed new training DVD was produced jointly by the Guild and GoSkills to help drive up driver standards - after all, no matter how good or expensive the coach, it is usually the driver that makes or breaks the customer's experience!

*Quality Service* – another distance learning training and testing package, available only to Guild Members.

*Walk Round check video* – specially commissioned for the Guild and with an introduction from former Senior Traffic Commissioner Michael Betts, this video is aimed specifically at coach operators, unlike the VI one. All Members get a free copy.

*Driver CPC - Periodic Training* – the Guild is a registered training provider and all members will have access to Guild courses that can be delivered by your own staff, for your staff.

*Tachograph video* – a practical, step by step guide to using an analogue tachograph is available on DVD. Each member receives a free copy.

## The Craic

Running a successful coach business can be lonely! The Guild's meetings offer an unparalleled opportunity to discuss current issues and problems and to develop solutions.

Participation is expected from the owners or managing directors of the Member companies – indeed, all Members are required to attend at least two of the four Guild meetings each year and many go to all four, including the two-day AGM and ‘Think Tank’.

Between meetings, Members can use an informal 'Members Forum' on the Guild web site to exchange ideas or alert Members to new problems. Recent messages have included diverse issues such as the rules on trailers and maximum vehicle weights, customs allowances for cross Channel trips, slack adjuster torque settings and coach parking in Leeds!

## Endorsement

The Guild’s name is synonymous with quality. Members can use the Guild logo on their stationery, publicity and vehicles and in dealings with clients. In an increasingly risk-conscious world, coach hirers are looking for reassurance. Guild membership – reinforced by our independent audit process - helps deliver that reassurance, nowhere more so than in the important school tour and day trip market. Positive publicity about the Guild and its Members rubs off on all the Members.

## What our Members say

Ian Shipley, Classic Coaches – interviewed in Bus & Coach Buyer, February 2004:

“It’s a tremendous association to be involved with. It’s good to be able to talk around the table with like-minded operators.”

Pete Johnson, Johnsons Coaches (Coach Operator of the Year, 2005), speaking about their decision to join the Guild:

“Johnsons were keen to be a member of the Guild because of its continuous drive towards the highest quality of vehicles, drivers and back up organisation. It seemed to us that an organisation that encourages and supports members with a fundamental commitment to continuous improvement in fleet standards and customer service has to be a winner.”

Steve Telling, Tellings-Golden Miller, explaining why operators should join:

“The Guild provides an excellent forum for owners to meet to share best practice and to help benchmark their operations against some of the best operators in the coach industry.”

Kevin Brown, Woods Coaches of Leicester (Coach Operator of the Year, 2005):

“Being a member of The Guild of British Coach Operators means we have excellent opportunities to market our company. As a member of the training committee I have been able to influence the type of training that's on offer to our staff.”