

Flying lessons

Help your bookings take off with Janine Kelso's look at where to learn more

Boost your flight sales by signing up to an aviation training course. That's the message from travel agent training provider Online Travel Training (OTT), which offers more than 55 free airline courses on its website.

Completing an airline training course provides agents with "the confidence, knowledge, passion and bravado to sell", says OTT senior account manager Will Bickmore.

What's more, 91% of travel agents say product training has helped them to increase sales figures, according to a recent OTT survey.

But if that's not enough of an incentive, many airlines offer

amazing rewards to agents who complete the training.

Once you've passed a course with flying colours, you'll usually be presented with a shiny certificate to pin up on the wall. You'll also be entered into prize draws, in which you can scoop anything from vouchers to holidays, model planes to fam trips.

Most airline training courses can be found online, allowing you to complete them in your own time, at your desk or even on your smartphone. Here's a round-up of a few to get you started, but it's worth looking up more online or getting in touch with the airlines' trade sales team, to make sure you're not missing out.

“

Completing a course provides agents with the confidence, knowledge, passion and bravado to sell

AIR NEW ZEALAND

Enjoy a sneak peek of the swish interior of an Air New Zealand aircraft by taking a 360-degree virtual tour of all four of the airline's cabins: Economy Skycouch, Economy, Premium Economy and Business

Premier. Available on Air New Zealand's trade site, these brilliantly immersive tours are complemented by comprehensive information on baggage, seat selection and much more. airnzagent.co.uk

AIR TRANSAT

Canadian budget airline Air Transat is relaunching an enhanced online training programme, in partnership with OTT, in January 2019. The new programme will cover route information, the highlights of economy class and inflight enhancements such as its onboard kids' club and gourmet menu from top Quebec chef Daniel Vézina.





ABOVE: British Airways' Training Academy site

RIGHT: The airline will launch direct UK-Pittsburgh flights in April

→ Agents will be rewarded for bookings they make via a new Travel Booker Incentive Portal. The airline will also meet agents face to face at 'hub' events next year in London, Manchester, Glasgow and Edinburgh, to give them a personal insight into the brand's unique selling points.

The airline's commercial director for the UK and Ireland,

Adrian Keating, says: "Air Transat places huge value on its partnership with agents across the UK and Ireland, and we are making significant investments to ensure we can provide them with the information and support they need to sell our wide range of flights to their customers, with confidence."

airtransat.com



An OTT survey showed 91% of travel agents say product training has helped them to increase sales

▶ BRITISH AIRWAYS

Swot up on the UK's largest international carrier via the airline's easy-to-follow online courses, where you can master your knowledge of BA's products, loyalty programmes, baggage restrictions, seating and more. It's a brilliant time to familiarise yourself with BA, as the airline has some exciting new routes



Fun facts: Airline training courses



BA: The White Company bedding

- British Airways has been rolling out luxurious bedding from The White Company in its business-class cabins throughout 2018. batrainingacademy.com

- Icelandair cabins have LED mood lighting that replicates the northern lights. onlinetraveltraining.com/free-courses/providers/icelandair-english

- The Qantas Learning Hub's most popular module is one that focuses on the cutting-edge Qantas Boeing 787 Dreamliner, the world's most advanced long-haul aircraft, which has features to reduce jet lag, turbulence and noise. learninghub.qantas.com

- Romania's state airline Tarom can mark a special occasion for a passenger by presenting them with a surprise cake or a bottle of bubbly. Just contact the airline's call centre in advance. onlinetraveltraining.com/free-courses/providers/TAROM

- With an average fleet age of just 3.6 years, Norwegian has one of the youngest and greenest fleets in the world. onlinetraveltraining.com/free-courses/providers/norwegian

- Air New Zealand is claiming a world first with the Economy Skycouch, a row of economy seats

that can be transformed into a comfy couch after takeoff, complete with bedding and pillows. Later this year, the Skycouch Infant Harness and Belt will be introduced to all Air New Zealand 777 and 787-9 long-haul services, allowing infants to stay lying down throughout the cruise phase of flight, even when the seatbelt sign is on. airnzagent.co.uk



AIR NEW ZEALAND: Economy Skycouch

→ planned for 2019: it will be the first airline to connect London directly to Pittsburgh next April, and it will offer direct flights from Heathrow to the Japanese city of Osaka from March. The airline frequently runs competitions, with the top prizes awarded only to agents who have completed the training, allowing you to earn while you learn.
batrainingacademy.com

▶ EASYJET

No-frills airline easyJet is launching a travel trade website early next year that will feature a training portal offering comprehensive guides on how to make bookings and how to assist clients with compensation claims.

▶ LUFTHANSA

Brush up on the German carrier's product information and amass booking tips via the airline group's online travel agent



LEFT:
Norwegian's Premium cabin

BELOW:
The airline's training website

platform, eXperts, which hosts a training programme, as well as featuring special offers. The Lufthansa Group also offers face-to-face eXperts academy sessions across the UK, with

upcoming workshops due to take place in London and Dublin.
lufthansaexperts.com

▶ NORWEGIAN

It's a great time to get up

on budget long-haul airline Norwegian, which recently overtook BA to become the largest non-US carrier to New York. Norwegian updated its trade site in August to add an



DREAM FLIGHT DREAM PRICE

Australia from just £539*
New Zealand from just £583*

* Prices subject to availability

Book at global.csair.com

CHINA SOUTHERN AIRLINES

interactive route map, highlighting new routes and products. The site features three training modules focusing on its route network, product and hints on how to sell Norwegian. The course takes just 20 minutes to finish and agents will be given a certificate at the end, as well as being in the running to win places on fam trips and prizes, including flights. onlinetraveltraining.com/free-courses/providers/Norwegian

QANTAS

There's plenty of buzz around Qantas right now as the airline made history this year with the first-ever non-stop London to Perth flight. The airline's training platform, the Qantas Learning Hub, has scooped several awards in its native Australia, and is a hit with the UK trade too, with more than 1,000 agents signed up. The hub's 22 'learning bites' last from two to 15 minutes, and

Case study

Tracey Edwards, key account manager at Meon Valley Travel
"Sometimes it's hard to distinguish between carriers that offer a similar service in each of their cabins. However, one training session that stood out for me was with our Finnair account manager. Finnair was not always a carrier that would instantly come to mind when pricing up itineraries to the Far East and beyond; for indirect options for clients, we used to look at KLM, Air France, Emirates and




Qatar, as standard. But since our training session with Finnair, our eyes have been opened to the fact

that flying via Helsinki offers a shorter and faster route between Asia and Europe. Helsinki is designed for an easy transfer between flights: it's compact and uncrowded with all the gates and services located in one terminal building, which allows for a minimum connection time of just 35 minutes between international flights. Since the training, we've seen more clients take this option, which they may have not previously been offered."

use a combination of video, podcasts, gamification and webinar classes to educate agents. Fun fact: the busiest day on the Qantas Learning Hub for UK agents is Friday. learninghub.qantas.com

VIRGIN ATLANTIC

Virgin Atlantic hosts all its training courses on its dedicated agents' website. Look things up quickly in the knowledge bank, or work your way through the training section by selecting a

module, reading the facts and then completing a fun quiz. Once you've made the grade, Virgin suggests you "download a sexy certificate, pin it on the wall and bask in the glory". vsflyinghub.com 



New routes from Edinburgh

		*	I	S	L	A	Y									
		*	B	E	R	G	E	N								
		*	S	T	A	V	A	N	G	E	R					
		*	G	U	E	R	N	S	E	Y	*					
*	*	*	*	B	O	O	K		N	O	W	!	*	*	*	*

Loganair
Scotland's Airline

Visit www.loganair.co.uk

*Guernsey operates summer only. Subject to availability.



airline of
the year 2018
an era:gold award