

Holiday Extras celebrates 25 years

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For Immediate Release

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Holiday Extras® 25 years

Holiday Extras has just celebrated its 25th anniversary and they've been remembering the success and teamwork that have contributed to making Holiday Extras the UK's market leader in UK Airport Hotels and Parking with a turnover in excess of £200 million.

Growing from a business which was started on £100 with a single computer, the company now has over 300 staff at offices near Hythe and does three quarters of its business over the Internet, through sites such as www.holidayextras.com.

Gerry Pack, the founder of Holiday Extras, says: "I'd been looking for an entrepreneurial alternative to my job of 14 years with Saga - and I realised that there was an area of the travel market that had not been explored. I had noticed that there was no easy way to book leisure travellers a night at an airport hotel, that there were no discounted rates available and, because of the climate of recession in 1983, there were hotel rooms languishing empty that would have normally housed the lucrative business clients."

He decided that this was the right time and the right venture.

He didn't give up his job immediately but set up a booking system in his spare time. Holiday Extras started out as the Apple Booking Company in Ashford, sharing an office with another business with pre-fix "Apple". There were just two telephone operators working from the office. When the phones were answered the customers were greeted "Apple". Both businesses could be serviced from the same place. Gerry felt it was really important to keep business overheads to a minimum and kept his job on at Saga and did the books at night and at weekends. In the first year the fledgling business sold 4,000 rooms. Now the company makes arrangements for almost 4 million airport travellers and sells more than half a million hotel rooms.

According to Gerry, the key to Holiday Extras' business success has been the continued pace of innovation in the products and services it sells as well as how it delivers them to the public and travel agents.

The core of the company's business is airport hotels, lounges and car parking and the portfolio of products and services has expanded hugely and now includes UK Short Breaks, London Theatre Breaks and Theme Park Breaks.

"Innovation is the engine of growth," says Gerry. "This year we're planning a host of new services and products and expect to take on around another 70 members of staff. The first 25 years was fun, but we're looking forward to the next even more."

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