



HICKORY GLOBAL PARTNERS TEAMS UP WITH UNIVERSAL VAT SERVICES

Corporate travel clients of HICKORY agency members gain ability to potentially reclaim value added tax paid by their employees when traveling abroad

Delray Beach, FL – April 21, 2015: HICKORY GLOBAL PARTNERS ("HICKORY"; www.HickoryTravel.com), a travel management services company providing innovative service, distribution and technology to its network of travel agency and supplier partners, announced today a new partnership agreement with Universal VAT Services, Inc. (UVS), a global leader in value added tax (VAT) recovery services.

As a result of this agreement, HICKORY is the first travel management services company to partner with UVS in this space.

VAT is a consumption tax levied on goods and services in many countries around the world, and a certain percentage of VAT is refundable for business-related purchases of goods and services. Reclaiming VAT can be lucrative and positively impact a company's profits.

"We have chosen to partner with Universal VAT Services because their proven products and services are helping companies to take newly "found monies" to the bank, literally. This new partnership will empower our agency membership to help their corporate clients, and in turn, leverage an additional channel for saving money," said Chris Dane, President of Hickory Global Partners. "Our strategic alliance with UVS means that our agency members can present this revenue-generating solution for their corporate clients with employees traveling to countries that refund VAT, thereby potentially positively impacting their clients' bottom lines," continued Dane.

Cashing in on VAT refunds otherwise left "on the table"

UVS works closely with clients that include corporate entities and academic institutions to reclaim the VAT their clients incur during business travel. Currently, there are several countries that refund VAT to foreign entities – with VAT refunding countries primarily located in Western European countries, as well as Japan and South Korea. Standard VAT rates vary from country to country, ranging from 5% to as much as 28%. The UVS team has vast knowledge about each VAT refunding country around the world and their respective VAT reclaiming procedures.

"We are excited to join hands with such a prominent travel management services company like HICKORY. This partnership creates a unique financial service advantage for HICKORY and its network

of agency and air, car rental and hotel supplier partners that has never before been available to this industry,” said Raj Shah, President and Founder of UVS. “HICKORY is an ideal partner for UVS. After more than two decades of successfully reclaiming VAT for numerous companies, we look forward to sharing our expertise and providing this VAT reclaim service that can amount to significant savings to corporate travel clients of HICKORY’s member travel agencies.”

With a success rate of 90% and experience recovering VAT on purchases of all types and sizes, UVS can assist corporate travel clients of HICKORY’s agency members to begin cashing in on TAX refunds that would otherwise get left behind “on the table.” In addition to the better known business-related travel expenses, such as meals, hotels, car rentals and telecommunication charges, VAT is also levied on a much broader set of categories, including meeting expenses, professional fees and international relocation, among many other areas and items.

The agreement further demonstrates HICKORY’s strategic drive to lead the travel industry in garnering measurable results and greater profitability. In providing a continually growing platform of tools to its travel agency network – with Universal VAT Services being the latest addition – HICKORY is delivering on its mission to forge long and mutually beneficial relationships with its travel agency membership and supplier partners alike.

About HICKORY - Hickory Global Partners, An INTRAVEL Company

HICKORY’s unique approach focuses on return on investment for agency and supplier partners alike, guaranteeing them a positive ROI. Its visionary hotel incentive program, a robust and one-of-a-kind air program, a car rental program, and 24/7 support products make HICKORY an important strategic partner to travel agencies. Proprietary, innovative tools designed to share data with agency partners enable agencies to make better, faster decisions – thus driving more revenue. Supplier partners benefit from measurable results and extensive distribution and marketing opportunities across the HICKORY global network, while Hotel partners gain access to a reporting platform that illustrates booking trends across the HICKORY agency network. For more information, please visit www.HickoryTravel.com.

About Universal VAT Services

Universal VAT Services, Inc. (UVS), based in Atlanta, GA, is focused on seamlessly maximizing overseas VAT recovery for business travel to and in those countries that permit VAT refund claims to be submitted. The company has been providing quality, comprehensive, value added tax reclaim services since 1992, helping its client base – primarily but not limited to corporations and academic institutions – to reclaim previously unclaimed tax refunds, monies that would otherwise go unclaimed. UVS conducts all of its work within the scope of laws while providing low cost and consistently effective solutions. All work on behalf of its clients is performed on a contingency basis.

For more information about UVS, please visit www.universalvatservices.com or send email to info@uniersalvatservices.com.