

Edinburgh companies – apply for help with flights here

✘ Scottish Development International is urging all Scottish companies to apply for the British Airways ‘Flights for Businesses’ offer, before the promotion closes on the 14th April, to help them target new international markets, increase exports and win new business.

Run jointly in Scotland by British Airways and Scottish Development International, the ‘Flights for Businesses’ offer is open to small and medium sized enterprises and aims to support overseas trade development activity.

It consists of a single-use discount voucher, for up to nine employees within any one organisation, providing a reduction of 15% off all cabins and classes on BA flights from the UK anywhere in the world. To date, over 400 Scottish companies have taken advantage of the offer.

Among the companies that have already enjoyed success from BA’s offer is Safequip Ltd, manufacturer of water rescue equipment for the emergency services. The company took advantage of the offer to travel to Taiwan and China to meet with new prospective customers. Philip Brown, managing director of the company, said: “We were encouraged by SDI to take this opportunity to give us the additional support we needed to get into new markets to explore the opportunities as well as identify and meet new potential customers”.

Similarly, Ben Panter, chief executive at Blackford Analysis Limited, took up the offer to travel to RSNA, a trade fair in Chicago. Dr. Panter said: “We are very grateful for the support of SDI and BA in exploring new markets. It’s vital for companies that are considering exporting to get out there and explore the markets and find out first-hand how business is

conducted in different cultures.”

Anne MacColl, chief executive of Scottish Development International, said: “This generous offer significantly reduces the costs faced by Scottish businesses when accessing new markets and allows them to explore new global opportunities and generate new business.

“It’s fantastic to hear the success stories from the companies that have already taken advantage of the offer and I urge more Scottish companies to apply before the deadline so that they can proactively make those all important face-to-face introductions in new markets.

“We believe internationalisation is the single biggest opportunity that exists for Scottish companies and one of the biggest factors that could accelerate Scotland’s economic recovery. However, we know that many SMEs find it hard to break into new markets on their own as they overestimate the barriers and underestimate the rewards.”

The BA flight offers have been running since May 2009 and of the 500 companies that have made use of the offers, 94 per cent were for long haul travel, including 56 per cent (306) to the Americas, 30 per cent (164) to Asia Pacific and the rest to Europe, the Middle and Asia. The current offer closes on the 14th April 2011.