



Euro Bus Expo 2016 previews its Master Class Theatre line-up

Speakers include John Birtwistle, Mark Fowles, Steven Salmon, Jeff Counsell & Martijn Gilbert

The Bus Services Bill, Brexit, devolution, and smart ticketing – some of the biggest challenges facing the bus and coach sector – will feature prominently in Euro Bus Expo's 2016 Master Class Theatre programme.

Taking place at the NEC Birmingham on 1-3 November, the show's speaker line-up already includes leading industry players like Mark Fowles, MD of Nottingham City Transport (NCT), Jeff Counsell, MD of Midlands-based coach and bus operator trentbarton, and Martijn Gilbert, CEO of Reading Buses. The Master Class Theatre is sponsored by SmartDrive Systems for 2016.

As in previous years, big names from the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) – the UK's operator trade body – will also be hosting presentations.

Partnership, marketing & talent

Mark Fowles, head of NCT since 2001, will be joined by John Birtwistle, CPT president and head of policy at FirstGroup UK's Bus Division, to discuss 'Making partnerships work' at 11am on opening day (Tuesday, 1 November).

NCT and Reading Buses are award-winning examples of how strong and successful partnerships between operators and local authorities can provide high quality bus services, improve frequency, achieve great customer satisfaction levels^[1] and help increase passenger numbers dramatically.

Jeff Counsell, MD of trentbarton, one of the most successful bus companies in the East Midlands will be at the show on day two (2 November) discussing how 'Marketing your business effectively' can reap long-term rewards. Known for its striking bus branding and design, trentbarton's marketing campaigns, digital engagement and passenger reward incentives reflect its ongoing commitment to put customers 'at the heart of every decision, every change and every innovation'.

Discussing 'Attracting the best talent' is a bold undertaking for any operator. But if anyone's in a position to give advice, it's Martijn Gilbert, CEO of Reading Buses (speaking on 2 November). Last year, the company secured four gold UK Bus Awards, including UK Bus Operator of the Year and Top Shire Operator, and won the routeONE Award for Operator Training.

Gilbert, who joined Reading Buses in 2014, will be sharing some of the initiatives that Reading Buses uses to engage, retain and develop its staff – from the introduction of 'Improvement Champions' across the business to 'more casual' uniforms to a mission statement that reflects the views of the entire 550-strong workforce.

"The seminars at the Master Class Theatre offer the ideal way to keep in touch with the industry and find out more about the latest legislation, business developments and innovations happening right now. It's the best opportunity of the year to hear firsthand what other operators are doing – what works and what doesn't, what can work and what can't," says event director Helen Conway.

"Euro Bus Expo is the number one place to find the solutions to the challenges [in your business] that you don't yet know exist," said Leon Daniels, Transport for London's Director of Surface Transport. He opened the show in 2014, and is back for 2016 hosting a Keynote session (on 2 November) outlining his views on 'Future prospects for buses and coaches in London'.

Highlights also include a Bus Services Bill presentation (with Q&A), plus sessions by The Royal Mint, ATCO, and Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership. Steven Salmon, CPT director of policy development, will be talking about 'Life after the referendum' and the potential legislative issues ahead, while 'The role of bus and coach operators in the new devolved structures' is the hot topic for the show's lively panel discussion; chaired by Lynda Waltho, area director for Midlands CPT.

Free registration now open

Euro Bus Expo, the free-to-attend three day biennial event, will feature nearly 300 sector leading exhibitors representing every link of the supply chain for coach, bus and minibuss operation. Returning show features include the Technology Zone; Outdoor Display Area; and the Accessibility Zone, accessibleSolutions by Rescroft.

The full 2016 exhibitor list is now available to view at www.eurobusexpo.com/exhibitor-list.

9,500 key industry buyers and decision makers from across Europe are expected to attend for 2016. For more information, and to register for a free ticket to attend, please visit www.eurobusexpo.com.

[1] <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/bus-passenger-survey-full-report-autumn-2015>

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[1] <http://www.transportfocus.org.uk/research-publications/publications/bus-passenger-survey-full-report-autumn-2015>

High resolution images are available upon request.

Euro Bus Expo will take place on 1-3 November 2016 in hall 5 at NEC, Birmingham.

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