

CARRIER

Carrier makes strategic senior team changes designed to invigorate and elevate support for valued trade partners

Manchester, June 2024

Luxury tailor-made tour operator, Carrier, announces strategic changes to its leadership team. Carrier's Head of Sales, Rick Milne, takes on a broader role as Sales & Commercial Director. Lee Marshall, who has been a strategic consultant for Carrier for three years, joins the business permanently as Head of Trade Partnerships. Recruitment for a new Head of Product is underway and the Concierge team has been expanded.

Natasha Towey, Managing Director, explained, "Following the pandemic much of our trade investment went into sales and operations – recruiting top talent, growing our after sales team, and doubling trips – to ensure we were in the best possible position to support our agent partners so they could rebound strongly with the knowledge, credibility and expertise of the Carrier team behind them. As a result, not only have we had our most successful trade sales years, but we've also improved service in dispatch and booking confirmations, we've increased conversion rates by over 50%, and our trade net promoter score has increased to 93, recognised as 'world class service'. Although we are always seeking ways to improve our operations, these areas are now in strong positions. This year we have chosen to invest in additional areas that are also crucial to supporting our trade partners: Product, Marketing and Agency Sales as well as one of our most coveted services – Concierge."

To deliver this, Milne will be taking on an expanded role as Sales & Commercial Director. Milne joined Carrier as a Sales Manager in 2009, quickly becoming part of the leadership team in 2011, operating both at a strategic level and as a figurehead in the trade. Under his direction, Carrier's trade business has gone from strength to strength, establishing a unique community of partners where relationships are cemented with mutual trust. In 2018, Milne became responsible for all sales channels including the company's own retail sales, with a distinct focus on protecting core agent business and partnerships. Sales and profitability have grown consistently since; culminating in 2023 being Carrier's most successful trading performance in its 40-year history. Milne's deepest love and dedication is with Carrier's highest profile strategic partners with whom he has worked closely for many years to support their business growth. More recently, he has helped develop initiatives to support their strategic challenges and their own professional and personal development too. In his expanded remit, this remains one of his biggest commitments moving forward also.

Towey commented, "Sales, Product and Marketing are the main functions driving demand and revenue into the business. Our aim is to improve collaboration between these three areas with an overarching commercial focus that will not only improve our creativity and teamwork internally, it will ensure we deliver a cohesive approach for our trade partners; equipping them with the right product, the right marketing messages, in the right format, at the right time. With his wealth of industry expertise and strong leadership skills, Rick will act as a cross-functional lead bringing these three critical functions together to align our strategic goals and plans."

Milne commented, "I'm thrilled to not only fulfil personal aspirations with this role but having been at Carrier for 15 years I am emotionally invested in the company's success and can't wait to help shape our commercial approach. I'll be working closely with Natasha and the other department heads to bring our strategic partners even closer to the business, while ensuring our sales, product and marketing plans support all our booking channels."

Towey added, "In order for Rick to take on this expanded remit, I am so happy to have Lee Marshall join Carrier on a permanent basis as Head of Trade Partnerships. Lee has been consulting for us for the last three years, but from day one quickly became a much-loved part of our family. Along with the rest of our Agency Sales team, he has been pivotal in helping us grow trade sales to record breaking levels. While Rick will continue to manage our highly valued strategic partnerships and oversee our trade channel, our B2B strategy and agent partners could not be in better hands with Lee, and I'm thrilled to welcome him to our leadership team."

Marshall has over 30 years' experience in luxury tour operating, working within the senior management teams of Thomas Cook Signature, Gold Medal Travel group and ITC Luxury Travel. He commented, "In 2019, I took a sabbatical to recalibrate my home and work-life balance; something that's incredibly important to me. Since January 2021 I have worked quietly alongside Rick and the Carrier Agency Sales team on helping refine, define and deliver an already exceptional trade strategy. I've thoroughly enjoyed helping Carrier grow their trade business, through my own established personal network and supporting the team to deliver a calendar of elevated agent events; including the overseeing of this year's A-List Awards, hosted at BAFTA Piccadilly. I feel privileged to have been invited to join Carrier's leadership team and I'm energised to play an active role in shaping the future; something I feel incredibly passionate about. Over the last three years, I've seen first-hand what a truly incredible business Carrier really is – considered, intelligent and genuinely caring about its people and its customers. For me, it feels like the last 30 years have been leading up to this moment."

Carrier are further investing in their Concierge team as it has become an essential part of their service offering and an essential part of a client's trip. Two new concierges have joined the award-winning team reinforcing their commitment to providing exceptional service at every touchpoint. They bring valuable experience in pre-booking elements of a trip, creatively sourcing top tables and sold-out tickets along with frequently fulfilling demanding and special requests. This team is now led by the new role of Concierge Manager, fulfilled by Lorraine Norcross who has been expertly serving Carrier client's needs for some time, and is described by many agents as their 'fairy god mother'.

In addition, Simon Jeffries, Head of Product will be leaving the business in June after almost seven years to pursue new opportunities. Carrier have already begun their search for a new Head of Product to join their award-winning team.

Towey added, "This is more than just a career opportunity – it's an invitation to be a pivotal player in the future triumphs of our esteemed brand and be at the helm of product innovation and excellence. Already distinguished for setting the industry standard with our exceptional product portfolio, we aspire to elevate our achievements even further, and are seeking an extraordinary leader who can spearhead this journey to success."

Towey ended, "We believe that these changes will propel us to even greater success, positioning Carrier to empower and uplift our trade partners, offering them the best product, marketing messages, and collaborative support."

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