



Mark Warner MD David Hopkins, right, and BlueSky MD Steve Driscoll seal the deal that will see the operator use a new reservations system that will process agents' commission straight away

Mark Warner moves from Travelog to ITour

Operator snaps up new system

MARK Warner is looking to boost turnover from £40 million to £100 million over the next five years following the implementation of a new reservations system launched by a team of travel industry IT specialists.

REPORT BY LOUISE LONGMAN

In October, Mark Warner will change its current reservations system Travelog, to ITour, a web-based browser system from new technology company BlueSky.

Mark Warner has bought the ITour package for £300,000 and has spent another £300,000 on staff, agent educationals and better point-of-sale material.

To support the new system, five extra sales staff and two agent support staff have been recruited.

"This is cutting edge stuff"

BlueSky won the pitch to create the new reservations system after an invitation to tender by travel technology consultant Paul Richer in January.

Mark Warner managing director David Hopkins said the system would allow agents to know what their commission levels are, and for commission to be

processed "instantaneously".

It will also allow agents to secure additional elements at the time of booking including child care and scuba diving.

"This is cutting edge stuff and they are an experienced team," said Hopkins.

The commercial side of Bury-based BlueSky comes from First Software, a management buy-out of the local government division of technology giant Oracle.

The technical development team includes former Airtours directors Tom Steele, who set up Airtours' reservations system and worked for Holidays by Phone, and Lesley Ingleson, former IT director at Airtours and ex-head of Eurosites.

Other features – aimed more at mass market operators – will allow the system to switch a generic late booking from one hotel to create space for a full-value booking – something current reservations systems aren't able to do according to BlueSky managing director Steve Driscoll.