

“Mobile vouchers create a customer-centric approach – a person’s mobile is connected to their world. A handheld device delivers high accessibility and as the product evolves we will see rapid adoption of mobile payments”

Giles Coccoli, PrePay Solutions

Match made in heaven

Gift Card, Gift Voucher and Reloadable Card **Summit 2011**

Insight, innovation and one of the most exciting partnerships of the year made for one of the most popular **prepaid conferences** to date

One word can sum up the Gift Card, Gift Voucher and Reloadable Card Summit 2011: collaboration.

Attracted by rich networking opportunities and the chance to find out how fresh thinking and new technologies can be applied to the prepaid industry, more than 350 delegates came together at the summit to make the most of all that the event had to offer.

But the biggest collaboration of the event was that of UKGCVA's partnership

with Prepaid Expo Europe to host and organise the conference.

UKGCVA director general Andrew Johnson said: "We were delighted to join with Prepaid Expo Europe. The partnership has given us access to new speakers, new sponsors and provided greater insight into innovations and happenings across the prepaid sector in the US and Europe. A number of our members work in Europe and we need to understand what's going on in various markets and their implications, so that we can work collaboratively with other countries to look at regulations and

What: Gift Card, Gift Voucher and Reloadable Card Summit 2011

Date: 30 March

Where: Lancaster London Hotel

Organised by: UKGCVA and Prepaid Expo Europe



Moving forward with mobile strategies

In a particularly busy session, David Stone, CEO of US-based CashStar, which calls itself a 'digital gifting and incentive partner to retailers', and Giles Coccoli, managing director of UK-based prepaid processor PrePay Solutions, suggested that retailers should now build mobile strategies "brick by brick".

Both support retailer-issued mobile gift and incentive cards, and called attention to the effectiveness of multiple electronic routes to deliver and redeem e-cards. Stone, who advocates making e-cards stand out through personalisation, warned delegates to stay away from e-cards that are just a "string of numbers".

Coccoli followed with these key messages: Mobile is the ultimate customer-centric approach; mobile marketing has its own way to go; and adoption will follow a generation impact.

"Watch out," Coccoli said. "The Facebook generation will soon be upon you!"

Fielding questions about technology and security, he went on to say that PrePay Solutions tackles fraud by treating closed-loop gift cards the same as open-loop, which have a high security standard.

Stone and Coccoli admitted that while the technology and a workable business model for a full mobile payments solution may be some way off, merchants should develop proprietary programmes to boost gift card sales while using social media to boost the impact of their efforts.

“As incentive and motivation experts, and leaders in the prepaid card industry, it was interesting to hear more about the latest prepaid innovations and how the use of virtual solutions and smart phone applications are embracing and replicating consumer society”

Colin Hodgson, sales director, Edenred

→ implement new technologies.

“This is a partnership that will continue into the future and we’re now looking forward to capitalising on the success of this year’s event, with a summit that is bigger, bolder and better next year.”

The collaborative nature of social media became a hot topic of the day, with social media marketing guru and keynote speaker Alex Hunter – former head of online marketing for the Virgin Group and now an independent brand consultant – proving a draw for many delegates. The charismatic speaker created a buzz among the assembled attendees (many of whom were programme managers and retailers) that lasted throughout the entire day.

A new subject matter for 2011 was the

introduction of open loop and broader prepaid issues. This new topic was woven into the seminars without losing the quality of closed-loop education for UKGCVA members. Other popular sessions included those on high-level mobile implementations and discussions that introduced new distribution and marketing techniques that are applicable no matter what the product.

Networking breaks and lunch were a hive of activity as delegates came together to discuss what they had learned and network with potential business clients and partners.

Attendance figures rose by 20% and post-event survey showed that the event was highly appreciated by attendees, with subject matter and speakers both given a rating of 9 out of 10. 