Behind the scenes with UPS and European Tour Productions
About European Tour Productions

European Tour Productions is a joint venture between IMG Media and the European Tour and is the world's most prolific producer and distributor of golf programming with an annual output of 700 hours. Content is broadcast around the world on all media platforms.

Programming features include:

• Coverage of all European Tour events via live, host broadcasting services or world feeds
• Ryder Cup production
• One hour highlights program for all Tour events
• European Tour Weekly magazine-style program
• Live coverage of selected events and highlights programs of European Senior Tour and Challenge Tour events
• News, statistics, video highlights and real-time scores online at www.europeantour.com
• Live radio coverage in local markets and daily news bulletins distributed to 160 stations in 80 countries reaching over 100 million listeners

European Tour Productions reaches golf enthusiasts on six continents through a vast network of media partners, including: the Golf Channel (North America and Japan), the BBC (UK), Sky Sports (UK), Eurosport (Pan Europe), Canal + (France, Scandinavia, Spain), Premiere (Germany), JGolf (Korea), CCTV & GDTV (China), and Ten Sports (India).

As part of UPS’s role as the Official Logistics and Express Sponsor of the European Tour, UPS will help provide European Tour Productions with critical transportation and logistical support.
Crossing Continents
How UPS and European Tour Productions are delivering the goods.

Picture the scene. You are on Jeju Island, a popular honeymoon destination just off the coast of South Korea. The sun is shining, the water is glistening and the sand on the beach is hot to the touch. Welcome to the European Tour.

Unfortunately, all those things are left to the tourists because for European Tour Productions (ETP), this trip is all about business. The ever-expanding European Tour has arrived on Jeju Island for the Ballantine’s Championship and it is ETP’s job to produce and distribute live television coverage of the event both around the world and on site via the Tour’s closed circuit “Tournament Television” service.

With the help of UPS, the European Tour’s Official Logistics and Express Sponsor, miles of cable and tonnes of equipment are shipped from events in Britain and continental Europe to as far flung places as Korea, India and Australia. It’s a tough job that entails in-depth planning. Things are put in place for tournaments at least three months in advance but the logistics are made far easier by their alliance with UPS.

As a company that shipped 3.9 billion packages in 2008, UPS is without doubt a truly global partner and their expertise in shipping freight makes the quick turnaround time between events throughout the calendar that much smoother.

Over the years, ETP has learnt the tricks of the trade to the extent where events in Europe provide few unforeseen problems.

Ciaran Bone
Senior Account Manager Tournament TV

Korea, on the other hand, presents its own unique challenges, as Ciaran Bone, Senior Account Manager, Tournament TV, explains.

“In China, Korea, the Middle East, South Africa and Australia, we operate a slightly different Tournament Television service to the one we do in Europe. In Europe, all our equipment is packaged and sent overland. This includes all our televisions, the big screen, cables and all the production equipment we require to run the broadcast. However, during “fly away” events only some of the production suite is packaged and sent, the remaining items we try and source locally. We use the term “locally” very broadly, as this still involves shipping items from other closer countries to the tournament venue to help keep costs under control.”

“The majority of our basic kit we send on a fly-away event include laptops, digibeta players & cables, with a net worth of around £50,000. But this core equipment is vital to the delivery of any tournament television broadcast, so if it all suddenly went missing or got broken, then the whole contract would be in jeopardy.”

“UPS really helped us out in Asia. They took control and shipped our basic kit from China to South Korea and then back to the UK.”
Our experience really was first class. The level of service has been tremendous, so much so that no one had to worry and I have slept better at night!”

Bone splits his time between three core areas. He looks after the logistics, equipment hiring and commercial needs of Tournament Television. He runs a media solutions agency, for clients looking to advertise within golf, through television, the internet or on-site advertising. And finally, for around 10-12 tournaments per year, he is an on-site commercial executive, helping sponsors get television exposure, whether that is through on-course signage, broadcast inserts or through player interviews.

Together with some of his colleagues, Bone paid a visit to UPS’s warehouse in Poyle, Berkshire, to get a feel for their operation and was hugely impressed with what he saw. “It was bigger than I thought, much much bigger,” he says. “I have never been to anywhere like that before. I just presumed it would be a fairly small office, obviously closely located to Heathrow.”

“One of the things that struck me is that it is a 24-hour service, especially coming from an office background like I do, where it’s 9-5pm. It was a complete all-round operation. It was very structured and everything made sense.”

“The other thing that we were all quite surprised by was the level of high security. It makes perfect sense, especially with the businesses UPS is involved in, shipping high value equipment and products, but it’s something I didn’t even consider or give a second thought to. It was a real eye opener and very interesting.”

With such vast quantities of equipment to transport around the world, costs can quickly escalate. In light of the global recession, reliability and cost are just as important as trust and efficiency. That is where UPS takes the lead.

“It’s great to know that when you get to a different country that everything is going to work and you will be left with as few unexpected costs as possible,” Bone says. “I think that has always been the case, the more expensive your kit, the more trust there needs to be in every aspect of the relationship.”
When Bone travels to events in Asia, he is one of a group of about 12 people and they often take equipment on commercial planes as excess baggage, which is never cheap. With the help of UPS, Bone says their passage through customs was much smoother and the need to put a hefty charge through on his personal credit card was significantly reduced, something Bone is very grateful for!

“It’s something we discussed at length with UPS. In terms of sending our equipment from China to South Korea,” Bone says, “UPS was completely honest with me. They discussed the problems in terms of the time frame and then suggested that it would be better to take a few of the items as excess baggage on the plane. The rest could be freighted without too many problems. The help and honesty UPS provided us with was fantastic. For me it is about managing expectations, I would much rather we work with a supplier who gives us the true picture than take any risks.”

“We were met at Beijing airport by one of their local representatives who had a customs carnet document, signed and ready to hand in. In the past this has been the single biggest problem because I don’t know what charge I am going to get. Customs can take two to three hours to process everything and I get left with the excess baggage charge of thousands of pounds.”

“But because of everything that had been organised by UPS we got away with only a minimal charge of a couple of hundred pounds. The relief of seeing our UPS manager waiting for us was immense.”

“Communication between ETP and UPS, thanks largely to a dedicated team, has been outstanding”, Bone says. UPS has its own online tracking system which sends regular email updates as to the status of a shipment. So, when things go wrong, as they inevitably do when managing such complexity, Bone knows where to turn.

At the start of the year, Bone received a call from Australia, one of the tours events, at 6am on a Sunday morning, from a colleague who was concerned that the kit had not been picked up as scheduled.

“It was a simple matter of sending a text to my UPS Account Manager, and he wouldn’t have appreciated that any more than I would have done (at 6am on a Sunday)!” Bone says. “He spoke to the project manager in Australia and within fifteen minutes everything was fine and the kit was collected.”

“That level of support, no matter where we travel – Malaysia, Middle East, China and even in Korea – is vital. I have never felt so far away than when I was in Korea. When I arrived neither my phone or Blackberry worked. All of a sudden I saw UPS as I stepped off the flight. They knew who I was and it makes you feel very comfortable and reassured.”

While European logistics are slightly more straightforward, not least because ETP is based in London, Bone says the Middle East is proving to be less problematic than Asia, most of the time.
“Although Asia has been evolving rapidly,” he says. “the infrastructure in the Middle East is slightly better.”

“You are sometimes faced with certain problems getting in and out of Middle Eastern countries. We do a desert swing from Abu Dhabi to Qatar and then back to Dubai. Getting out of Qatar with equipment is often the biggest thing that can slow you down. Now having UPS on board, we hope that such problems will be reduced.”

Bone says ETP has only really scratched the surface in terms of its relationship with UPS and believes there is much more to come.

“The level of service has been fantastic so far,” he says. “As we look to increase our service offering in new territories we will look to UPS for guidance and advice every step of the way. This will not just involve increasing the volume of kit we send, it could also include taking a greater variety of equipment out to each tournament all with specialist handling requirements.”

“We did speak to UPS when we went down to their offices about the possibility of flying our own production truck out to different countries. This would be particularly helpful around events such as the Ryder Cup when it is hosted in the US.”

“It was a very brief discussion but it wasn’t out of the ordinary for them. In fact they have done similar projects in the past using their supply chain management team.”

With so much equipment to transport, there are bound to be problems but rather than the bulkier items being a problem, it can actually be the smaller things that tend to cause the most headaches at customs, according to Bone.

“The main worry is things like batteries,” he says. “Lots of different countries have various rules with batteries. ‘Is there any liquid in them? How explosive are they for example?’ But UPS is able to help with these questions which makes our lives much easier. UPS’s customs brokerage service can tell us ahead of time what products will be of concern when entering each country. That is tremendously helpful for a company like ETP.”

Bone finishes by commenting that although the relationship between UPS and ETP is still in its infancy, he can see clear areas of value add, using a global logistics network that has genuine experience and insight across multiple territories to help them deliver what they need in the right place at the right time.
Cheques and Balances

ETP’s numbers man reveals why UPS is much more than just a brown van.

Imagine, it is Sunday afternoon on the European Tour and the tournament is drawing to a close. Suddenly the sky darkens, the clouds burst and a thunderstorm forces a suspension in play.

For the golfers, it is frustrating as their concentration is broken; for Nic Hayllar, the Financial Controller of European Tour Productions (ETP), it’s the nightmare scenario.

ETP is responsible for producing and distributing television coverage for European Tour tournaments around the world. Not only can the weather affect their job, it can cause logistical chaos in terms of moving their equipment on to the next event.

Tournament planning starts months in advance. For the Ryder Cup, it starts even before the present one is complete. That includes budgeting for the event, so if something extra is required, the scope is there to react without panic. When the weather intervenes on a Sunday, however, it can cause a knock-on effect for the following event, which is when Hayllar is likely to receive a phone call.

“We tend to be reasonably flexible, because we work in a live television environment,” Hayllar says. “Sometimes things just need to get done and there isn’t a (financial) decision to be made. But occasionally I will get a call, when the team are all supposed to be returning home on a Sunday night and play hasn’t finished. I am there for that kind of eventuality to make decisions which will impact significantly on budgets. It tends to be emergencies rather than a matter of course. Normally we just set a pre-defined limit for how much budget there is to spend on a tournament and it’s down to the production team to manage in the confines of that.”

“We rely on the weather. These are the worst case scenarios, when something happens on the Sunday. Quite often when we experience bad weather it tends to be all week, so you are already on alert. Throughout the tournament the team will meet with the tournament director to evaluate whether we are going to make it through the weekend and if not, start making contingency plans around the logistics of the kit.”

“We have our own meteorologist on site to help make decisions because obviously it is in the best interest of everyone to have the tournament televised. We have had some close scrapes with getting not only our production team back to the UK in time, but also having our equipment shipped back, which can have quite a serious knock-on effect for the next tournament.”

That is when having UPS as a partner makes things a lot easier. As the Official Logistics
and Express sponsor of the European Tour, UPS provides critical transportation and logistical support, which comes in very handy when there are 53 tournaments, spanning more than two dozen countries on 5 continents.

That means shipping tonnes of expensive equipment around the world, from Malaysia to Melbourne and operating within tight time constraints, often leaving one tournament on a Sunday night and ensuring everything arrives safe and sound for the next event the following day.

Hayllar thinks trust is the key to the relationship with UPS. “It’s all about reliability,” he says. “And they have been great. The absolutely vital thing for us is that we know the kit is going to turn up on time and in one piece. If the equipment is not there on a Wednesday when it needs to be set up and installed for a live broadcast then we simply can’t deliver.”

“That is really the important part of any supplier relationship with us. They have to know what we are about. That is something that impressed us when we went down to Poyle, to see the UPS warehouse. They have a specialist team who actually have worked on similar live events before, from the Olympics to band tours, which have similar logistical requirements to us. If the concert’s happening on Friday night, then the equipment has to be delivered on time, there is no room for error”.

“UPS sees things the same way as us and that helps tremendously, having a dedicated team who understand your business, what you need and how to go about achieving it.”

Hayllar spreads his time between the administrative side of the business, looking after staff payments and signing the cheques, to working at the heart of ETP and liaising with the production management team who are out on the road. Hayllar is a key decision maker when it comes to the procurement process and selecting new partners.

“I will help the production team by approving costs, providing counsel and generally helping them to solve logistical and financial problems,” he says. “I have to give the team guidance as to how much money there is to spend per tournament and indeed what contingency there is in case of a crisis situation with the equipment and getting kit from venue to venue.”
Hayllar also analyses business decisions to ensure ETP are always getting value for money. He liaises with Rupert Hampel, the managing director of ETP, and the executives in charge of sponsorship and broadcasting rights, and offers his expert advice.

“In a time of global recession”, he says, “keeping a handle on the finances is more important than ever. But providing a top-quality service, no matter what, is the underlying promise we all have to fulfil.”

“We are a big operation and are in so many countries, therefore cost-efficiency is of course important to us,” he says. “We do not have a bottomless pit of money so it is important to work with a partner who not only offers value for money but also a first class service a hundred per cent of the time.”

“The key is getting the planning right in the first place. You are trying to balance the needs of all the tournaments and we have a TV production department who if you gave £50 million to them to spend, they could spend it. My job requires me to look for continuous cost savings but not at the expense of delivering a poor broadcast.”

“You always have to be conscious not to restrict what we do editorially; thereby making the financial controls so tight that actually what you produce at the other end turns out to be very average. A lot of that comes down to me, working with the producers and directors and that’s a reasonably difficult aspect of what I do.”

Hayllar worked as an accountant with PriceWaterhouseCoopers before joining ETP. The introduction to his new role was quite stressful.

“I am quite different to the average accountant in that I am not just focussed on finance, I am very much embedded in the business from a production delivery standpoint as well,” he says. “You can’t be taught the job before you arrive and my first experience, just two weeks after I joined in fact, came when the 2001 Ryder Cup was postponed (after the terrorist attacks in the US on September 11). It is our biggest event and I hadn’t a clue what was going on. We had equipment and people all over the place. Let’s just say it was a steep learning curve.”

“But you really learn from those experiences. There are situations that come up now and I think, ‘I’ve seen this once or twice before’, so experience counts for a lot in my role.”

Hayllar believes the relationship with UPS, which began in November 2008, is already bearing fruit, not least because of the excellent communication, which he says is especially important when the Tour moves to Asia, where the time difference makes things more difficult than in Europe.

“Whenever you are that far away from home, it presents problems for us communicating internally let alone with our suppliers,” he says. “You are trying to get hold of the person you need and he is in bed because it is 3am his time.”
“What we are finding in Asia is that because of the geography of the region, you have to ship in equipment from neighbouring countries because there just is not enough kit in the country you are working in to fulfil our requirements. We have tournaments in Hong Kong, Korea, China & Malaysia to name a few, where virtually all the equipment has to be shipped in from another country. As we find our way in these venues, it is going to involve more and more ad-hoc jobs and increased project complexity, especially from a logistical stand point. As a result we become more and more reliant on partners like UPS to help and support us globally.”

UPS has been present in Asia-Pacific for almost 20 years, 1990 saw the first scheduled flight to the region on a UPS aircraft.

“Communications are certainly more difficult when working in multiple territories and you will get to a week before the event and your team in China will say: ‘we haven’t got enough cameras or cable and we have only just realised, can you ship some over?’ We as a business need to be able to respond to these situations quickly and efficiently to deliver on our promise to the broadcasters.”

“UPS also have an on line tracking system which is really reassuring when shipping consignments globally. No matter what time, day or night, we can log on and find out where our equipment is. This gives the whole team piece of mind.”

“Flexibility and having the right partner for shipping something globally is going to become more and more important as our tournament footprint grows.”

UPS is the ninth largest airline in the world. In 2008 it had a fleet of 262 planes, but Hayllar said he had not quite realised the extent of its presence or global network.

“The traditional impression of UPS, and I think UPS would say this themselves, is of the delivery drivers in their brown vans who deliver small packages,” he says. “When we first started our relationship we pretty much thought: ‘how is UPS going to help us carry 40 tonnes of equipment across continents?’ Their specialism, we thought, was delivering packages.”
“One of the things we have learnt is that actually there is a whole lot more to UPS’s operations than that. One thing we have always dreamt of doing around the Ryder Cup, is being able to take our outside broadcast trucks, whole articulated lorries, to the States (on planes) and do our TV production using our own equipment.”

“For the first time ever, we can actually see that may be a possibility because UPS has the capability. They’ve got the aircraft and the knowledge; they can do so many more things than deliver small packages.”

So much so that Hayllar said he would be amazed if UPS ever said it could not ship equipment to any European Tour venue, no matter how remote. They operate in even more places than the Tour.

“We travel to some quite obscure countries, places that are difficult to get to, so it is important that we work with a global supplier who has capabilities everywhere,” he says.

“I would be shocked, even in the short time we have been working with UPS, if they said “sorry, we don’t know how to deliver to that venue”.”

“We would not expect UPS to ever say that. That is how confident we are in their global network.”

Choosing the right suppliers and then building lasting relationships with them is something that Hayllar says is crucial to ETP. Part of the reason for the relationship with UPS is that they can rely on them to complete the job, something he says will save money in the long-term.

“Dealing with one supplier is obviously easier,” he says. “If you have one supplier that can manage 20 different projects throughout the year, rather than engaging 20 different suppliers, then of course it is going to be cheaper, more efficient and with less administration involved. Multiply that cost saving over four or five years and you will start to see some significant economies of scale and a reduction in your cost base.”

“With regards to freight, when we ship to multiple countries, quite often these jobs are interlinked. Our events in the Middle East are a prime example. We have three consecutive events in that region, so it wouldn’t make sense to have different suppliers working on each project independently. You have to have a partner that can manage complexity and will take entire ownership of multiple projects and not wash their hands of it after a couple of weeks.”

“If you have one logistics company that is in control the whole time they may say “well, you have got a few weeks before the kit is needed again, let us ship via ocean which will be cheaper than by air and help save money.” It’s very important for someone to have a holistic picture of what we are doing in order that they can offer their insight and experience to help us.”

Hayllar finishes the discussion by expressing his excitement at the evolving ETP relationship with UPS and developing a better understanding of their core capabilities across the business. In time Hayllar believes this partnership will help ETP become more time and cost efficient, something that is vital in today’s economy.