



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**20 October 2008**

### **Travel Counsellors survey reveals its agents are more positive than ever**

How many travel professionals in today's industry can say they love their jobs? Well an impressive 93% of Travel Counsellors agreed with this statement in the company's annual survey.

The Travel Counsellors' survey, which reported responses from 800 of the company's home-based agents, showed that despite the current negative economic reports within the industry its agents are more positive than ever, with 94% of Travel Counsellors also rating their level of job satisfaction as high or very high and the same amount stating that they are happier now than in their previous job.

An impressive 97% of agents also revealed that they would not return to their previous job, whilst the same amount said they would recommend Travel Counsellors to agents currently working for other travel companies. When asked about the future of their businesses 81% of TCs envisage their business will be 'even better than now' in a year's time.

Managing Director Steve Byrne comments; "In today's industry it is easy to be swept up in the talk of recession and economic downturn. The results of the survey show that our agents are still in a very positive frame of mind."

The survey indicated that this feedback was largely due to the level of support the company's Travel Counsellors receive, and the on-going technological developments being implemented by the company in order to help agents grow their businesses.

Overall 98% of agents rated the head office support provided by the company from its team of over 200 head office staff plus international offices as excellent or good. When asked the main reasons for this the most common responses were that Travel Counsellors never felt alone even though they work from home and that they were able to contact a member of the head office team at anytime if needed. This enables them to concentrate on servicing their customers and building their home-based businesses. This dedication to supporting agents means the company now has one of the highest retention rates in the travel industry, with nine out of ten individuals who join Travel Counsellors choosing to stay with the company.

A massive 99% of Travel Counsellors rated the company's technology as excellent or good. The company's own in-house dynamic packaging system Phenix, which now accounts for a third of bookings made by agents, was rated by 91% of Travel Counsellors as excellent or good.

The survey shows that over three quarters of the company's agents have children (77%), with 31% having children under five. One of the many advantages offered by working from home as a Travel Counsellor is the ability to combine a successful career with bringing up a family, and 87% of agents say their work/life has improved since joining the company.

Each Travel Counsellor has an average of 20 years experience in the travel industry, with 64% previously holding roles as managers, deputy managers or agency owners. The convenience of working from home, crazy demands from management, wanting to spend time with family and inflexible working hours are the top four reasons why agents left their previous jobs.

The company has also responded to the growth in customers searching travel options on the web by enhancing their agents' personal web-pages within its new look customer website. This includes agents' personal travel diaries, pictures and customer testimonials. Within the survey 85% of agents feel that their personal web-pages are extremely important to their business.



Steve Byrne adds; "We provide our agents with all the support, tools and training to enable them to focus on building relationships with their customers. As a result our agents' business is based on referral and recommendation and not reliant on cold calls or teletext leads. We are dedicated to taking on great people and looking after everything from admin to IT to marketing, allowing them to do what they love and are best at – delivering an exceptional service to their customers. That is why 90% of our customers would recommend their Travel Counsellor to friends and colleagues\* and why the business continues to go from strength to strength, with sales up 5% last month compared to the previous year. These fantastic survey figures reflect what makes us different and reinforces why there is no better time to run your own home based travel business as part of Travel Counsellors."

**The Travel Counsellors survey was conducted during September and all Travel Counsellors were invited to complete the survey. In total 800 surveys (80%) were completed across the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany, the USA, South Africa, Australia and Canada.**

**ENDS**

**About Travel Counsellors:** Travel Counsellors PLC is one of the UK's largest independent travel companies with turnover at the end of its last financial year (Oct 31 2007) of £212 million, a 21% increase year on year. Founded in 1994 it currently has over 1,000 travel consultants who work from home with the support of over 200 staff at the company's head office in Bolton. The company operates in the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany, South Africa, Australia, Canada and the US. In the UK Travel Counsellors places all customer money in a Trust account which guarantees a 100% refund in the event that a supplier collapses. Travel Counsellors was the winner of the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise in 2003-2008, the technology category of the 2005 CBI Growing Business Awards and was voted Travel Agent of the Year by readers of the Guardian, Observer and Guardian Unlimited in 2006 & 2007.

\* Travel Counsellors uses the Net Promoter® Score system to measure customer satisfaction. Two weeks after booking all customers are sent a simple question 'How likely is it that you would recommend your Travel Counsellor to your friends and colleagues?' Customers can give us a score ranging from 1 to 10. Since Travel Counsellors started measuring our customers' responses in 2007 it has consistently achieved a world beating score of over 90%, far higher than that achieved by other travel companies and putting it among just a handful of companies worldwide that are rated so highly by their customers.

**For further information contact:**

Victoria Fox or Helen Furnivall

Tel: 00 44 1204 536 191 / 002

E-mail: [victoria.fox@travelcounsellors.com](mailto:victoria.fox@travelcounsellors.com) / [helen.furnivall@travelcounsellors.com](mailto:helen.furnivall@travelcounsellors.com)