



PRESS RELEASE
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**Travel Counsellors regains title as UK's 'Best Travel Agent'
at national Guardian awards**

Travel Counsellors has been named the UK's Best Travel Agent at the 23rd annual Guardian, Observer and guardian.co.uk Travel Awards, as voted by its readers. It regains the title after winning the award for two consecutive years in 2006 and 2007.

Readers were asked to rate the quality of service they received on their holidays, with Travel Counsellors scoring a highly impressive 99.7% overall in the category.

The awards took place in Bangkok, Thailand at the weekend (17th October) and were attended by over 100 travel industry professionals. Based on the longest running survey of its kind the questionnaires were completed by 19,248 Guardian, Observer and guardian.co.uk readers, rating their experiences as excellent, good, fair or poor.

Travel Counsellors is one of the UK's largest independent travel companies, with over 1,100 professional Travel Counsellors, working from home throughout the UK and overseas. David Speakman, Chairman and Founder of Travel Counsellors, commented; "We are delighted to receive the prestigious title of 'Best Travel Agent'. The fact that this is the third time we have won this award is a fantastic achievement and is a public acknowledgement from our customers that the level of service we offer is a cut above the competition. Travel Counsellors attracts the cream of the industry and each and every one of our agents is dedicated to providing the highest level of personal service to their customers."

The company, which now operates across seven countries and is the largest home-based travel company in the world, provides its agents with unrivalled support and award winning technology, enabling them to tailor make travel arrangements for their customers at competitive prices. Plus because agents work from home they are available to customers at a time convenient to them, rather than being limited to the 9-5 opening times of traditional high street travel agencies. This unique level of personal service has also resulted in Travel Counsellors being one of the top scoring companies in the world when it comes to customer loyalty, with a world beating score of over 90% in its customer satisfaction survey*.

Mr Speakman adds; "To be scored so highly on the quality of the service is down to the hard work and dedication of our home based Travel Counsellors. Despite reports of the current climate the business continues to go from strength to strength, with sales last month up 13% from the previous year."

Travel Counsellors also operates its own independent trust, with over £21 million of customer money held on behalf of its customers, providing a financial guarantee that very few other travel agencies can match. It means its customers can be sure when they hear news about a travel failure they will not have lost their money for their flights and travel bookings, which is proving extremely reassuring in the current economic climate.

For further information on Travel Counsellors, or to find a Travel Counsellor in your area visit www.travelcounsellors.co.uk.

To read more on the awards visit www.guardian.co.uk

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* 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.

About Travel Counsellors: Travel Counsellors is the world's largest home-based travel company with turnover at the end of its last financial year (Oct 31 2008) of £245 million, a 16% 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 UK headquarters in Bolton and overseas offices. The company operates in the UK, Ireland, the Netherlands, South Africa, Australia, Canada and the US. In the UK, the Travel Counsellors Trust financially protects everything booked by the customer free of charge. 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.

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