



PRESS RELEASE
25 May 2010

SALES INCREASE AT TRAVEL COUNSELLORS AGAINST ALL ODDS

In the wake of a volcanic eruption, impending airline strikes, and ongoing unrest in popular Asian holiday destination Thailand, independent Travel company Travel Counsellors report sales continue to boom against all odds.

The company, which operates in seven countries and supports over 1,200 home working travel agents worldwide from its head office in Bolton, UK, ended the explosive month of April on a high, celebrating one of its best sales days in the company's history achieving a gross of over £1.5 million (R16,5m) on Friday 30 April. Overall sales for the month were up by 29% on the previous year.

Despite the hovering ash cloud holidaymakers are continuing to book their travel arrangements with their local Travel Counsellor through the company's in-house tour operation Suitcase, with the most popular destinations for May to August being long-haul flights to Dubai, Hong Kong and New York.

Managing Director Steve Byrne comments; "The travel industry has experienced a series of knockbacks recently but our business model continues to thrive because of the emphasis on personal service. People still want, and need to go on holiday, but in the light of recent events they are looking for a travel service that goes above and beyond. These sales figures prove that the travel industry is still flourishing for agents who can be there for their customers, and the drive to provide a unique level of personal service when unpredictable events occur."

Since the start of its financial year (1 Nov 2009), Travel Counsellors has achieved total group sales of over £154m, (R1,69B) a 36% increase on the previous year. International sales have increased by 89% on the previous year, and total group sales are forecast to increase from £255m (R2,8B) in the last financial year to £320m (R3,5B) this year.

The company's agents are also reaping the benefits of these booming sales, with the average income per Travel Counsellor up by 20% worldwide and 23% in the UK alone.

Mr. Byrne adds; "Our sales continue to grow from strength to strength and expect this trend to continue. Much of this is down to customers realising the value in the personalised service our agents can offer. As a company we have been very proactive in keeping in contact with our customers throughout the ash crisis and will continue to do so through the close relationships our Travel Counsellors are able to foster. It really does prove that with the right support, the best agents can flourish and thrive in an industry they love, and customers can continue to enjoy a bespoke travel service, despite an ever-changing and sometimes unpredictable environment. "

ENDS

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 2009) of £255 million. Founded in 1994 it currently has over 1,200 travel consultants who work from home with the support of over 170 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 & 2009.

For further information contact: Carolyn Parish. Tel: 00 44 1204 536 191

E-mail: carolyn.parish@travelcounsellors.com