

PRESS RELEASE

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Working from home for Travel Counsellors makes you happier

Not having to travel to the office, escaping crazy demands from management, enjoying more time with family and not having to put up with inflexible working hours are the top four reasons why agents left their previous job to join Travel Counsellors according to the independent travel company's annual survey.

The survey reveals that most of the company's home based Travel Counsellors are female 87% (2005: 85%), and three quarters have children (2005: 72%), with almost a quarter (23%) having children under five (2005: 19%). They are also travel professionals. Almost two thirds of Counsellors were previously managers, deputy managers or agency owners (63%) and each have an average 18 years experience.

The ability to combine a successful career with bringing up a family is clearly one of the advantages offered by working from home as a Personal Travel Counsellor – indeed 85% say their work/ life balance has improved since joining the company (2005: 86%).

An over-whelming 95% of Personal Travel Counsellors say they are happier now than they were in their previous job. 93% of Counsellors say they agree with the statement 'I love my job' and 81% say they feel more positive since joining the company.

What's more a massive 98% of Counsellors say they would not return to the high street (2005:96%), and a similar number (97%) say they would recommend Travel Counsellors to other agents currently working on the high street (2005: 96%)

Travel Counsellors believes the level of head office support, encouragement and tailored personal business development advice that it provides to its home-based agents are major factors in the high overall level of job satisfaction highlighted by the survey and are also what make the company fundamentally different from other homeworking firms. This is borne out by the survey results which reveal that:

- ? 98% of Counsellors rate head office support as excellent or good
- ? 91% of Counsellors rate Travel Counsellors Television – the company's weekly webcast to its home-based agents – as excellent or good
- ? 97% of Counsellors who have had a business development meeting rated it as excellent or good.

This focus not just on recruitment, but on supporting its Counsellors once they have made the life-changing decision to join the company means the company now has one of the highest retention rates in the travel industry – with nine out of every ten people who join choosing to stay with Travel Counsellors.

The survey also reveals that its consultants are successfully making the transition to dynamic packaging – which now accounts for almost a quarter (22%) of all bookings made by its agents. Two thirds (66%) of Counsellors say they are earning more now thanks to Phenix, the company's in house dynamic packaging system, while a further 6% say their earnings have stayed the same – but would have reduced without Phenix.

An overwhelming 79% of Counsellors rate the company's technology as excellent, with a further 21% rating it as good. Despite this fantastic technology the personal touch also remains highly important - 41% of Counsellors regularly make home visits to clients and the company's annual conference – the highlight of the year for many of its home-based agents – was rated as excellent (65%) by two thirds of those who attended in 2005; with a further third (33%) rating it as good.

Commenting on the survey results managing director Steve Byrne said: "We have made a determined effort over the past year when we have been expanding the company rapidly, not to neglect our existing Travel Counsellors, and I think these results show that we have succeeded in this aim.



“Our results show that for experienced travel professionals – whatever their background – who want to be able to focus on the customer, enjoy a better work/life balance and be part of a company where every part of the business is geared towards making them a success there is no better home for them than Travel Counsellors.”

The Travel Counsellors survey was conducted during June and all Counsellors were invited to complete the survey online. In total 541 surveys (over 85%) were completed.

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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 312005) of £150 million, a 17% increase year on year. Founded by chairman David Speakman in 1994 it currently has over 640 travel consultants who work from home with the support of over 110 staff at the company's head office in Bolton, Greater Manchester. During 2005 the company expanded into Southern Ireland and the Netherlands with further overseas expansion planned. Travel Counsellors places all customer money in a Trust account, administered by the Barclays Bank Trust Company, 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 and the winner of the technology in business category of the 2005 CBI Growing Business Awards.

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