



PRESS RELEASE
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Travel Counsellors to broadcast special recruitment webcast for newly redundant retail staff

Travel Counsellors, the UK's leading independent travel agency, is to broadcast a special recruitment webcast aimed at experienced and exceptional retail staff who have been made redundant encouraging them to consider a career working from home in travel.

The company offers people with a passion for travel and a commitment to customer service the opportunity to train on its unique Travel Academy training course. Through a dedicated 12 month professional franchise training programme, including a two week residential course, people from different backgrounds can train to become fully fledged Travel Counsellors working from home, providing the best levels of independent travel advice to their customers.

It comes as a number of retail chains with experienced staff including Marks & Spencer, Woolworths, Land of Leather and children's clothing retailer Adams announce significant job losses. Travel Counsellors believes that some staff who now find themselves facing redundancy through no fault of their own will have valuable skills that could translate equally well to a career in travel. In addition they may not be aware that Travel Counsellors offers the opportunity for people to work from home as a travel agent. Unlike retailers on the high street who are suffering in the current economic climate, research shows that few people are willing to give up their holidays, with the award winning travel company experiencing record sales figures this January.

The webcast will provide all the details they will need to know about running their own travel business from home through the Travel Academy scheme including interviews with people who have already successfully completed the training programme and are working from home as fully fledged travel consultants.

Travel Counsellors is one of the UK's most successful travel companies. Founded in 1994 the company has over 1,000 home-based agents operating in eight countries, including over 750 Counsellors in the UK and Ireland. While most of the company's Travel Counsellors have previous travel experience – with each having an average 20 years experience – the company introduced its Travel Academy scheme in 2007 as it was aware that people from outside the industry would welcome the opportunity it offers.

The Travel Counsellors franchise has been recognised by the British Franchise Association. The Academy training programme normally costs £10,000 plus VAT which covers all training and set-up costs and the right to use the company's trademark and brand.

Commenting on the special Travel Academy webcast Travel Counsellors Managing Director Steve Byrne says: "Travel Counsellors is extremely proud of our Travel Academy. We have created a unique programme that offers the highest level of training to professionals from outside of the travel industry who have a passion for travel and customer service, equipping them with all the tools and skills they need to become the very best travel experts worldwide and join the cream of the travel industry. We believe customer service professionals who have been made redundant through no fault of their own will welcome the opportunity to learn more about working in the best industry in the world and participating in the most in-depth travel franchise programme in the UK."

Travel Counsellors is the only travel agency to be the winner of the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise 2003-2008. Readers of the Guardian, Observer and Guardian Unlimited voted Travel Counsellors Travel Agent of the Year for two consecutive years in 2006 and 2007.

The special academy webcast will be broadcast on January 29 at 7pm. To register for the special academy webcast visit www.travelcounsellors.com/tctv, telephone 0800 195 7024 or email tctravelacademy@travelcounsellors.com



CASE STUDY

Tracey Tweedle from Chester made the decision to join the Travel Academy last year after being made redundant from her job in the hotel and restaurant trade.

“The business was suffering financially and had lost several key accounts and major contracts. As a result they needed to make cut backs within the company, which unfortunately included reducing the staffing levels. I was twice put on 30 day notice and the third time it happened was the time that I was made redundant.

Travel is something I always wanted to do but it never seemed the right time. I had a lot of experience in customer service and I knew combining this with my love of travel would be my dream job. So after receiving my redundancy payment I decided to put it to good use and look to see if it was possible to get into travel and buy a franchise.

I began researching my options and came across Travel Counsellors' Travel Academy. As I read all about the company and what it had to offer I knew it was for me. I really liked the idea of becoming a Travel Counsellor Associate as I wanted to be able to be in control of the hours I worked whilst running my own business. The main reason though was the fact that I wanted a job that I could look forward to, something to enjoy and get real satisfaction from and, of course, I would get my dream of working in travel!

Since I joined the Academy last March I have watched my business go from strength to strength and love the flexibility, satisfaction and rewards of running my own travel business. The level of training and support I receive is fantastic. Although I work from home I am never alone and have the back-up of over 200 staff at the company's head office who help me with everything from admin to marketing to IT.

I also have a much better work life balance. My husband works shifts and as I have flexibility and control over the hours I work we are able to spend much more time together – whereas when I worked in my previous job we could go for weeks of hardly seeing each other!

I would definitely recommend the Academy to others, especially those who have been made redundant like I was and are looking for a career opportunity. It was actually the best thing that could have happened to me. If you have a passion for travel and the drive to take control of your own destiny, running your own business and reaping the rewards then make the move. I did and I have never looked back.”

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 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 240 staff at the company's UK headquarters in Bolton and overseas offices. 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.

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