



## **Travel Counsellors – Key Personnel**

### **David Speakman**

David Speakman was the original pioneer of the travel agents working from home concept. In 1994 he founded Travel Counsellors, which was the first - and is also the largest - travel home-working company in the world.

At that time he had already been in the travel industry for 15 years, operating a chain of retail travel agents in North West England.

The company continues to be one of the biggest innovators in travel and in 2003 the company was presented with the Queen's Award for Enterprise, the UK's highest business accolade.

David is also an ardent champion of the customer. It was his vision that saw Travel Counsellors UK launch a Financial Trust to guarantee all client money. Recognition of his high standing in the travel industry came in 2006 when he was one of the first recipients of the prestigious travel industry Lifetime Achievement Awards. He has also been given the honour of induction into The British Travel Industry Hall of Fame 2008 in recognition of his innovations and achievements within the travel industry.

### **Steve Byrne**

Steve Byrne joined Travel Counsellors Ltd as managing director in October 2004, moving from his previous position as chief executive of a UK based luxury tour operator.

Steve has led the growth of Travel Counsellors from a UK travel agency to an international travel company.

Before joining ITC in 1998, Steve spent five years as principal consultant at KPMG Management Consulting.

A chartered accountant, with a Masters in Business Administration (MBA) from Henley Management College, Steve graduated from the University of York with an honours degree in Politics, Economics and History.



### **Paul Speakman, Group IT Director, Travel Counsellors Ltd**

Paul joined Travel Counsellors in 1998 and now heads a team of over 30 IT staff. The Company's award winning technology is at the very heart of the business, benefiting each and every one of the company's head office staff as well as home-based Counsellors in almost every aspect of their work.

Since the Company started it has been seen as a leader in its use of technology not just within the travel industry, but within the business community generally. Indeed in 2005 the company was the winner of the technology category of the prestigious CBI Growing Business Awards.

After gaining a BSc in Mathematics & Management from the University of Nottingham, Paul went on to attain an MSc in Information Systems from the University of Leeds. Before joining Travel Counsellors in October 1998 Paul worked for a Leeds based software house.

### **Derek Lorton, Financial Director, Travel Counsellors Ltd**

Derek joined Travel Counsellors Ltd in August 2001 as financial controller and was promoted to financial director in December 2003.

Derek originally qualified with the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants in 1981 and has worked as financial controller for several large firms including Rathbones Bakery and furniture companies Allermuir and FMS.

### **Kirsten Hughes, Commercial Director, Travel Counsellors Ltd**

Kirsten originally joined Travel Counsellors at the beginning of 1995. From her original role as travel consultant, she was promoted to telesales manager in 1997 before being made commercial manager in mid 2000. She was then promoted to her current position of Commercial Director in November 2004.

Prior to joining Travel Counsellors, Kirsten worked for two years as a travel consultant for Lunn Poly, before which she worked in the accounts department of the Courtaulds group.



### **Malcolm Hingley, Sales Director, Travel Counsellors Ltd**

Malcolm joined Travel Counsellors in 2002, but has worked in the travel industry ever since leaving school at 18.

Previous roles have included working as a regional sales manager for Hogg Robinson, general manager at Going Places and business development manager for First Choice owned Travel Choice.

He joined Travel Counsellors in June 2002 as training manager, becoming head of sales the following year before being promoted yet again to sales director in January 2004. His responsibilities include the motivation, training, sales development and customer relationship management of the company's 1,100 plus agents

### **Karen Morris, Operations Director, Travel Counsellors Ltd**

Karen originally joined Speakman Travel in Atherton 25 years ago as a travel consultant. She was also part of the original Travel Counsellors team when the company was founded back in 1994, working her way up the ranks before being promoted to her current position of operations director in December 2001.

Karen has a pivotal role within the company coordinating operations in the UK and overseas. She is responsible for meeting the resource needs and appropriate skill sets of every department in order to support the 1,100 plus Travel Counsellors and ensure the smooth running of a growing international business.

### **Cathy Burke, General Manager, Travel Counsellors Ireland**

Cathy joined Travel Counsellors in September 2005 and is responsible for co-ordinating and leading the company's expansion in Ireland.

Travel Counsellors was the first travel company to introduce the concept of experienced travel consultants working from home to Ireland. Cathy's experience made her the obvious candidate to spearhead this expansion - she has worked in the Irish travel industry for 30 years, where she is an extremely well known and popular figure.

Previously she combined the role of co-ordinator for Worldchoice Ireland with running her own travel consultancy business - Cathy Burke TMC - which has worked for clients including the Irish Travel Agents Association, the Irish Brokers Association and Hyatt Hotels.



**Fred van Eijk, General Manager Travel Counsellors Nederland BV & Travel Counsellors Deutschland GmbH**

Fred has been employed by Travel Counsellors since November 2005.

Before joining Travel Counsellors he was chief executive for the Qatar Tourism Authority and member of the board for the Qatar National Hotels Company, prior to which he was chief executive of MyTravel's Benelux operations. Before joining MyTravel, Fred was London-based Managing Director of Flying Colours plc. Other previous roles include international travel trade director and more recently board member, for Forte and Le Meridien Hotels.

A fellow member of the Institute of Travel and Tourism (ITT), Fred is a member of the advisory board of the Dutch CHN University for Professional Education in Tourism and Leisure and is a frequent columnist in the country's leading travel trade magazine Reed's Reisrevue. He is the founder and chairman of the registered children's charity Helping Hands.

**William Puk, General Manager, Travel Counsellors, South Africa**

William is responsible for the day-to-day leading and running of Travel Counsellors South Africa.

William was born in the U.K and began his career within the airline industry, where he spent 19 years with British Caledonian Airways and British Airways. He was posted to Cape Town by British Airways in 1988 and three years later he joined large Cape Town based agency, ITC Travel as Managing Director.

William joined Travel Counsellors in April 2007 as General Manager. Prior to this he was Managing Director of Sure Travel, a consortium of travel agents, for 12 years within which he grew and developed the company into a successful franchise group.

William is also a well known personality within the South African travel industry, having contributed regularly to travel industry columns and holding various regional positions within The Association of South African Travel Agents (ASATA).



**Deb Duncan, General Manager, Travel Counsellors, Australia**

Deb Duncan joined the company's head office team in Melbourne in July 2011.

Deb has over 30 years of industry knowledge and expertise. Starting as a travel consultant to owning her own award-winning travel agency, her previous roles include Business Development Manager for Victoria with Travelscene American Express and running her own successful travel consultancy helping travel agencies analyse their strategic positioning in the market and improve their profitability.

Deb has also worked from home as a travel consultant, so brings a wealth of experience to the company's agents along with driving the business forward and building on its growing success.

**Anita Emilio, General Manager, Travel Counsellors, Canada**

Anita Emilio was appointed to lead the Travel Counsellors operation in Canada in June 2010. She is responsible for the day to day running of the operation with a focus on Travel Counsellors expansion in the Canadian market.

Anita has over 12 years experience in the travel industry. Previous to joining Travel Counsellors she held senior roles with Gap Adventures and Travel CUTS/Adventure Travel Company. She was one of the original management team to open up the Canadian operations for Flight Centre and was responsible for Eastern Canadian Sales and Operations overseeing 300 agents.