

TTG Top 50 Travel Agencies 2021: Homeworking Agency assessment form

Congratulations on being shortlisted as one of the UK's top five homeworking agencies! We know the last 12 months have been like nothing the travel industry has ever seen. We have created a new TTG Top 50 assessment form that asks different questions, and will help you tell the story of how you've supported your homeworkers/franchisees through such difficult circumstances, how they've adapted and survived, and how you've helped them provide the very best care to their customers. Please read these new questions carefully, complete the form (bulletpoints is fine) and send the form back to your journalist judge in advance of your Zoom call, to allow for further discussion during the call.



Background info:

Tell us about your homeworking agency - how long you have been in operation, your model, how many consultants/franchisees you have currently, how much experience they have etc:

Please list the names and job titles of everyone taking part in the interview:

1. How your head office team and your homeworkers/franchisees coped – worth up to 5 marks

What impact did the crisis have on your head office team, and on your individual homeworkers/franchisees? Please don't be concerned about having had to lose staff and reduce hours and so on. Everyone's in the same boat! You might consider telling us:

- What changes were you forced to make at head office last year and since?
- How did you adapt working practises?
- How did you continue to offer support to your homeworkers/franchisees? Did you provide additional resources or communicate with them in any special/new ways?
- What was the impact on mental health both for your head office team and for your homeworkers/franchisees?
- How did you try to safeguard mental health across the business?
- Were some homeworkers forced to take second jobs, or even close down their businesses? Again – you wont be judged negatively for that having been the case.
- How did you make sure homeworkers/franchisees were up-to-date with travel restrictions and rules relating to travel during the crisis?

2. How your homeworkers/franchisees looked after customers - worth up to 10 marks

Travel agents have demonstrated their value like never before during the Covid crisis. Tell us what exactly your homeworkers had to do for their customers, and how they strived to go above and beyond. You might consider:

- What can you tell us about the level of administration and customer service that was required of your homeworkers/franchisees? How many affected customers might some of your consultants have had? What level of effort and overtime has been required?
- Any particular client stories/cases that stand out, such as a customer a consultant fought particularly hard to get a refund for, or a client who's return home was a huge challenge? Any ways in which your homeworkers had to go above and beyond for their customers?
- What level of reassurance and communication was required with customers who travelled during the crisis or were looking to book for future travel?
- Did you provide any new tools or resources to help consultants give that reassurance?
- Did your homeworkers/franchisees begin communicating with customers in new ways eg Zoom calls?
- What sort of feedback and appreciation did your homeworkers/franchisees get from customers during the height of the crisis? Share some testimonials/reviews if you can.

3. About your previous business performance, and marketing activity - worth up to 5 marks

We'll want to hear how business started off in 2020 and about any marketing activity you may have supported at the height of the crisis and since.

- How were sales faring in Q1 2020 (Jan-Mar) before the pandemic hit? Can you give us any figures and comparison with 2019? What plans and aspirations did you have for the year ahead?
- What approach did you encourage your homeworkers to take with marketing during the height of the crisis and since, including social media channels, email newsletters, website, any virtual events for clients etc?
- How and when did your homeworkers/franchisees start proactively promoting holidays again and with what success?
- Has anything new been tried in terms of marketing?
- How have you/your homeworkers been promoting the value of booking with a travel agent?
- Have any homeworkers perhaps gained any new clients as a result of bad customer experiences with other providers during the pandemic?
- How have sales fared more recently? Any positives you can share?

Optional section: Final thoughts...

Is there anything else you want to tell us about your experience of the past year? This section is optional! But you might consider:

- Any examples of homeworkers/franchisees (or head office colleagues) who strived to give back to their local community, volunteering, supporting the vulnerable etc as a result of the crisis?
- Anything you believe your head office team or your individual homeworkers/franchisees have learnt as a result of the crisis, and ways in which you might come back stronger?
- Any other tales of flying in the face of adversity in the last 12 months?

