

## Online 'Booking Stress' may fuel a travel agent resurgence

August 31, 2007 in Events



A recent SideStep survey of 1744 UK adults, found that 50% of people consider booking travel online to be 'stressful'. **The biggest contributing factors were; too many options, anxiety over sourcing the best deal, researching destinations and finding the time to do the research.**

Take heed global travel suppliers hurrying to drive customers to online portals, and aspiring to cut out the middle man. Presumably the percentage experiencing 'booking stress' will only grow, as more suppliers opt for the direct sales model and push their online offerings.

Booking stress could have a key role in re-establishing the traditional high street travel retailer as a preferred booking method, rather than online direct?

Across Europe companies are investing massive amounts in online marketing, hoping to capture some of the estimated £31.2 billion spent in Europe purchasing travel online this year (PhoCusWright). But perhaps the stress element could cause the pendulum to swing back in favour of traditional travel agencies, rendering increasingly cluttered and stressful online sales channels redundant.

According to the Association of British Travel Agents, the number of high street agents has fallen by nearly a fifth since 1997, giving rise to OTA super powers such as Expedia and lastminute.com. However traditional agencies who have established themselves online while retaining their high street outlets, look to be the major benefactors of booking stress.

Perhaps surprisingly, the market experiencing the most stress with booking online according to SideStep, is the under 25 years age group where 70% of respondents feel overwhelmed. No matter how simple the major online players make their booking process, the number of actual offers online will continue to climb.

Agency outlet numbers may be slowly falling, but the niche knowledge and stress free environments that they provide could be about to power a travel agency renaissance.

**The speed, power, multitude of options and ability of a Travel Agent to do it so much better (that is what they are trained to do best!) are contributing greatly to their valued resurgence and respect throughout UK and Europe.**

**If you have a good one-stay with them ! They can save you time, money and STRESS!**