

Darling, tell it to me straight

Husbands and wives trusted over accountants and bank managers for straight talking business advice

T-Mobile Research Key findings:

- Small business owners trust husbands or wives over accountants and bank managers to give them straight talking business advice
- Small business owners seek advice from those that will 'tell them the truth' and 'give it to them straight'

London 30th November, 2010: Over half of UK small business owners will turn to their husband, wife or partner before anyone else for straight talking business advice, according to a national survey of 2,000 small business owners by T-Mobile. Spouses and partners (51%) were preferred to accountants (22%), trade bodies or other local businesses (3%) and bank managers (2%).

This trend was greatest in the North, with nearly six out of ten small business owners in Liverpool and Newcastle (58%) turning to their wives and husbands over accountants (16% and 17% respectively). Londoners were the least trusting of bank managers, with only one per cent turning to them for straight talking advice on issues affecting their business.

More than half (53%) of small business owners choose their business advisor based on who they trust to tell them the truth. A further 27 per cent seek business advice from those who were most likely to "give it to them straight".

Judi James, one of the UK's leading behavioural experts, comments: "This research from T-Mobile highlights how highly we value those who get to the point and give it to us straight when discussing business issues. It's understandable that we tend to turn to our partners for this honest and clear advice - they have the same goals as us and understand the complexities of the possible answers to our problems. Unlike other advisors, they have no hidden agenda and aren't trying to impress us to secure a contract. Psychologically, talking to our partner is the closest thing we have to talking to ourselves. By logically discussing our problems with them we have to 'straight talk' the problem over. In this respect they become a vital sounding-board as well as an actual advisor."

For T-Mobile customer, The Posh Tent Company - a company run by husband and wife team, Martyn and Andrea Rose - straight talking is vital to the smooth running of the business. Martyn Rose, co-owner comments: "Although my wife Andrea and I work together, our roles and responsibilities are very different. To make both our professional and personal relationships work we have to be able to trust each other. She's the person I will turn to first when I need business advice - I know she'll tell me the truth without sugar-coating what needs to be said. We're both busy people so we don't have time to act any other way."

Martin Lyne, Director of SME Marketing at T-Mobile comments: "Eighty per cent of the small businesses we polled stated they take advice from people who will give them the truth and will tell it to them straight. As a supplier, we need to take a straight talking approach, offering small business owners uncomplicated products and services that simply help them get on with what they do best. The last thing we want to do is waste their time."

T-Mobile commissioned the research into Straight Talking* to better understand the time pressures business owners are under and determine how they prefer to communicate in business.