

Stuart Bensusan

Stuart Bensusan is Head of Sales for Essential Travel one of the UK's leading holiday essentials providers.

Born in the UK to an English mother and a Spanish father, Stuart was schooled in Spain but returned to the UK at the age of fifteen. After stints as a postman and fork-lift truck driver and ten years as a carpenter, Stuart was offered a job in sales at Bupa where he achieved top salesman status every month for his first 18 months at Bupa.

Stuart left Bupa to launch Essential Health Insurance, later diversifying into travel insurance. After being head-hunted by travel insurance company Primary Direct for the position of Business Development Manager for four different brands. Stuart left Primary Direct on 1 March 2002 and Essential Travel went live at 17.30 on the same day. By 19.30 Essential Travel had made its first sale.

Stuart is also an active member of the ATII (Association of Travel Insurance Intermediaries) which acts as the voice of industry, commenting on matters such as Insurance Premium Tax (IPT) and FSA regulation.

Simon Purnell

Simon is the Commercial Director of Essential Travel.

Simon left school at the age of fifteen and a half to spend three years in the dispatch department of the BBC, after which he decided to head off travelling. After some time away, including six months painting yachts in Antibes and a French ski season, Simon returned to the UK and started work at NCP, looking after its car fleet. In 1992 he was asked to set up a call centre for airport parking.

In 1997, Simon took a position with APH, working across backend, systems and product. He later moved on to set up Online Essentials which then merged with Essential Travel.

Steve Smith

Steve Smith is Head of Commercials at Essential Travel.

After a year at Leicester University studying building surveying, Steve decided it wasn't for him and went to the US where he spent the next two years getting his licence as a commercial pilot.

On his return to the UK, Steve started working at a Gatwick car park where he could fit in his shifts around flying. This eventually led to a full time position in sales and development with APH, where Steve took the company from a car park near an airport to a national booking agency, acquiring car parks in Manchester and Birmingham along the way.

After meeting Simon Purnell, Steve and Simon partnered up with Stuart Bensusan, Phil Jordan and Richard Hannan to create Essential Travel.