

Noel Edmonds Launches face2face with Groundbreaking Survey Revealing True Cost of Business Travel

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Most Business Trips Last More than Six Hours and Cost UK Businesses £2,000

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London, 03 June 2003: Results of a groundbreaking survey released today revealing that the average single business trip costs in excess of £2,000, are central to the launch of Noel Edmonds' latest venture, face2face (f2f). Furthering the recent dramatic advance of video communications, the new company introduces a world first, nationwide network of consistently high-quality, easy to use, public access, pay-per-use facilities, which eliminates the traditional barriers of cost, availability and ease of participation.

f2f's network offers the service using its own equipment or ViewStations from f2f technology partner, Polycom®, from around £50 per meeting at convenient locations across the UK and already has more than 50 venues. Hundreds more are in negotiation to join within the coming months and 1800 sites globally affiliated to meet the urgent need highlighted by today's research findings.

More than 80 regular travellers, including business people, at London's Paddington Station this morning, found the total amount of time actually spent in meetings on most trips is often less than just two hours, or 30% of the total time spent out of the office. Around 60% were travelling purely for business purposes, with UK destinations as far away as North Yorkshire and Hampshire. In addition, almost half would consider video meetings as a preferable alternative.

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On average, three employees travel to a single meeting, driving staff costs to as much as £6,000 per trip on top of hard costs for travel, food and entertainment. In addition, the journeys in question were found to impact severely on the work/life balance – of the average door-to-door travel time, up to two hours would usually have been spent at home.

Noel Edmonds, chairman and co-founder of face2face comments: "Even with the recent sharply increased travel problems on railways, planes and roads, not to mention the introduction of congestion charges and the concerns over terrorism and safety, this research confirms that still more people continue to travel unnecessarily because they are not aware of the alternative, with the majority travelling at least twice a week. While video communications can never remove the need for all meetings, many companies do realise the real business benefits and cost savings it offers for regular contact, in addition to redressing the work/life balance. face2face further enables individuals, and the people they wish to meet with, not only to gain access to the network but also to expense the cost just like a rail ticket."

He continues: "This research is indicative of the need to overcome the problems associated with excessive business trips and I look forward to helping individuals and businesses of all sizes across the UK reduce costs whilst increasing productivity and having happier staff."

Managing director EMEA for Polycom, Steve Leyland, adds: "Polycom is proud to be involved in this strategic, truly groundbreaking initiative and we look forward to bringing the real business benefits of video conferencing to an even wider audience. The f2f network allows us to continue to extend our reach as the video communications market leader."

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Notes to editor

face2face (f2f) is the world's first network of publicly accessible, low-cost, high-quality video meeting facilities for the reluctant business traveller. Founded and chaired by Noel Edmonds and actively promoted by the Sunday Times Enterprise Network, the company counts Cisco among its national blue-chip and SME subscribers.

f2f is the ideal solution for smart businesses looking to increase the effectiveness of their communications, maximise available time, reduce unnecessary travel time & cost and improve the work/life balance – without the need for any upfront cost . With a central booking system for locations nationwide, f2f offers easier meetings to everyone at convenient locations.

Its extensive UK network of Venue Partners offer modern, near-broadcast quality, user-friendly communications technology to enable interactions as good as meeting person-to-person.

Launched in 2003 and with headquarters in London's Kensington Village, f2f anticipates more than 2,000 branded sites will be in operation worldwide by 2006. There are currently 1,800 affiliated sites globally.

For more information, please visit www.face2facemeetings.com.

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Polycom, Inc. is the world's technology leader of high-quality, easy-to-use video, voice, data and web conferencing and collaboration solutions. The Polycom Office™ is our continued commitment to make distance communications as natural and interactive as being there by providing best-in-class conferencing solutions that are interoperable, integrated and intuitive to the user.

The Polycom Office is based on industry standards and supported by an open architecture that promotes interoperability in multi-vendor environments and complements leading network infrastructure platforms.

The Polycom EMEA (formerly Polyspan) HQ is in Slough, Berkshire in the UK. Polycom EMEA operates in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. For additional information call 00 800 00 33 44 55 or visit the Polycom website www.polycom.com

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