

MORE MONEY THAN TIME

Tina Nielsen talks to five experts, all running the lives of cash-rich, time-poor consumers

The personal PA

Sue Reeve, Consider it Done

Consider it Done offers a personalised PA service. As Sue Reeve, managing director, explains: “We help people focus on their jobs by removing the noise that goes on in their mind.”

That noise might include getting a broken boiler fixed, renewing a passport at the last minute, paying bills, holding the line when buying tickets, researching holiday destinations, tidying up paperwork at home or supplying maps and directions. The list goes on—they even arrange house moves. “Our specialism is our generalism,” says Reeve. “We deal with lots of small jobs, such as dry cleaning, but sometimes we get more specific requests such as tracking down a battery for a 1920s clock.” More unusual

requests include locating 100 extras for a film and tracking down live chickens for a gift.

Reeve stresses the personalised aspect of the services on offer. “Our lifestyle managers are assigned just eight to 12 clients, so they build a close, high-quality relationship and act quickly when receiving a request.” She believes the increase in women rising to senior positions has a lot to do with the booming popularity of concierge services. “More women now reach senior positions, but are still expected to do the work at home. They have realised that there is something that can take the strain, which wasn’t available before,” she says.

www.consider-it-done.co.uk

The concierge

Alex Cheatle, Ten UK

Since starting in 1998, Ten UK has grown rapidly and now has 60,000 members. “We are primarily about saving people time and hassle,” says CEO Alex Cheatle. “We help with whatever people want; whether it’s planning their holiday, buying a car or getting a plumber to unblock their drain.” Or hiring an elephant for a wedding, something they have done twice.

Available 24 hours a day, all year round, its 110 lifestyle managers include a range of experts. “We speak 12 languages in-house, so if members get stuck abroad, we can help out even then,” says Cheatle.

The company’s work can be divided into the home, events and entertainment, travel and buying and researching. “Last year we bought and sold 1,000 cars,” says Cheatle. “We have experts who are former directors of car dealerships and they know how and where to get the best deals.”

Since Ten UK set up, Cheatle has seen a change in what they do. “When we started we did jobs instead of members. Now we can do jobs better than them. The reputation of the industry has grown and because more people know about these services, more people use them,” he says. Cheatle also puts the boom

down to a shift in attitudes. “The baby boom generation and those that followed are more comfortable delegating and don’t want second best. So, if they know we can get them a table at the best restaurant they will ask us to do it.”

www.tenuk.com

The relationship headhunter

Mairead Molloy, Berkeley International
Gone are the days when dating agencies conjured up images of desperate loners with poor social skills. Mairead Molloy’s Berkeley International matches up professionals with a lasting relationship in mind. “We provide a high-end dating service for people who are



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looking for a long-term relationship and marriage,” she says. “Our members are people with busy lives who don’t have the time to look for someone but are ready to settle down.”

Molloy takes a practical view of dating agencies: “It is like appointing an estate agent when you are looking for a house,” she says. By her own admission, she is “ferociously busy” and with 1,200 members on her books, it is hardly surprising. “I meet everyone and have a good chat with them over a coffee or a glass of champagne to find out what they are after.”

For Molloy, the job never ends and she admits to headhunting when she is out. “I carry all of our members in my mind and if I meet someone I think is suitable I tell them what I do and ask them if they’re interested,” she says.

Membership of Berkeley International is rising and Molloy thinks the trend will continue. “In the US, the only way to date is through an agency. The UK is becoming the same.” People who join, she says, include career people, divorcees and widows. The common denominators are a lack of time and a reluctance to stand around in smoky bars waiting for the right person. “Lots of people don’t want to waste time, so they come to us.”
www.berkeley-sweetingham.com

The holiday organiser

Kate Marriott, The Holiday Planner

The Holiday Planner is no ordinary travel agent. Clients spend over £5,000 per person on a holiday. “We deal with the five-star end of the market,” says director, Kate Marriott. “A lot of our clients are in their 40s and 50s, in the financial sector and have big budgets. Some spend hundreds of thousands a year.”

Staff have superb relationships with the best hotels in the world. Says Marriott: “When hotels claim there is no availability, we can get a room.” The Holiday Planner offers a bespoke service and will arrange as much as the client requires, including restaurants, shows and other events. Clients can request a meeting at home. Says Marriott: “We always find the best for our clients and we are totally independent.”

She is not surprised that more people ask her to arrange holidays. “Time is precious, nobody can afford a rubbish holiday. People hand it over to us to make sure they have a really great time.”
www.theholidayplanner.co.uk



The social organiser

Jamie Walker, The R Club

Although the R Club does offer some concierge services, Jamie Walker, founder director, prefers the term lifestyle club. “A PA can do what a concierge can do, but we have all the deals to help people make the most of their spare time.” Services include everything from tickets and mobile beauty therapists to party lighting and an online casino as well as member events.

“The benefits tend to expand into areas where we get demand,” says Walker. “Our members expect access to the best nightclubs and deals on the best restaurants.” The R Club also offers members the chance to purchase luxury goods at low prices in the online shopping boutique, the Luxury Market.

Walker points to rising earnings to explain the increasing use of hired help. “People have more money and less time. Bonuses are becoming extraordinary and it’s easy to delegate and say ‘sort this out, I am busy’,” he says.
www.rclub.com

