



Media Release

For immediate release

Being your own boss – dream or nightmare?

Insync Surveys and RedBalloon.com.au discover who our Dream Employers are, and why, in 2011

Monday 19 September 2011: Employees still dream about being their own boss, but according to Australia and New Zealand's largest public employer of choice survey, the dream isn't all it's cracked up to be.

Now in its second year, the Insync Surveys and RedBalloon Dream Employers Survey, with over 7100 public votes, saw Google clearly maintain its position as the number one employer of choice.

Second to Google was self-employment moving up from third spot last year, but for those who are already self-employed, while satisfied with their own situation, they would caution others against making the switch.

CEO of Insync Surveys James Garriock said "63% of those who are self employed would not consider changing jobs in the next 12 months, but less than half (48%) are actually satisfied with their job, and only 28% would recommend self-employment to others."

When asked why, self-employed respondents gave these top areas for improvement: pay, benefits and conditions (50%), work/life balance (45%); networking/teamwork opportunities (43%).

"Nobody claimed that self-employment was easy money; but there is a general perception that taking charge of your destiny will result in better pay and work/life balance," Mr Garriock said.

"However, these findings show that being in charge of your time doesn't necessarily mean that you'll make choices you're happy with - loneliness and networking are key challenges for the self-employed."

Interestingly, for those seeking a move to self-employment, 81% were considering this to achieve greater work/life balance. So it seems the dream does not reflect reality.

For RedBalloon founding director Naomi Simson, her move to self-employment almost a decade ago reflects the findings in this survey - she was seeking greater work/life balance to help juggle a young family and a serious corporate career.

"Don't be fooled into thinking RedBalloon was an overnight success – it was three months after the site launched in 2001 before we made our first sale!" Ms Simson said.

"I used to walk around Sydney going to meetings with red balloons tied to my briefcase hoping that someone would notice the URL, and I would sit on my couch at night stuffing customer vouchers into envelopes. It was 15 months before I drew any sort of wage from the business.

"But I never thought of us as a small business – we were a big business in a small, agile body.

"It was hard work, dedication, persistence, having a great team behind me, and importantly expelling the word failure from my vocabulary that led to the success of RedBalloon. And now, ten years on, we have surpassed the magic million, having sold more than 1.1 million experiences to our customers."

According to Robert Gerrish, founder of Australia's micro business community Flying Solo, work/life balance is a constant juggling act for this segment of the workforce.

"One of the main appeals of self-employment is the freedom to do what you want, and with that comes the responsibility of using that freedom wisely," Mr Gerrish said.

"A common trap for self-employed people that leads to dissatisfaction is the failure to delegate and becoming overwhelmed, and that's why up-skilling is key for those who are seeking better pay, work/life balance and networking opportunities.



"The catch 22 is that many are working too hard on the day-to-day to spend the time developing these skills, so staying connected, communing and engaging are vital.

"Walk away from the desk, join a networking group, get online into small business discussion groups that create a sense of community, and make sure you don't get cut-off from the wider world."

The top 20 Dream Employers as voted by the public were Google, self employed, Virgin Group, Qantas, Apple, Microsoft, OMD, Walt Disney, BHP Billiton, Getaway, United Nations, police force, Vodafone, NASA, Rio Tinto, departments of defence, Commonwealth Bank, Cadbury, Facebook and Lonely Planet.

New to the list in 2011 are the police force, NASA, Rio Tinto, departments of defence, Cadbury and Facebook. Making way for these new additions are Sydney Water, Coca Cola, eBay, Salmat and ABC, who have all dropped from the top 20 this year.

Insync Surveys and RedBalloon are running a free webinar unpacking the results of the 2011 Dream Employers report with loads of advice and insights. To register or for more information visit <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/875692081>

-ENDS-

Notes to Editor

- The full 2011 Dream Employers Survey report is attached and can be viewed online here - <http://www.insyncsurveys.com.au/resources/research/2011/09/dream-employers-2011-report>
- For further comment on the report, please see Media Q&A/Fact Sheet

Available for further comment

- Naomi Simson – founding director, RedBalloon.com.au
- James Garriock – CEO, Insync Surveys
- Robert Gerrish – founder, Flying Solo

For more information or to arrange an interview or photo of one of our spokespeople, please contact:

Lauren Ashton, Communications Specialist - P: 02 8755 0034 M: 0404 136 765 E: lauren@redballoon.com.au
Virginia Shaw, Marketing Manager - P: 03 9909 9279 M: 0433 722 729 E: vshaw@insyncsurveys.com.au

About RedBalloon

RedBalloon For Corporate provides exciting reward and recognition solutions, corporate gifts and sales incentives to ensure businesses keep their employees and customers motivated, rewarded and engaged. With a unique resource of over 2,500 amazing experiences in Australia and New Zealand RedBalloon specialises in creating attachments between employees and their employer. RedBalloon has also been awarded for its innovative employee engagement practices, named in the Best Places to Work by BRW Magazine three times, including a top ten ranking in 2009. Hewitt Associates have also awarded RedBalloon with an engagement score of over 90 percent three years in a row. The average engagement score in Australian businesses is 55%.

About Insync Surveys

With offices in Melbourne and Sydney, Insync Surveys specialises in employee, customer, board and other stakeholder surveys backed by consulting. Their experienced team of organisational psychologists and research experts help organisations become more effective. Insync Surveys co-founded the Dream Employers Survey and has worked with some of the largest organisations in Asia Pacific, including: Cathay Pacific, Toll, Medibank Private, WorleyParsons, Fairfax Digital, Mission Australia, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, state government departments, many local councils and most university libraries. This broad experience allows it to benchmark results.