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(All Written to specific guidelines)

By

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THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO GETTING A TATTOO IN BANGKOK THAT YOU'LL REGRET LATER

(tone – humorous)

For most visitors to Bangkok - whether as a tourist or an expat - getting a tattoo to commemorate their trip to the "Land of Smiles" has become something of a tradition.

As with most traditions however, there is a dark side.

There is a small segment of these "tattoo types" who go way over the top.

These reprehensible types end up with tattoos that are not only carried out safely, but they are also correctly spelled AND contain beautiful designs.

Who do they think they are? How dare they?

They have gone about it all wrong, and by doing so, have severely damaged the reputation of Bangkok tattoos.

The whole point of getting a tattoo in Thailand is so that you can spend the rest of your life shopping for long-sleeved T-Shirts, and getting changed quickly at your gym so nobody has time to spot the eyesore on your back. Isn't that right?

As an added bonus, you can even claim your "15 minutes of fame" by participating in a TV show like, "Tattoo Fixers," where the only criteria for applicants is possessing a disastrous tattoo - the worse the better.

So why miss out on all that fun?

If you follow the guidelines below, we promise that you will be successful in getting your *perfectly imperfect tattoo* done wrong, the first time!

Two good ways to find a bad tattoo parlour:

1. Go to Khao San Road and get drunk and disorderly.

As every traveler to Bangkok should know, Khao San Road is *the* place to go if you want something done fantastically badly. In this amazing road, so beloved of western backpackers, you will see sights such as:

- Middle class white kids who have recently converted to Rastafarianism for their trip to Asia, and who have invested in stunning polyester dreadlocks, and speak in hip Jamaican rap-speak that nobody can understand.
- Westerners fully embracing Thai culture by stuffing themselves with genuine "traditional" Pad Thai dishes consisting of a pack of 7/11 mama noodles and a fried duck egg.
- Incredible men's outfitters where you can buy an "Armani Boss" or "Ralph Lorenzo" suit, complete with branded belt, tie and cufflinks for fifty bucks.

In an area that is a haven for drunken foreigners and for Thai teenagers playing the traditional Thai game of "spot the drunkest wife beater," this is the perfect first stop-off if you are truly looking to get a terrible tattoo.

The best part for us lazy westerners is that we don't even have to go looking for a tattoo - they will come to you!

How is that?

Well, look for any open bar that proclaims "Cheap Buckets", perch yourself on a half-broken plastic seat, and start downing the noxious mixture as if your life depended on it.

Sooner or later, you will be approached by a very friendly man with a battered plastic folder that is filled with pixelated pictures downloaded from the internet.

How will I know he's selling tattoos?

Easy. If he has approached you and said: "Wassup man", or "Hey boss", or "Cool man, cool man", there is a 50/50 chance he is either selling a suit or a tattoo. Then, if he points to a tattoo you already have on your pinky-white body, or he shows you his "slip on tattoo sleeve", you know you're in!

Follow the friendly gentlemen to his establishment in as straight a line as your "three bucket" legs will allow; flop down on a cracked plastic leatherette sofa; take a quick, blurry-eyed flick through the plastic book to choose a design - and you're all set.

Within the space of a couple of hours, you will be the proud new owner of a terrible tattoo that you can be gleefully ashamed of.

(insert picture, i.e. "bad gorilla)

2. Ask a Tuk-Tuk driver

This is possibly even better than going to Khao San Road; as wherever a Tuk-Tuk driver tells you to go, you can be sure that it's definitely the best place.

Bangkok is a city which is blessed with an extensive network of an air-conditioned sky-trains, underground-trains, cheap air conditioned taxis, Uber taxis and even speedy motorcycles who can zip their way around the traffic. But everybody knows that by far the best form of transport to use is in this hot congested city are the slow, dangerous and wonderful Thai Tuk-Tuks with their smarmy ex-con drivers and expert over-pricing.

Tuk-tuks can be found in various locations in the city, and the best way to track one down is by looking outside mid to low priced hotels and at popular tourist attractions.

Tuk-Tuk drivers are well-known for their expertise in pinpointing the very best places in the city that have everything a visitor would need, such as:

- The most remote and hidden "special" massage establishments.
- Back-alley tailor shops with amazing deals on "branded" fabrics
- Some very expensive but beautiful cubic zirconias that put most diamonds into the shade.
- Seedy looking bars that double up as table tennis tournaments.

And, of course, tattoo studios!

After you have selected your smarmiest looking Tuk-tuk driver, ask them which tattoo studio pays them the highest commissions. You can be sure the one at the top of his list will be the very best establishment for your goal.

Remember, the further away from the premium areas in the city center they bring you, the better this option is likely to be.

Jump in the back and hold on for the journey of your life. With any luck, your probably drunk driver is likely to be in a fantastic mood at the prospect of his forthcoming payday and will get you there in extra quick time, or kill you both in the attempt. So prepare yourself for a tattoo that you're going to love to hate.

Tips on making sure you mess up your tattoo script.

Most westerners think it is extra-specially cool to have some Thai writing tattooed on their bodies, with or without an accompanying design. A great way to find the best bad Thai script to present to the tattoo artist is to use Google Translate to get a literal back-translation.

This will work really well, as anyone who's tried to learn Thai as a foreign language will know. There is no such thing as a "direct translation" and the entire structure of the language is different.

This means that although there are many Thai phrases that have English equivalents, there are very rarely any direct correlations.

For example, the Thai phrase *Gin naam pheuua laaeng* is the equivalent of saying "Put something away for a rainy day", but literally translated, it means, "Drink water for drought".

So you can see how much potential this option has when looking for an incorrect tattoo script that you can truly regret. For the absolute best outcome, make sure you pick a phrase that is a metaphor in English such as "You can't make an omelet without breaking an eggs," and use Google Translate to find the Thai version, which will say, "To cook an omelet, you must break egg."

The Thai script will read like the first line from a Thai cookery book. The Thais will be secretly giggling with their friends about that crazy farang who can't remember how to make an omelet, and had a tattoo to remind him.

The key to getting this completely wrong is to not have the translation checked by anyone who has an advanced knowledge of Thai culture and who can also speak English fluently.

Always find the cheapest price

Bangkok is known as a city where bartering and haggling over price is just a part of the buying process. Everyone knows that in the local markets, the first price quoted by the vendor is far in excess of the price that they will be happy to accept for your shiny new pair of elephant pants. The whole negotiation dance routine you both do is just a part of the fun.

However, in tattoo circles there's a well-known phrase, "You never negotiate a tattoo price". When it comes to tattoos, you're paying for your artist's experience and any genuine artist will assign a fee to their work that they believe to be a fair representation of their quality, experience and time.

Of course, this doesn't apply to you!

In your quest to find a tattoo that you can truly regret later, you'll need to find the absolute cheapest price possible.

One of the tried and tested methods of achieving this is as follows:

- Download a generic design from internet.
- Go to a tourist area, such as Khao San Road, with many tattoo studios.
- Ask the first studio you can find what they will charge for your tattoo.
- Go to at least three more studios, and play them off against each other.
- Once you have the very lowest price on offer, without them shouting a lower price as you walk out of the door, you're good to go.

By making sure the first contact with your artist is an argument over price, thus demeaning his standing as an artist, and then choosing said artist purely on the basis of price instead of quality is a fantastic way to guarantee ending up with a something truly horrible.

Here's an example:

(insert the meme)

Trigger the romance option

Just as lawyers are forever thankful for the booming divorce industry, so tattoo studios are grateful for the practice of couples tattooing each other's names onto their bodies, or getting matching tattoos.

Thailand can be a very romantic country, and the heady mixture of beautiful scenery, great food and cheap alcohol create a cocktail custom made for romance.

You'll probably be more in love with your significant other than you ever have been before. Or, you have just met the greatest love of your life while you were watching a table tennis match in a seedy Bangkok bar

Unlike a child or some other close family member, who you'll always want to remember, it's much better to tattoo the name of a romantic partner as they are much more likely to disappear from your life in the future, and thus be a reminder of poor decisions and unhappy times.

So make sure you put the name of the most recent romantic partner. Remember - the chances of regret are inversely proportional to the length of the relationship.

We know of somebody who had "Lauren" tattooed on his arm at the start of his holiday and when he broke up with her a week later, instead of getting a cover up or laser removal, he just got "Ralph" tattooed above it.

(insert funny graphic)

You will earn bonus points if you tattoo the name of someone you meet on holiday, as this is the kind of high-quality poor decision making normally reserved for the pros.

Always be creative!

While this article it gives you some of the best tips to make sure you have a dreadful tattoo, it is far from exhaustive.

Before you set out on your tattoo venture, why not speak to a few friends and hear their many tales of woe. This will help you come up with a great idea of where to start.

In Bangkok, we like to help each other out. In fact, expat groups online are known to be universally helpful, cheerful and judgment free. No trolls here, so be a public spirited 'farang' and leave your best "bad tattoo" story in the comments sections to help out - and entertain - your fellow man.

GETTING A "SAK YANT" (THAI TRADITIONAL) TATTOO IN BANGKOK

What is Sak Yant?

Most of us are familiar with the mystical geometric tattoo patterns that we see tattooed on the bodies, necks and even the faces of Thais and western visitors to Thailand. But it is doubtful that many of those receiving a "Sak Yant" tattoo are aware of the tattoo's origins.

Sak in Thai means Tattoo, and Yant is the Thai pronunciation for the Sanskrit word Yantra - a mystical diagram used in meditation. Yantra is common in the "Dharmic religions", such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhsim.

The practice of *Sak Yant* originated over 2,000 years ago amongst the Tai tribes of Southwestern China and northwest Vietnam. It consists of sacred geometrical, animal, or deity designs, which are accompanied by Pali phrases that supposedly offer the bearer of the tattoo magical benefits, such as power, protection, fortune, and charisma.

This ancient art originally spread as far south as Indonesia and the Philippines, but these days, it is mainly practised in Thailand and to a small extent in the neighbouring countries of Cambodia, Laos and Burma. The tattoos are traditionally carried out by Buddhist monks or Brahmin holy men using a *Khem Sak*, (Tattoo needle), which is a metal rod, or bamboo stick sharpened to a point.

It is important for us to understand that Sak Yant predates Buddhism. Like so many mystical and deeply superstitious practices in Thailand, *Sak Yant* has its roots in tribal animism and pre-Buddhist shamanism. It is only through the centuries it has become closely tied to the Hindu-Buddhist concept of *yantra* which is used as an aid meditation.

Over the ages, the tattooed scripts or phrases which accompany the *yantra* designs have developed in different ways and languages, depending upon the geographic and cultural location of the practitioners. But one thing is common - these mystical tattoos are said to bestow special powers and protection against evil spirits and enemies, and they will only work provided the bearer adheres to certain rules, such as abstaining from specific foods. For this reason they are much favoured in Thailand by the police, military, criminals and anyone else who encounters dangerous situations in their daily lives.

Why should I get a "Sak Yant" (Thai Traditional) Tattoo in a Bangkok Tattoo parlour, rather than go to one of the more traditional praticioners?

Yes - why should you consider getting your "Sak Yant" (Thai Traditional) Tattoo in a proper Bangkok Tattoo parlour, rather than go to a temple or to one of the many tattoo shops that have sprung up in Khao San road and the red light districts?

Here are three reasons why getting your "Sak Yant" (Thai Traditional) Tattoo in a proper Bangkok Tattoo parlour, such as **All Day Tattoo**, may well be a much better bet.

- Firstly, you will have the convenience and comfort of a clean, modern, well-appointed air-conditioned tattoo parlour. And if you book your appointment in advance, you are assured of receiving prompt attention when you arrive.
- Secondly, you can choose one of the finest and most experienced *sak yant* tattoo artists in Bangkok. You can talk to them in English, so that there are no misunderstandings, and take as much time as you like in selecting your preferred tattoo. You can choose from one of our many fascinating and innovative designs, or you can opt for one of the more traditional Sak Yant patterns. Try checking out our senior tattoo artist's website, (www.sak-yant.com), which is considered to be Thailand's definitive website for *Sak Yant*.
- Last, but by no means least, are the health concerns. These days, much more is understood about the potential health hazards you might expose yourself to

when getting a tattoo. These risks were completely unknown hundreds of years ago when the art of *Sak Yant* was first practised.

But even in these enlightened medical times, many tattoo practitioners still reuse the same needle for different customers after superficially wiping it - or they may dip different needles into the same ink jar. These kinds of practices can lead to the mixing of bodily fluids - including blood - from one customer to another, with the obvious risk of contracting HIV, hepatitis B, or some other disease carried by the body.

If you get your "*Sak Yant*" (Thai Traditional) Tattoo in Bangkok, at a tattoo parlour such as **All Day Tattoo**, you can be assured of the highest standards of hygiene and cleanliness. Here are some of the basic, common sense measures that are taken by **All Day Tattoo** for every one of our valued clients.

- Our studios are always kept spotlessly clean, with no open garbage disposal carriers.
- Our workstations are covered with a disposable film that is changed after each client.
- Our imported needles are open to inspection and are of the highest quality. They are individually sealed and safely disposed of after a single use.
- Our artists always use gloves, clip cord sleeves and machine bags.

There are many different places where you can have your tattoo done. You can go to a temple, or a temple fair, or do it on a beach, or in a questionable shop in one of the red-light districts.

But we suggest that if you want to have your tattoo done by a true professional, in a totally safe environment, then you should seriously consider getting your "sak yant" (Thai traditional) tattoo done in Bangkok, at a reputable tattoo parlour.

Maybe you are thinking about having a tattoo, but you still haven't decided the 'if' or the 'where' to have it done. If so, why don't you click the booking button below for a free, no obligation consultation?

Our friendly staff will put you at ease, and will be delighted to show you what designs are available, what is involved, how long it will take, and the approximate cost.

Contact us today - we would love to hear from you.

HOW MUCH DOES A TATTOO COST IN THAILAND?

It's all about the quality.

Back in the day, the London "rag trade", became famous for the phrase: "Never mind the quality, feel the width." Of course, it was a bit of joke, but at the heart of this hackneyed phrase was the common sales pitch used by the cheap east-end London tailors – that quantity was more important than quality.

Those London tailors *could* have charged for the skill of their suit designers or the *workmanship* of their seamstresses, but no, they were quite content to charge by the amount of cloth used, regardless of quality.

I mention this, because in today's modern tattoo world, the quality of a tattoo artist's work is of paramount importance. It far outweighs all other considerations, such as the size of the tattoo, or the speed the tattoo artist completes his work, or indeed – the price.

If you are buying a tattoo, you are purchasing a unique piece of art that is probably going to be part of 'who you are' for the rest of your life. It will not be something that you can *wear on your body* for a few months and then discard it for the latest fad.

Remember - a tattoo is for life – and you owe it to yourself to make sure it is the best possible tattoo it can be, and that you will continue to be happy with it for many years to come.

So when we discuss the price of a quality tattoo, we are primarily talking about the cost of the tattoo artist's time to create and indelibly *imprint* a unique work of art on your skin.

So how much is a tattoo artist's time worth?

This depends very much on the skills and experience of each individual artist. At **All Day Tattoo,** we only have the very best, international artists.

Our resident artist, "Eight", has traveled extensively in Asia and has 15 years' experience including residencies in notable studios in both Japan and Korea. Eight's specialties are bold lines and New and Old School and Japanese color pieces, although he can put his artistic mind and hands to anything.

Our guest artist, Zizi, has over ten years of experience in creating world-class, truly stunning and intricate works of art. Her masterpieces can be drawn from her specialist geometric designs, or from a wide range of diverse creations - maybe a totally original one-off that she will tattoo on a wide canvas of your skin.

But if you charge me by the hour – won't your artist spin the work out to earn more money?

Our artists are people of the highest integrity and they have trained for many years to achieve their exceptional levels of expertise. Every commission, big or small is a new creation, and they will strive to make best it can possibly be. The last thing in their mind is trying to milk a valued client. After all, every client is a potential returnee and more importantly, a satisfied client will tell their friends and pass the word around.

So what's the bottom line?

At All Day Tattoo, our artists charge 3,000 Baht per hour and our minimum charge is 2,000 Baht.

Our hourly rate includes:

- Free, no-obligation consultation with advice on the design and placement and approximate price of the tattoo.
- Work done by top internationally trained artists.

- Artists' time, (free of charge), for design work.
- Comfortable, air-conditioned, fully-equipped, state of the art studio.
- Top quality, US imported inks and needles which are disposed of at the end of each session.
- Hygienic workspace, with disposable films that are replaced after each session.
- Central location, close to BTS station.
- Online booking with fast response in English.

All this, and you can be secure in the knowledge that your tattoo will be 100% safe from contamination.

All we ask for in advance is a deposit, based on 20% of the estimated cost of the tattoo, with a minimum charge of 1000 Baht, and a maximum of 5000 Baht. This will secure your artist's time and, where appropriate, will enable him to carry out some design work in advance of your session, although the time for doing this is not charged.

Does the size of the tattoo or the intricacy of the design, or the placement area on my body affect the price charged?

As stated above, our charges are based on our artists' time, so to the extent that the size, level of intricacy or placement area will have an effect on the time taken to complete the tattoo; then yes, these factors will have an impact on the cost. When you come for a free consultation, all these factors will be discussed with you.

How do your charges compare to other Bangkok studios, and also studios around the world?

We won't deny that you can get a cheaper Tattoo in Thailand, as there are plenty of cut-price shops around which will cut corners in terms of hygiene and will not necessarily employ the best artists.

There are also a few other good quality studios in Bangkok, although not always in convenient locations, who may charge anything from 1,000 - 3,000 Baht, either as a fixed, or an hourly charge.

Always remember that as far as tattoos are concerned, you will most certainly get what you pay for. At All Day Tattoo, you pay for the best.

In Japan, charges can start at 12,000 Baht an hour, in Sweden from 6,000 Baht an hour and in the USA, prices will start from over 10,000 Baht (\$300) an hour for a quality artist, with a similar cost in the UK.

If you want to know more about our charges and talk to an expert about how much your preferred design may cost, why don't you click the booking button below for a free, no-obligation consultation?

Our friendly staff will put you at ease and will be delighted to talk through the process, how long it might take, and the approximate cost.

EXAMPLES OF WEB PAGES WRITTEN FOR A NEW THAILAND TRAVEL WEBSITE/APP

Thailand Overview

There is something for everyone in Thailand - a country that has always been synonymous with western "backpackers".

Indeed, it is quite possibly the westerner's decades-old passion to set off and explore Thailand that first brought the activities of backpackers to the world's attention.

If you mention...tropical island paradises; white sand deserted beaches; sumptuous resorts; spectacular waterfalls; tropical rainforests teaming with flora, fauna & exotic wildlife; centuries-old ancient ruins from past civilizations; colourful hill tribes; floating markets; pristine coral reefs; atmospheric Buddhist temples; Buddhist monks; rave parties; lively entertainment venues; yoga centres; massage parlours; opulent palaces; immaculately manicured gardens and parks;

.... you can only be talking about Thailand.

Partly thanks to the 19th century King Rama IV, who loved all things western, this unique nation, which has never been colonised, has been enthusiastically welcoming visitors to its shores since the mid nineteen sixties when the intrepid western backpackers first discovered the "Land of Smiles."

Much has changed since those far-off days; when the population was steeped in poverty in a largely agriculture-based economy, and the military was enmeshed in the US-led catastrophic Vietnam War.

Year by year and decade by decade, this now well-developed nation has made tourism one of the cornerstones of its economic policy. In 2015 alone, almost 30 million foreigners, (including just under a million Brits), visited Thailand and there is no sign of this number peaking any time soon.

So just what is it about Thailand that makes it second only to China as the top tourist destination in Asia?

The backpackers undoubtedly led the charge back in the 70s and early 80s. They discovered little 'paradises' all over Thailand that have subsequently been transformed into fully-fledged tourist spots; with many of them now accessible to one and all – from the still well-entrenched backpacker brigade, to the high-end luxury tourist.

Thailand has a population of 68 million, and it is the largest Buddhist country in the world, with 85% of them devout Buddhists. It has a land mass that is more than double the size of the UK, and despite its meteoric development over the past 30 years; you can still find many areas with laidback lifestyles that have hardly changed in hundreds of years.

Trek through the lush green terrain of Doi Inthanon National park – the home of Thailand's highest mountain - with its riot of wild flowers and blossoms; discover the spectacular caves at Soppong; chill out in the 'Little Tuscany' of Chiang Dao; take a spiritual break in the picturesque town of Mae Hong Son; visit the infamous 'death railway' in Kanchanaburi; take a walk through the stunning national parks of the Northeast, (Isaan), with spectacular mountain scenery and thundering waterfalls.

Alternatively, rest up in the sleepy border town of Nong Khai with its views of Laos across the mighty Mekong river; go partying "out of your skin" at the Full Moon parties on Koh Phangan; laze away your days in a hammock on a deserted beach on Koh Tao.

There is so much to see and do across this spectacular country that it is difficult to know where to start...or end.

And we haven't even mentioned the great provincial cities that are scattered across this far-flung nation, with at least one major city stop-off for each of Thailand's 76 provinces. Many of these can provide enough interesting places to visit to keep you engrossed for several days - or weeks.

We are talking of **Chiang Mai**, the bustling and historic northern city and former capital of the ancient Lanna Kingdom; of **Sukhothai**, the centre of the great Khmer empire with its amazing historical park, full of antiquities that rivals Anchor Wat; of **Ayutthaya**, the ancient Thai capital with so many ruins and temples dating back to past dynasties and Burmese occupations; of **Lopburi**, with its massive colony of monkeys; of **Nakhon Pathom**, Thailand's oldest city which is the site of the tallest Buddhist stupa in the world. And that's only five...with 71 still to go!

In Thailand, you are never far away from a local festival, as every province promotes its own festivals and special events, many that are distinctive for their little corners of Thailand, such as buffalo racing, rocket festivals, kite flying, Loy Krathong and flower festivals.

We have yet to mention Thailand's capital – the massive, noisy, polluted, trafficcongested, frenetic city of Bangkok which is home to 6.4 million Thais.

Bangkok is a city of fascinating heterogeneous skyscrapers; impressive historical buildings, canals that criss-cross the city that support floating markets and long tail boats for local transport; air conditioned sky trains and modern subway systems; world-class hi-tech shopping malls; infamous red-light districts; street markets; thousands of street food stalls, eateries, and upmarket restaurants; and, of course, not forgetting the backpackers mecca of Khao San Road.

And then there is the Thai food, which in itself is a good enough reason to visit this fascinating country. World famous for its huge variety of culinary delights, Thai food can be as cheap and easy to cook as a bowl of fried noodles for 25B, or as complex and expensive as a multi-course culinary delight for 4000B, served by a top chef in a 5-star hotel.

For most visitors, the cheaper end of the scale will be the order of the day, and they can enjoy eating safely from the open-air food stalls and tiny Thai restaurants that abound throughout the country. Thai cooks always use fresh ingredients and will happily cook in your presence. Generally speaking, you can be assured of cleanliness.

Menus are extremely varied and no two Thai dishes are ever the same – every cook has their own recipe; be they for green or red curries, spicy papaya salad, spicy shrimp soup, chicken in coconut soup, stir-fry vegetables or fresh fish.

Every region of Thailand has its own specialities, ranging from Bangkok "Pad Thai", to Burmese curries, to Phuket seafood, to "Royal Thai" food, to the spicy food of the Northeast, (Isaan), which has become so popular in all parts of Thailand - and indeed, across the world.

Come to Thailand and enjoy the experience of your life.

Isaan Summary

The 20 provinces of North Eastern Thailand, known as Isaan, comprise Thailand's largest region. It is often written off by foreign tourists as having no beaches, no hill-tribe trekking and lacking the fast-paced urban energy found elsewhere in Thailand.

The truth is that Isaan is the most colourful, traditional, and culturally distinct part of Thailand where the population is friendlier and speak their own Lao dialects as well as Khmer dialects in Southern Isaan.

The region is steeped in ancient history and the Lao-influenced cuisine is a culinary delight that has been 'exported' to all corners of Thailand. There is also much Vietnamese influence in many parts of Isaan where many Vietnamese dishes have been adopted as part of Isaan's own.

Apart from the fascinating people, Isaan is rich in outstanding places to visit. From the riverside provincial towns of Nong Khai, Nakhon Phanom and Mukdahan, which all have common borders with Laos, to the outstanding national parks - Khao Yai and Phu Kradueng National Park were the first two areas in Thailand to be awarded National Park status - all full of gorgeous scenery, unforgettable views, thundering waterfalls and wild life, to the culture of the hillside temples, and ancient Khmer ruins.

There is something for everyone in Isaan. The laidback style of life is in sharp contrast to life in Bangkok or in many of the southern tourist spots, and foreigners who have made the trip to Isaan often find it very relaxing</> and the best part of their journey across Thailand.

Accommodation and food is generally much cheaper in Isaan than other parts of Thailand, with countless low-priced guesthouses,/b> which are perfect for budget travellers. It is also the best place to seek out real Thai rural life that has barely changed in hundreds of years, except maybe for the odd rusty motorbike leaning against a wooden house and a rusty tractor in the village.

LOWER GULF SUMMARY

Searching for a tropical island paradise? Look no further!

For the vast majority of Thailand's independent travellers, Thailand's lower gulf means the three idyllic tropical islands that make up the Samui archipelago, together with the 42 mainly uninhabited islands that constitute the wonderfully unique Ang Thong National Marine Park.

Generations of backpackers have flocked to the tropical paradises of Koh Samui, Koh Tao and Koh Phangan. If you're seeking sun, gorgeous beaches, swimming, diving, and snorkelling and so on, or just lazy days in cheap beachfront cottages, then it's difficult to find anywhere on earth that is better suited for your needs.

But these days, there is so much more to do and enjoy on these three heavenly islands:

24/7 partying; sipping cool cocktails while you enjoy incredible views of the shimmering gulf and fantastic sunsets; trekking and climbing across the islands' interiors; diving & snorkelling; cliff jumping; kayaking; stand up paddling; attending Yoga retreats...and much more.

Koh Samui, the largest of the three islands, has become known for its five-star resorts and high-end spas, but there is still plenty of reasonably priced accommodation across the island, and visitors can party till dawn or find deserted beaches with the odd budget hostel to welcome you.

The mystical island of Koh Phangan, famous for the hedonistic bucket laden Full Moon Parties, has a treasure trove of places to explore - from the atmospheric temples, to some delightful waterfalls and hiking trails to incredible viewpoints. It is also increasingly becoming a world-renowned centre for yoga retreats.

The small volcanic island of Koh Tao is indisputably a world-famous diver's paradise, with over 18 established dive sites and more than 40 diving centres and resorts to serve you and to get you PADI certified. With its shallow waters, the island is perfect for beginners, as well as for more experienced divers, not to mention the increasingly popular free diving fraternity. Then there are snorkelling and other water activities.

If diving isn't your thing, there are still the gorgeous beaches, beautiful sunsets, 24/7 partying on the western coast. Or you can go to the "get away from it all" beaches on the east and southern coasts.

Challenging treks into the interior will be rewarded by wonderful viewpoints or isolated beaches.

The unique Ang Thong marine National park is accessible from any of the three islands. You can take a boat trip out there for a day's fishing or diving, or to explore, snorkel and kayak amongst its little islets, in the countless lagoons and caverns and under towering limestone cliffs. Probably the pièce de résistance is the beautiful inland Emerald seawater lake, famous for a scene from the iconic film, "The Island".

Full Moon Party

The Moon Party starts before sunset and runs till dawn, although by the time the sun rises the next morning, most party revellers are have either succeeded in making it back to their accommodation or have fallen asleep on the beach.

These parties at Haad Rin Beach have their roots back in the mid-80's, when the locals held a party to give thanks to the 20-30 tourists who visited the island. By word of mouth, the numbers attending the parties rapidly expanded and in recent years these world famous parties, attract between 10,000 to 20,000 revellers. At New Year, the numbers can exceed 30,000.

The success of the Full Moon parties has led to the creation of Half moon, Quarter Moon, Black Moon, Shiva moon and a host of other excuses for all night raves. But at the present time, these additional parties have been banned by the military government, and even the long-term future of the Full Moon Party is in doubt.

In the meantime, almost the entire community of Haad Rin is geared up to provide you with a madcap, drunken night of drinking, dancing, and making merry. All the pubs, clubs, beach bars and restaurants in Haad Rin stay open till dawn, and everywhere is jam-packed with a heady amalgam of young people looking for fun - European men and women, as well as Thais.

Many of the partygoers dress up in fluorescent T-shirts, UV body paint, and all manner of bizarre masks and costumes, such as animals, skeletons, loincloths and the like. Skimpily clad women add to the visual excitement.

A hypnotic mix of deafening music pervades the whole area: psychedelic trance music, R&B / rap, house, dance, garage, reggae, electronic and just about any music you can think of. Strobes and spotlights light up the sky, as well as technicoloured explosions from the non-stop firework displays.

Wander or weave your way along the beach by the water's edge, or walk at the top of the beach from bar to bar, as you alternate your bottles of beer with cheap buckets of booze consisting of vodka, gin, Thai whisky, and topped with Red Bull.

In between these two walking routes lies a great seething mass of humanity on the sand. Everyone is drinking, gyrating to the music, and screaming their heads off. Some try to participate in drunken limbo dancing, while others watch juggling and fire shows and much more besides.

The general idea is to get as smashed as possible, as quickly as possible, and most partygoers report that the experience was the biggest, baddest and greatest party night of their lives. Everyone gets uproariously drunk and a goodly portion also make fools of themselves. But nobody cares.

Vendors will try sell their booze buckets to you for 400B-600B so be prepared to bargain. You will find that buckets sold away from the beach are much cheaper, probably around 200B.

It is a fun-filled, non-violent atmosphere, and it is only after around 2 am, when well over half the revellers have already left, that trouble can sometimes break out. This is when a hard core of extremely drunken young men start to lose control, or thieves and muggers choose to pray on revellers who are too drunk to defend themselves.

One favourite place for the merrymakers to go when things become a bit unsettling is Mushroom Mountain, a bar and dance floor set over the rocks at the northern end of the beach. This offers a wonderful view of the entire Full Moon scene from a safe distance.

Full Moon parties can provide you with an unforgettable and fun experience, and while over the years, there have been many reports of people getting arrested, robbed, mugged, seriously beaten up, raped and even killed, a few sensible precautions will see you clear of most, if not all, trouble.

Here are some tips which will serve you well.

- ➤ If you plan to stay on the island, make sure you have booked your accommodation in advance, but note that most places have a 3-4 day minimum over the period of New Moon. However, the fact that many tourists leave the island during the party period means that some rooms will be freed up. Also note that you can stay at just about any beach on the island, as they all provide organised transport, to and from the party at Haad Rin.
- Never bring or buy any kind of drug under any circumstances. All drugs, including marijuana, are strictly illegal and you can be locked up for months as well as have to pay a lot of money in kickbacks before the police will let you go. It is quite common for drug dealers to sell you some drugs and then inform the police.
- ➤ Wear protective footwear, and if you wear sandals or flip-flops, secure them with duck-tape. There are cigarette butts and glass everywhere and your feet can get badly cut or burnt if you venture near the fire shows.
- ➤ Travel light and only bring enough money with you to last the night. Keep the money in something attached to your body and don't bring a purse or a bag. It is difficult to estimate how much you might need, but between 2000B 3000B should be plenty.
- ➤ If you bring a phone or camera, keep them properly secured to your body at all times.
- ➤ Keep away from the fire shows offering fire rope skipping. It is a very dangerous activity and countless people get seriously burnt trying to do this when they are drunk.
- ➤ Never accept food or drink from strangers.
- ➤ Although the general idea is to get "rat-arsed", don't arrive too early or drink so fast that you pass out and miss most of the fun. Arrive a little late and pace yourself it will be much more fun this way.

- ➤ Only bring a COPY of your passport with you. Although this may not always be accepted by the police in the event of trouble, it is still preferable to losing your passport or having it stolen.
- ➤ To save money, buy your own body paint from a local supermarket and buy all your drinks away from the beach.
- > Bring a six-pack of water to keep yourself well hydrated.
- Ensure all your valuables are safely locked up back at your accommodation. Do not bring any rings, gold or jewellery with you.
- ➤ Go with a friend (or friends) and try to stay together. If one of you has a trouble or gets too drunk, the others can help out. Agree in advance on a place and time to meet up in case you become separated.
- ➤ Keep the address and phone number, (in Thai), of your accommodation with you.
- > Do not go swimming in the sea it will be full of urine and all kinds of unhealthy debris.
- ➤ If you encounter a serious problem, or need advice or help, look for the tourist police in their white bibs. They are independent of the local police.

If you follow all the above suggestions, you should have an epic time.

NW THAILAND.

The diversity of the North Western region of Thailand, which comprises the two mountainous provinces of Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Son, has made the region one of the most popular areas in Thailand for tourism.

The region has so much to offer today's adventure seeking tourists, with its many mountain ranges, breath-taking scenery, isolated Hill Tribe villages, teeming wildlife, unique flora and fauna, tropical rainforests, towering waterfalls and swirling rivers.

Here in the North West you will discover many fascinating cultures; explore diverse and ancient architecture; seek adventures in the mountains, jungles and rivers; shop yourself silly in the dozens of markets; enjoy some of the most breathtaking scenery in Thailand, "chill out" in one the many isolated, laid back picturesque provincial towns; or simply indulge yourself with the many delights of Chiang Mai, Thailand's largest northern city.

Whole industries have grown up in the North West to provide ever more tourist activities, such as mountain trekking, rock climbing, white water rafting, kayaking, nature trailing, living with elephants in natural habitats, staying in Hill tribe villages, tree-top abseiling, caving, and much more.

The region also has its own fascinating histories and has many unique cultures that still survive today.

The original Lanna Kingdom around Chiang Mai, dates back to 13th Century, and has its own distinctive food, music, arts, traditional dress and language.

Further north, Mae Hong Son province, which borders Burma was largely cut off from the rest of Thailand until the 1980s. The predominant culture in this province is Tai Yai, (Shan), although there are a host of other, individual ethnic tribes, living in the hills and valleys of the North West - each with their own very distinctive cultures.

With its abundance of fascinating ancient temples and monuments, drawn from

b>Lanna, Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and Shan-Burmese architectural styles, the region is a cornucopia of living history for the cultural tourist.

Climb Thailand's highest mountain in Doi Inthanon national park; chill out in Tha Ton; tarry awhile the "Little Tuscany" of Chiang Dao; enjoy the unique backpacker's ambience of Pai; go white-water rafting from any number of towns in the region, or visit the Hill tribes and soak in their distinctive cultures.

Or just take it easy and enjoy the wonderful temples, the friendly folk and the unbelievably glorious scenery.

Chiang Mai

This glorious "Rose of the North" offers something for everyone, with its ancient Lanna culture, breath-taking scenery, and so much to do and see.

If you only visit one city outside of Bangkok, "The Rose of the North" - Thailand's second most visited city- has so much to offer to all manner of tourists - young or old, backpacker or high-end tourist.
Chiang Mai, which means "New City", was founded in 1296 - a mere 'stripling' at 720 years old.

The atmosphere here is nothing like you have ever experienced before. Come and visit Chiang Mai's unique down-town area, with its historic walled city, and the dozens of incredible ancient temples, standing cheek by jowl with modern guesthouses and hotels, chic coffee shops and restaurants, open air markets and so much more.
It's a wonderful mismatch of old and new that somehow seems to work.

Chiang Mai is considerably smaller than Bangkok, and is a great place to get away from the noise, hustle bustle and pollution of the Thai capital, and relax in this laid-back town that has so much to offer.

Thailand's fifth largest city has a population of just over 1 million in the greater metropolitan area, with only around 160,000 residing in the main city area. It is a magnet for foreign tourists and expatriates alike, who enjoy the cooler climate, the surrounding, mountainous countryside, the local culture, the fascinating ancient history and the wealth of things to do and places to visit.

Located at just over 300m above sea level, Chiang Mai lies in the Ping River valley, with the river flowing through the centre of town on its way to the Chao Phraya River. <bs/>
<bs/>
Surrounded by high mountains and lush green countryside, it offers so much for visitor to do and explore.

/b>

The foot of Doi Suthep Mountain is within cycling distance, and the towering peak, together with the famous Doi Suthep temple, looks down over the city. Further afield is the Doi Inthanon National Park which contains the highest mountain peak in Thailand.

Inside the ancient city there are more than 35 ancient temples and ruins worthy of a visit, with even more, further afield.

When you've had your fill of temples, there is the national museum, (off the Super Highway - within walking distance of Wat Chet Yot), as well as a number of specialist museums, including a numismatic museum, (Treasury Hall, 52 Ratchadamnoen Road) and a postal museum, (at Mae Ping Post Office).

And you must spend a few hours at three charming, modern museums, euphemistically entitled "cultural centres", all within walking distance of each other in centre of the old city near to the Three Kings Monument.

Here you will learn all about the Lanna history and culture; of ages long past, which reads like something out of "Game of Thrones." Chiang Mai was the capital of the Lanna Kingdom from 1296-768 and was ruled over by Lanna Kings for over 500 years. The city was occupied the Burmese in 1556, and eventually became a vassal state of Thailand (Siam) in 1775, when the Thai King, (Taksin), helped to drive out the Burmese. In 1899 Chiang Mai was fully integrated into the Thai Kingdom and only a ceremonial Prince lived here until 1939.

Chiang Mai has also been the centre of Buddhism in the northern region for many centuries and much of this religious history can be found in the city's ancient temples.

This culturally aware town has many art galleries, including the Chiang Mai University Art Museum, (at the corner of corner Suthep and Nimmanhaemin Roads) and 'Art in Paradise' and is always awash with art exhibitions featuring contemporary Thai artists.

Then you can try the open-air markets - the Night Bazaar, the Sunday Walking Market, the Saturday Walking market, Wororat indoor/outdoor Market - each with its own special ambience, and always with plenty of nick-knacks and handicrafts and many food stalls, so you will never go hungry.

Not that there is a shortage of just about any kind of restaurant you care to name - much like Bangkok but on a smaller scale.

Another popular and peaceful place to go is the Chiang Mai Foreign Cemetery, within walking distance of the Holiday Inn on the east side of the river.

And let's not forget there is a wealth of Thai Classical music and dancing, Thai massages, Thai cookery schools, Thai boxing shows, and for those who are missing home, there are departments stores, such as the Central Plaza, near Chiang Mai Airport and even cinema multiplexes showing western films.

Outside the city, you can visit zoos/night safaris, botanical gardens, endless picturesque waterfalls, a few notable out-of-town ancient temples, elephant sanctuaries and Hill Tribe villages. You can go mountain trekking, hiking through the rain forests along nature trails teaming with wildlife, caving, mountain biking, white water rafting, and many more adventurous activities, too numerous to list.

A good place to book tours and adventure activities is at your guesthouse, or in the city centre, around the area of Thapae Gate/Warorot market.

Getting around

You have a very wide choice of transport to get you around Chiang Mai.

Local Buses, red songtaews (lot dang), Tuk-tuks, taxis, rented bicycle/motorbike/car, and even by foot as many places in the central area are within walking distance.

 Buses - Look for the white B1 and B2 which run from the Arcade bus station to the railway station, to Thapae Gate to the zoo and the airport. Both go via Wororot Market. Minimum fare is 15B

Songtaews - The red converted pick-ups roam the streets looking for
business and should take you to a destination within the old city for 20B; and 40-
60B for places outside the central area. Fares must be negotiated. There are also
"fixed route" songtaews (white, yellow, blue and green) which start at the Wororot
market and travel to various destinations in the outskirts of the city for a standard
fare of 20B

You can also use songtaews as taxis, and sit up front in air conditioned comfort, but you will pay more and will have to bargain hard for a sensible fare.

<bs/>Tuk-Tuks - Again you have to bargain and don't try to hire one parked up at the bus or train station as they will charge extortionate prices. It's always better

to hail an empty one passing. As a rough guide, a short ride will be 40-50B and 50-100B for longer distances.

 - They do not cruise the streets. They park at the airport, railway station, bus station and outside hotels. You can also phone for a taxi from your guesthouse. Expect to pay 150B for trips inside the old city - higher for further afield.

 And the airport </br/> - Bicycles and motorbikes can be rented from guesthouses and from dozens of places all over town. Cars can be rented at the city centre and the airport.

ACCOMMODATION

Cheap accommodation - even by Thai standards - is plentiful in Chiang Mai, and there is a wide range of lodging available. There is anything from inexpensive guesthouses with very basic facilities to 3, 4 and even 5 star high-rise hotels catering for the high-end tourists.

A number of Thai-style boutique resorts located near the old city centre have sprung up in recent years, which often offer excellent, reasonably priced service in quiet garden settings.

Recommendations:

FOOD

You will never be far from food in Chiang Mai, especially around the city centre, and you are genuinely spoiled for choice.

Street stalls and markets offer an endless array of delicious finger-foods, and 'hole in the wall' local food shops that sell authentic Thai food abound. A little basic Thai will help enormously in expanding your choice of food, and always try to find food shops with plenty of Thais dining there, rather than those with plenty of tourists - as the food will be much better.

Chiang Mai's restaurant scene is second only to Bangkok. There are many restaurants that specialise in Northern Thai food, and in particular you

must try the famous local delicacy - "khao soi" - yellow wheat noodles in a curry broth, served with chicken or beef. Khao soi is also available in some places as a vegetarian dish or with seafood.

As far as international cuisine is concerned, you can find just about everything, from cheap burger joints, to the full range of decent restaurants, including Italian, Australian/British/Irish, French, German, Spanish, American and Mexican.

PARTYING

While very much a bit player when compared to Bangkok, the city's nightlife is by far the biggest night scene in the North of Thailand, and in many respects is a microcosm of what you typically find in Bangkok.

Here, you should find something to suit your taste, from discos, karaoke joints, respectable Thai and expat bars, western style pubs where you can watch sport on big screens and play pool, bars where you can watch live Thai boxing, bars and clubs with live music, jazz and pop music bars, Thai folk music bars, and even country and western bars.

b> As ever, there are also the obligatory seedy girlie beer bars, lady-boy bars and go-go bars. You name it - Chiang Mai has it.

As there are always many tourists regularly patronising the Chiang Mai bar scene, be warned that there are occasional police raids to check for drugs and to ensure you are carrying your passport and your visa is in order. Transgressors can expect a minimum of a night in jail, plus a hefty fine.

The busiest nightlife zones are near Tha Phae Gate, Loi Kroh Road and along Charoenrat Road on the eastern bank of the Ping River.

At the Night Bazaar of Loi Kroh is Chiang Mai Entertainment Complex (CMEC) where there are about 30 bars, ranging from girlie bars to sports bars with big screens.

On Moon Muang Road and the sois running off it you will find small expat hangout bars which are mainly go-go and sports bars.

The east bank of the Ping River, on Charoenrat Road is well known for restaurants serving a variety of Thai, Chinese and western food and providing live jazz, rock, pop, Thai, and country and western live music, for their customers.

There is also a vibrant gay bar scene.

Fancy a coffee? You're in the right place, as Chiang Mai is coffee mad. Almost every few metres you will find anything from roadside vendors, to plush, Starbuck-style chains, with prices pretty standard, regardless of where you choose to sip the night away.

INTERNET

Wifi is widely available in just about every guesthouse and hotel and also in many bars and restaurants. Be careful about doing 'work' on lap tops in bars that have a lot of expats doing the same thing, as there is an outside chance that you may be arrested for working without a work permit. Silly, but sadly true.

Getting Here

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Sy Air:
International and domestic airlines serve Chiang Mai Airport from Bangkok and other regional domestic airports, as well as from Asian cities such as Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Beijing, Taipei and Singapore.

b>By Bus: The city has two bus stations.

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 Chang Phuak Bus Station, (+66 53 211586) off Chang Phuak Rd, on the north side of the moat, about 1 km north of Chang Phuak Gate, serves destinations within Chiang Mai Province including Mae Rim, Chiang Dao, Fang, Tha Ton, Phrao, Hot, Chom Thong, Doi Tao, and Samoeng.

Buses leave Bangkok daily from Mo Chit bus terminal and you can choose between modern air-conditioned comfort at a range of prices; or government buses, which make frequent stops and charge around 400B. The journey takes about 12 hours. Non-stop 24/32-seaters and 1st class buses such as Nakhon Chai Air provide larger seats and snacks. The journey takes around hours and costs around 800 baht.

By Train: (www.railway.co.th.).Trains depart from Bangkok Hualamphong, and Don Muang train stations from 07:00 am to 10:00 pm daily. There is a wide range of classes, including sleepers, with a range of prices to match. The journey times vary, but on average, take about 14-16 hours. A really

good website which is jam-packed full of useful train info is: www.seat61.com/Thailand.htm.

Central Thailand

Thailand's 'rice bowl' region has some of the most historic cities along with beautiful National Parks.

Central Thailand is the historic and cultural heart of the country and where most of its population speak in the original Thai tongue. The vast fertile central plains are effectively the 'rice bowl' of Thailand, and political control of the central region has always meant control of the country. As a result, the central area has been the main focus of many wars with Thailand's two neighbours - Burma and Cambodia - during the Kingdom's long history.

As much of the central region it is devoted to agriculture, it might appear to have little to offer the casual tourist. However, it also contains some of the most famous and historically interesting towns and provinces in Thailand.

High on this list are Thailand's two former ancient capitals of Ayutthaya, and Sukhothai, which are both World Heritage sites, and you should take at least a day, ideally more, to explore these fascinating ruins.

And we mustn't forget scenic Kanchanaburi with its infamous bridge and death railway. This province, in the west of the central region, has many National Parks of outstandingly beauty, said by some to be the most scenic in Thailand. This includes the Erawan National Park with its famous waterfalls, and Huai Mae Khamin Waterfalls in a park that stretches to the mountainous border with Burma. There are also camping sites scattered around these parks and many outdoor activities available in the province for the more active tourists.

Then there is Lopburi, with its world-famous colony of monkeys occupying the Temple of the Three Prangs, (also known as the Monkey Temple), in the town centre and Nakhon Pathom, Thailand's 'first city' and the birth of Buddhism - which boasts the ancient Phra Pathom Chedi, the tallest stupa in the world.

Central Thailand is separated from Issan by the scenic Petchabun mountain range and in the north, by the equally scenic Phi Pan Nam Range.Below, the fertile central plains, consisting of rice paddies, shrimp

farms, orchards and sugar cane plantations, are irrigated by rivers flowing down from the surrounding mountains. They eventually merge to form the mighty Chao Phraya which flows through the centre of Ayudhaya, where you could take a boat trip to Bangkok.

Ayutthaya

Ayutthaya is on the central plains of Thailand, about 85km from Bangkok and is the capital of the province of the same name.

The city was found in the mid-fourteenth century and became the second capital of Siam, after Sukhothai. It remained one of the grandest cities in Asia until Burmese forces overran it some four hundred years later.

Ayutthaya is the Thai pronunciation of the famous Indian city of Ayodhya. indicating the influence of Hinduism in the region.

Although the Burmese were soon sent packing, Ayutthaya never regained its former glory and the Thai capital moved to Thonburi and later to Bangkok. Today, Ayutthaya has a population of around 60,000.

At its peak in the 16th and 17th centuries the fortified city, which sits on an island, was the capital of a Kingdom that spread over much of mainland South East Asia,/b> and had trade links as far away as Persia, Japan and even London. The city and the surrounding area were home to over a million inhabitants, and settlements of more than 15 different nationalities ringed the city. Even today, by tradition no foreigner is allowed to live within the island city.

Descendants of the old Muslim and Chinese communities still remain, many of them dwelling along the back lanes in century-old wooden houses.

Today, modern day Thai life exists amongst the ancient relics and monuments of a bygone age. There are ruins and monuments everywhere, some minor ones are barely noticeable. Modern restaurants, cafes and resorts have recently sprung up alongside long-established guesthouses, and low budget boarding houses.

Most visitors to Ayutthaya rarely travel outside Koh Mueang ("The Island"), which is at the confluence of three rivers and a canal. The island is about five kilometres long from east to west and three kilometres wide from north to south and is circumnavigated by the U Thong ring road. (Much of this area can be explored by bicycle, see separate "Highlight".)

The ruins of the city are preserved in the Ayutthaya historical park which is a

 VNESCO World Heritage Site. They are characterised by prangs (tall, tower-like richly engraved spires) and gigantic monasteries which provide a taste of the city's past splendour. Modern day Ayutthaya was re-founded a few kilometres to the east.

Most of the ruins and monuments are in the northwest area of the island, with accommodation and nightlife clustered around the northeast. There are nine notable temples on the island along with four museums.

Off the island you will find more ruins and five temples worthy of a visit. Also off the island there are relics / museums of three of the numerous foreign settlements, namely, Dutch, Japanese and Portuguese.

 Chao Phrom market is located next to the Pasak River on U-Thong Rd, and on nearby Naresuan Road and Naresuan Soi 2, minibuses to Bangkok and other towns can be found. You will also find many banks, ATMs, convenience stores and internet cafes in this area as well as backpacker lodgings.

'Elephant stay,' is a "no-profit" programme located at the Royal

Elephant Kraal and village. The Kraal was moved to its current location in the

16th century and was still used for elephant roundups as late as 1905. Restored in

2007, it's now a centre for the care, breeding and training of more than 90

elephants.

The Ayutthaya Floating Market is open every day from 10:00 am - 9:00 pm and they have daily shows which feature Thai culture, particularly from the Ayutthaya period.

There is so much to see and do in and around Ayutthaya that we strongly recommend you allocate at least two days for your visit. We also suggest that the first place you visit is TAT's tourism centre at the Sala Klang Jangwat Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya Building, where you can see an exhibition of Ayutthaya history and will be provided with maps and details of places to go.

TAT Ayutthaya Tourism Centre

Open: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm (Thursday- Tuesday

Tel: + +66 3524 6076-7 Email: tatyutya@tat.or.th.
 Address: 108/22 Mu 4, Tambon Pratu Chai, Amphoe Phra Nakhon Si, Ayutthaya, 13000.

Website: http://www.ayutthaya-history.com/Historical_Sites_SalaKlang.html

Getting Here: Ayutthaya Tourism Centre (Sala Klang) is located inside the Sala Klang Jangwat Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya Building, in the centre of Ayutthaya, in Pratu Chai Sub-district. The imposing building stands at the western end of Rojana road, south of the City Pillar Shrine. It also houses a national art museum and a TAT exhibition.

ACCOMMODATION

The Soi Farang backpacker strip, or Naresuan Soi 1, is the best place for travellers looking to meet, mix and party. Although it can be noisy at night, some spots towards the north end are reasonably quiet - even for families.

For the best selection of flashpacker-range options plus some good, quiet budget choices, head west up Naresuan Road to the area stretching between Soi Farang and the Historical Park.

There are also many places to stay along the riverfront, mostly towards the east of the island along the Prasak River and to the southwest along the Chao Phraya, as well as dozens of 3-5 star hotels.

Here are just four suggestions from a list of hundreds which are typical of the lower budget lodgings available.

Baan Are Gong Homestay

Set in an old teakwood house overlooking the Prasak River in an intimate setting with convenient access to the train station. The house leads into a large garden with a wooden dining area set beside the river.

Upstairs, the rooms feature original teakwood floors and fretted wood walls with at least partial river views. Downstairs, the rooms are more spacious and come with cramped but private hot-water bathrooms. There is a large family room for groups.

There is free Wifi, a full-service restaurant, Thai massage, and bicycle/motorbike rental. The location is great if you want a room close to the train station.

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dble fan sh b-r/dbl a/c sh b-r/dble a/c pvt b-r: 400B/500B/650B
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- Address: 48 Moo 10, Ayutthaya
-
Website: www.facebook.com/baanaregong/
- <bs/>b>Getting Here: Off the side lane across from the train station and near the cross-river ferry.

<bs/>b>December House

Located in the heart of Ayutthaya riverside, only 500m from the city centre, this 6-room guesthouse is ideally placed to explore the Historical Park. The comfortable rooms are all air-conditioned, there is a coffee shop, free wifi throughout the property, and bicycles are available for rent.

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b>Rates: </b> Standard a/c 400B
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Tel: +66 82 2383138

 Address: 128/1 Horatanachai Sub-District Phranakhon Si Ayutthaya.

b>Getting Here: Situated only a short walk from Ayutthaya Railway Station

and 1.4 km from Wat Mahathat.

Baan Lotus

A favourite of backpackers, Baan Lotus is spread over two floors in a large house and all the rooms are accessed by stairs. They come in different sizes with a choice of shared or private hot-water bathroom. The rooms are all clean and simple, yet charming, with firm beds, high ceilings, hardwood and several windows.

There is a lotus pond where you can sit and contemplate and a small restaurant area next to the reception desk. There is also free wifi and regular pushbikes and mountain bikes are available for hire.

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<b>Rates:</b> sngl fan sh b-r/dble fan pvte b-r/dbl a/c pvt br: 250B/ 450B /600B
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Tel: +66 95 311680, +66 35 251988

Address: 20 Pamaprao Rd, Ayutthaya

Tel: +66 35 235592, +66 87 1070745

<bs/><bs/>Setting Here: Walk to the far northern end of Soi Farang, take a left on Maprao Road and you'll see the entrance up on the left.

b>Bann Kun Pra Guesthouse

A little expensive compared to other lodgings, as you pay for the riverside location and the view of temples in this well-regarded, atmospheric guesthouse.

Stretching along the riverside within a short walk of Chao Phrom Market, Bann Kun Pra occupies a pair of beautifully preserved teakwood houses which are over a century old. Some of the rooms have four-poster beds, dark-wood interiors, period furnishings and shared terraces looking out over the Pasak river.

Filled with portraits and antiques, the common spaces feel like a museum. In a separate building, the male and female dorms contain four single beds spread over fairly spacious rooms.

 Rates: Dorm w.fan/Dbl fan sh b-r/Dbl a/c pvt B-R: 250B/600B/1100B

b>Tel: +66 35 241978

Email: welcome@bannkunpra.com

Address: 48 Moo3 | U Thong Rd., Ayutthaya 13000

Website: http://www.baankunpra.com

<bs/><bs/>detting Here: A five-minute walk from the train station ferry pier, on the west bank of the Prasak, and 15 minutes' walk from Soi Farang.

FOOD

Ayutthaya is renowned for being one of the better eating towns in Thailand and food enthusiasts could happily spend days devoted exclusively to the food scene.

The famous "kuay tiao ruea", or boat noodles, can be found in boat noodle shops all over town. A large area at Pa Lek, which is conveniently located within

sight of the historical park, off Chikun Road, sells small bowls of noodles for 15B. Another popular area is on Uthong Road at the island's far southwestern corner.

Another notable local specialty is "roti sai mai", which can be found at "Roti Road" - a stretch of Uthong Road that runs along the southern side of the island, around Ayutthaya Hospital.

Other specialities include traditional Thai sweets and giant freshwater prawns served in riverside seafood restaurants.

All manner of local food can be found in the night market at the western end of Bang Lan Road.

Near the Soi Farang backpacker strip, a smaller collection of street food stalls are set up every night along Naresuan Road where you can find western dishes as well as Thai street food. Vegetarian food can also be found on Naresuan Road. and spicy Isaan food can be found on the far eastern side of the island.

There are numerous restaurants and 'hole in the wall' noodle and rice shops scattered throughout the city and you will never be far from tasty food.

NIGHTLIFE

Outside the tourist areas, the city is not noted for its nightlife - indeed some of the guesthouses have a 10:30 pm curfew.

The main area for foreigners to find nightlife and live music is in and around 'Soi Farang' backpacker strip and the nearby Na Naresuan Road. Pub/restaurants such as Tony's Place, Chiang Restaurant, Jazz Bar and Street Lamp often offer live music in the evenings and are popular places for the western tourists to drink their evenings away and swap travel stories.

You can also find a few Thai-style pubs with wide fronted terraces near Soi Farang on Maprao Road, and closer to the Historical Park on Naresuan Road.

INTERNET

Free wifi is widely available in Ayutthaya in all hotels and even the smallest guesthouses. Many well established restaurants also provide free wifi for diners.

The quality can vary, so if this is important to you, it is wise to check in advance before booking your room or dining. You can also buy a local sim card for your phone and get on line via the Thai 3G networks. Top-ups are available at any 7/11 store.

 Island Bicycle tour

Wat Mahathat,

Depending on where you are staying, probably a good place to start your bicycle tour of the Historical Park is at Wat Mahathat, particularly if you are coming from the area of the backpacker strip off Naresuan Road. If not, choose any starting point along our suggested route.

Located at the corner of Chikhun and Naresuan, Wat Mahathat is an excellent place to start the day as if you come at 8:00 am, (opening time) it will be cooler and the light will be good for photography. This large ruined temple is famous for the head of a Buddha image encased in the roots of a banyan tree, but there are many more fascinating ruins there for your eyes to feast on. Wat Ratchaburana

When you've had your fill, cross over Naresuan Road and go to the nearby Wat Ratchaburana to see the ancient Buddhist frescoes inside the crypt.

Wat Thammasikarat,

Next is stop is Wat Thammasikarat, which predates the foundation of Ayutthaya, and is still used as a working temple today.

Located a few hundred metres further down Naresuan Road, and then a short ride north, the temple is signposted and you will be rewarded by the sight of lion guardian statuesand the massive brick ruins of an assembly hall. The highlight here is a revered reclining Buddha covered in gold leaf in an easy-to-miss wihaan.

Vihara Phra Mongkhon Bophit.

Back on your bike, continue riding west on Naresuan Road and shortly after, the road takes a sharp left turn and veers south. Take a right turn onto the 'bicycle-only' brick lane that runs west to Vihara Phra Mongkhon Bophit.

Here you will find an impressive 20th Century, Thai-Style Hall where the bronze Buddha image in the attitude of subduing Mara (touching the earth) is situated. It has a lap measurement at 9.55 metres and a height of 12.45 metres and is one of the most revered and largest Buddha images in Thailand. Somehow it survived the Burmese attack of 1767.

Wat Phra Si Sanphet,

Just to the north of the hall is Wat Phra Si Sanphet, where you can walk around three graceful chedis, or stupas - as are also known - because they contain the remains of three Ayutthaya Kings. This is one of the outstanding highlights of Ayutthaya.

Nearby to the north and west are the sprawling grounds of the Ancient Palace which contain countless headless Buddha Images.

Wat Phra Ram

Next, head south on Naresuan Road and after a short ride you will see Wat Phra Ram on your left hand side. The grounds are very atmospheric, with ponds and footbridges, and the area is dominated by Khmer-style prang, (a tall, tower-like richly engraved spire.)

One of the nearby sights will be elephants dressed in red and gold, waiting for their daily tourist rides. Be careful to give them plenty of clearance when riding your bike.

National Museum.

Your next stop is the excellent National Museum. To get there, continue south on Naresuan Road, and go straight ahead at the traffic circle at the junction with Pathon Road. You will soon see the Chao Sam Phraya National Museum,/b> complex on the left. Turn left on Rochana Road and you will find the entrance.

By this time you will be feeling pretty hot, so the air-conditioned museum will come as a welcome relief and provide an opportunity to cool down.

Named after the third King of Ayutthaya, there are three large exhibition areas which display solid gold swords; an array of valuables discovered in the crypts of
b>Wat Mahathat and Wat Ratchaburana; a massive bronze Buddha head discovered at
b>Wat Thammasikarat; a complete traditional Thai teakwood house and an accompanying exhibition on how daily life was lived by the common people. Another section displays ancient Buddha images and other relics of Hindu/Buddhist art.

Sala Klang Jangwat Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya Building, and Visitor Information office

When you have finished at the museum, back on your bicycle and head south for a few hundred metres and take a right past the Kiatnakin Bank and then a left which will bring you to TAT's tourism centre in the impressive the Sala Klang Jangwat Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya Building, which is the old city hall.

Here you can see an exhibition of Ayutthaya history and will be provided with maps and details of places to go.

(Armed with all this information, you may wish to start your bicycle tour here.)

Khun Phaen's Residence.

Now head back north to the traffic circle, turn left onto Pa Thong Road, and a short ride will bring you to Khun Phaen's Residence. The house occupies a piece of land that once served as Ayutthaya's prison. Many prisoners were beheaded here, often after enduring horrific torture.

But the dwelling is based on a house owned by one of the main characters in
 Khun Chang Khun Phaen - a famous Thai literary epic - that recounts the

story of two men's 50-year fight over a woman. Polished teak floors and fretted walls with swing-open windows are set around a central open area. The house was constructed on broad teak stilts and fitted together without a single nail or screw.

Wat Warapho

Just a little further along the road is the Historical Park's elephant kraal.
Continue west on Pa Thon Road, and take a right (north) onto Khlong Tho Road.
Ride along this quiet leafy road for about 1km and just before you reach Uthong Road, you will see Wat Warapho on your left hand side.

This Wat is worth a brief stop and you can take a good photo shot of a Buddha image through the front window of a roofless brick hall.

Wat Lokkayasutharam.

Continue back south along the small lane, pass Wat Worrachettharam, and arrive at your next stop-off point, Wat Lokkayasutharam. The highlight here is a 42-metre-long reclining Buddha made of brick and finished with white plaster.

The image of Buddha, serenely smiling at the moment he enters Nirvana, stands eight metres tall at the head, and rests on an image of a lotus flower. Long branches reach towards the Buddha from nearby trees, making for some great photo shots.

Chedi Phra Sri Suriyothai.

Now head west, away from the Wat, along a lane that winds through some old neighbourhoods, and when you reach U Thong Road, turn left (south) and stop at
 Chedi Phra Sri Suriyothai.

The site of this Chedi was first established by King Maha Chakkraphat to honour the legendary Queen Suriyothai, who was slain while attempting to defend the king in an elephant battle near Ayutthaya, in the Burmese-Siamese War of 1548.

In the 19th century, King Rama V built a Chedi on the spot where it is thought the queen was cremated. The gold-painted chedi is topped by a slender

spire and rises from a four-sided white base. It towers over the broad trees in a park across the road from the Chao Phraya River.

Set in the small Sri Suriyothai Park with gardens, gazebos and shady trees, it makes for a pleasant stop in the late afternoon if you are starting to feel hot and weary.

Wat Chaiwatthanaram,

We suggest that the final stop in your bicycle tour is at Wat Chaiwatthanaram, just outside the perimeter of the Historical Park. This Wat looks particularly stunning in the late-afternoon light. From the chedi, you continue south on U Thong Road and then cross the bridge over the Chao Phraya River and take a left to the Wat.

King Prasat Thong had the magnificent Wat Chaiwatthanaram constructed after returning victorious from an invasion of Khmer lands in 1630.

The four spires and the central prang are in remarkably good shape. They make for one of the most stunning views in Ayutthaya when viewed from a distance. In the late afternoon, the sunlight brings out the rich tones of beige stucco and red brick. It is believed that relics of the Buddha are encased somewhere inside the main prang.

(Note- you could also include this temple as part of your "Off Island bicycle tour.")

HIGHLIGHT

 Off the Island Bicycle tour

Outside of the island-based 'Historical Park', there are a number of outlying temples and other spots which are well worth a visit if you are staying in Ayutthaya for two or more days.

If you are up to it, we suggest visiting these outlying sites by bicycle, in the same way as we have suggested for the Historical Park ride. In all, we calculate a total cycling distance of around 26km, (about 16 miles), so if you're feeling fit, why not give it a try? The roads are mainly flat, but it will get very hot in the afternoon.

Of course, you can also see these sights by rented motorbike or by car, as the routes we recommend are suitable for motorised vehicles. Or, you can simply hire a tuk-tuk or a taxi and select one or two of the most impressive attractions from our list.

Wat Phanan Choeng Worawihan

We are going to commence our "off-island tour" at Wat Phanan Choeng. It is located just off Route 3477, a few km west of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon on the south bank of the Pasak River, and covers a large area at the confluence of the Prasak and Chao Phraya rivers.

The highlight is a 19-metre-tall and 14-metre-wide Buddha image seated in the Subduing Mara posture in a richly decorated wihaan. Sculpted in 1325 from a mix of brick and plaster and later gilded, it displays an early Ayutthaya style.

The corridor leading to the principle Buddha image is studded with Chinese lanterns, banners, and a Kuan Yin image. The ordination hall features several

b>Sukhothai-era Buddha images, including a small one made of solid gold, along with a mural depicting the Buddha's enlightenment in the Central Thai style.

A separate Chinese-style building contains a shrine dedicated to a local goddess.

From here you might want to visit Baan Hollanda and the Japanese Village, as they are both within walking distance.

Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon

Our second stop is about 1.7km to the east. Riding away from Pasak River in a south easterly direction, you will pass next to the Chinese cemetery (which is worth a quick look) and then join route 3477 for 1.5km ride to Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon

Established as a meditation and study centre by King Uthong, the monastery became more closely associated with King Naresuan after he erected a
b>massive stupa</br/>b> here in commemoration of a key Siamese victory over the Burmese in 1592.

According to legend, King Naresuan single-handedly slayed his Burmese counterpart in an elephant duel to end a war in the late 16th century, after which, he commissioned construction of the towering bell-shaped stupa that still stands today. An artist's depiction of Naresuan's victorious duel can be seen in the ordination hall.

Built from brick and plaster in the Sri Lankan style, the 72-metre-tall stupa can be seen from all over town and is the only one of its kind that still stands in Ayutthaya. A steep stairway leads high up to the top of the colossal base, where a crypt houses several Buddha images. The views from here are breathtaking.

Fronting the stupa is a large seated Buddha image. You can get a great shot of the Buddha's head framed by bricks and sky halfway up the stairs. Dozens of smaller seated Buddha images border the complex and still have possession of their heads. There's also a large reclining Buddha.

 Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon is a working monastery, and many foreign monks make it here. It is also a popular pilgrimage for Thais.

Wat Maheyong

Now head northwards along route 3477 for 2.6Km. You will pass the Floating Market and Elephant village on your right, and less than half a kilometre further on, you will come to Wat Maheyong, which is also to your right, just off the 3477.

Established in 1438, the atmospheric ruins are a pleasure to wander through. After passing through a brick gate, stroll down a long walkway between brick walls draped in low-hanging trees and you will reach the remains of a large hall with most of the walls still standing but no roof.

Remains of a Buddha image sits exposed to the elements, and at the rear of the grounds is a large bell-shaped chedi made of brick and plaster that is still partially intact.

The ridged spire that once topped the chedi lies headfirst on the massive brick base, presumed to have been left exactly as it fell. Bordering the base are dozens of white-plaster elephant statues.

With few visitors, you can enjoy a few minutes of solitude wandering around the grounds which are dotted with minor chedis and ancient walls. You might like to also wander across the lane to the ponds and pavilions set amid forested grounds near the meditation monastery.

Wat Na Phra Men

Your next stop is a bit of a bike ride - altogether about 6.5km. Head south, back down Route 3477 for approx 1km and turn right at the traffic circle onto Route 309. Ride east along this road, over the Pasak River Bridge, and keep going until you reach Khlong Makharm Riang Road, not far from the Ayutthaya Palace Youth Hostel.

Turn right (north) along Khlong Makharm Riang Road and stay on this road for several kilometres, crossing over several roads, including Naresuan Road, until you reach a T-junction at Pa Maphrao Road. Here, turn left (west), and eventually you will come to another T-junction. Turn Right (north) and you will soon come to Uthong Road where you turn left (east) for a kilometre or so.

Look out for the bridge on the left hand side over the Muang River. Cross over this bridge and head north for a few hundred meters and you will reach Wat Na Phra Men

This temple was built sometime around the turn of the 16th century and is worth this side trip to see a rare early Ayutthaya-style temple that remains preserved, when most of the others were destroyed or fell into ruins.

During the siege of Ayutthaya in the 1760s, the Burmese used Wat Na Phra Men to bombard the nearby Royal Palace with cannon fire, but a Burmese commander was killed when a cannon misfired. The Thais now consider the site to have very strong spiritual powers.

The main place to visit is the eye-catching ordination hall which has remained pristine through the centuries. The front of the gabled roof features a stunning depiction of the Hindu human-bird Garuda stretching its wings atop Kali while supporting a slender-looking Vishnu.

Inside, eight massive pillars rise near a six-metre-high seated Buddha image, which is known for its distinctive headdress and other regalia. Displaying a level of detail rarely seen on such a large image, it's an exquisite example of Ayutthaya-era bronze work.

Wat Na Phra Men is very popular with merit-making Thais but has few foreign visitors.

Wat Choeng Tha

Less than 1km from Wat Na Phra Men, is the 17th-century Wat Choeng Tha ("Historic") which was once situated in front of the royal boatyard, directly across the Lopburi River from the Royal Palace.

To get there, head back south for about 500m and then take a right (west), past Q Zone Boutique resort, and you will reach your destination up ahead.

Established before the founding of Ayutthaya, the centrepiece is a medium-size Khmer-style prang built in the early Ayutthaya period and is adorned with white-stucco standing Buddha images in the 'Halting of Evil' posture. West of the prang, you'll find minor chedis along with an ancient ordination hall guarded by lion images.

Wat Phu Khao Thong

Your next stop is about 3.5km to the northwest. From Wat Choeng Tha, take the lane for about 100m in a westerly direction to the T-Junction with Route 309. Turn Left (north) and about 200m further, take a left (west). Follow this road for 2km as it heads first south west, then takes a sharp turn to the northwest, and finally take the road to the northeast. Wat Phu Khao Thong will be on your left. It will be easy to spot from a distance as it rises high above rice paddies in the countryside just outside of Ayutthaya city.

The temple is an impressive chedi whose name translates as "Golden Mount" even though it is blazing white. This is probably because it was originally gold when it was established in 1569, but was later replaced by a white chedi.

The slightly lopsided chedi is one of Ayutthaya's more imposing monuments; with its slender spire on top of a massive, four-sided base containing multiple ridges. Visitors can climb the base for a good view of the surrounding countryside.

Wat Phutthaisawan

Your final stop on your route is the most challenging - a distance of 10.3km - which takes you from the northwest side of town to the south side.

Retrace your steps from Wat Phu Khao Thong back to route 309 and then to Uthong Road. (See above directions). Turn right onto Uthong road, and ride in southerly direction down this road until you reach the bridge over the Chao Phraya River. Cross the bridge on Route 3263, and then take a right onto route 3469. Continue on this road for 6.3km, and then turn left (north) up the lane leading to the temple. A large red sign marks the entrance on the left.

This is one of the best sites in Ayutthaya. The temple was built in 1353 by King U Thong and was established in memory of the campsite where he lived while he waited for his new city to be finished on the nearby island.

The temple and the surrounding grounds are a feast for the eyes and include: five statues of Thai kings gazing across the Chao Phraya; an ancient building that served as the head monk's residence; a late-Ayutthaya period ordination hall graced with a bronze seated Buddha image along with intricate lai Thai designs painted on the pillars; and a white stucco Khmer-style prang in excellent condition - and this is just downstairs.

If you walk upstairs to the crypt you will find a pair of ancient Buddha footprint images and a reclining Buddha, along with the main reliquary and some badly faded murals. Then walk out into the square-shaped cloister that surrounds the prang. The cloister contains 105 seated Buddha images under a ceramic roof held up by ancient wooden rafters. There are some great photo-shots here of the Buddha line-up.

If you are feeling fatigued from your day's exertions, you can relax beside the river, before heading back to your lodgings.

HIGHLIGHT

Million Toy Museum

Located in the northwest of the Island, this privately owned museum occupies a b>beautiful two-storey building. It was founded by Krirk Yoonpun, a children's literature professor at Srinakharinwirot University, also an illustrator and author of children books. With dozens of windows covering all of the walls, the large building is an attraction in its own right.

A great number of Thai and foreign toys, from the distant past to present, are assembled in this museum, with the first floor showing a collection of Thai toys from <bs/>b>Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Rattanakosin periods.

/b> The second floor displays old toys from all over the world, including tin toys.

If you have kids with you, they will enjoy the amazingly large collection which includes several Godzillas, a life-sized Superman, umpteen Donald Ducks, some intriguing vintage Japanese toys and awesome Samurai figures.

There is glass case after glass case of history in the form of various knick-knack toys, games, figures, cars and dolls. There is also a large collection of antique Thai kitchenware and ceramics on the first floor

Although it cannot qualify as the definitive toy collection, the exhibits are attractively displayed and visitors will find the museum absorbing, good fun and the staff are very friendly.

When you're through, you can wander out the back to relax in the well-manicured gardens, or take a seat out front for a bowl of boat noodles. There is also a restaurant serving food and drinks.

b>Entry: Adults/Children 50B/20B

b>Open: 9.00 am - 4:00 pm (Closed Mondays)

Tel: +66 35 328949

 Address: 45, moo2, Uthong road, Ta Wasukri sub-district, Mueang Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya district.

<bs/>

don the northwest side of the island, about midway between Wat Thammasikarat and Pridi Panomyong Memorial. It is situated right at the Pratuchai School intersection.

HIGHLIGHT

Ayutthaya Floating Market

Strictly speaking, it is not really a floating market as the vendors set up their stalls on either side of wooden walkways directly over the water which is actually a large pond with an island in the middle. The market is very much a tourist attraction, with plenty of Ayutthaya T-shirts, key chains trinkets, and other cheap touristy souvenirs for sale, and most of the visitors are Thai.

But there is plenty of cheap Thai food on sale, such as noodle dishes, rice plates and Isaan food and you can dine on decks beside the water. Other stalls provide Thai snack food and drinks to go.

The market is liveliest on weekends, when you can watch cultural shows including traditional Thai dances and Thai classical music performances. Boat rides are also available at 20B, and an elephant camp employing animals trained at the Royal Elephant Kraal offers dubious elephant rides around the nearby ruins to the south of Wat Maheyong.

Entry: "Negotiable" around 20B-50B

Open: 10:00 am to 9:00 pm

Tel: +66 35 881733, +66 35 88168

Address: 65/12 Moo 7, Phai Ling, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya,

Phranakhon Sri Ayutthaya.

<bs/>

detting Here: It is marked by signs off Route 3058, about a kilometre north of the Sam Pluem Chedi traffic circle in East Ayutthaya.

<bs/>b>Japanese Village

Back in the late 16th century, many foreigners came to the Ayutthaya Kingdom to trade and when Japanese government allowed the Japanese to trade overseas, a group of them came to trade and live in Ayutthaya.

The King of Thailand let the Japanese settle outside the city centre, and all told, about 1,500 Japanese lived there. Their settlement stretched for 1km along the eastern bank of the Chao Phraya River.

Now a museum tells the story of how the Japanese influenced the city, and how it also changed them.

The two exhibition buildings include videos, comprehensive information boards and displays. One exhibit shows how the Japanese contributed to the development of Thai sweets, while on their part, the Thais influenced the evolution of Japanese rice liquor.

Another relates how most of Ayutthaya's Japanese were Christians fleeing persecution in their homeland. Nobles from Ayutthaya favoured Samurai warriors as bodyguards, and a full set of armour and swords are on display.

One of the local Japanese rulers even became governor of Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, which meant that Japan was considered an important nation by the Ayutthaya kingdom.

Outside the museum building is a peaceful Japanese garden and pavilion set alongside the river.

Entry: Adults/Students 50B/20B

Open: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Tel: +66 35 245336, +66 22 515852

 Address: Tambon Ko Rian, Amphoe Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, Phra

Nakhon Si Ayutthaya

Website: www.thai-japanasso.or.th

Getting Here: The Japanese Village is clearly signposted off Highway 3477, 1.5 km south of Wat Phanan Choeng. It is near Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon, Wat Phanan Choeng and Baan Hollanda.

b>Baan Hollanda

Dutch merchants working for the Dutch East India Company first arrived in Ayutthaya in 1604. The Thai King of the Siam,/b> allowed them to establish their first trading post in the capital in 1608.

Before long, the Dutch had a fully-fledged settlement of 1,500 people and boasted one of the more stately buildings in the city. Their compound was built out of stone and viewed with admiration by Thais who called it Tuek Daeng, or the "Red Building".

The Dutch not only involved themselves in trade but also participated in Siamese society and politics, largely because such participation served their commercial ends. Their records offer a unique insight into 160 years of trade and diplomacy,/b> with the Kingdom of Siam.

After decades of gradual excavations, Dutch and Thai historians completed the reconstruction of the "Red Building" which was opened in 2013 as the
b>Baan Hollanda Museum.</br/>

Overlooking the Chao Phraya River, the small museum contains information boards explaining the history of Dutch-Thai relations and you can learn more details of how the Dutch lived and worked here.

Take a look at the handful of antiques used by the settlers, and replicas of maps, paintings and sections of chronicles which are displayed at the exhibition.

There is an on-sight café and you can also wander next door to see a working boatyard on land that was once part of the East India Company's port.

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<br/>
<b>Entry: </b> 50B (special rates for groups and schools)<br/>
<b>Open: </b> 9:00 am -5:00 pm. (Wednesdays - Sundays)<b>Tel: </b> +66 35 235200
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Email: info @ baanhollanda.org

 Address: Soi Khan Rua, Moo 4 T. Klongsuanphlu A. Phranakorn Sri

Ayutthaya 13000

b>Website: www.baanhollanda.org

 Setting Here: Located south of the island, on the east bank of the Chao Phraya River off Highway 3477, about halfway between Wat Phanan Choeng and the Japanese Village.

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- 50+ Bookmaker bonuses.
- New 'reload' offers every day
- Full Access to our members' area.
- Full support

SIGN UP

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- 50+ Bookmaker bonuses.
- New 'reload' offers every day
- Full Access to our members' area.
- Full support

SIGN UP

4. Premium (Lifetime)

- £200 onetime fee
- Earn £1,000+ each month
- 50+ Bookmaker bonuses.
- New 'reload' offers every day
- Full Access to our members' area.
- Full support

SIGN UP

Free Trial

If you are very interested but still aren't 100% convinced, you can sign up for our free, no-obligation trial, and see how you get along. You will receive our full support and have immediate access to the members' community. No card details are required and within a few days you will see your risk free profits start to flow in.

Premium Membership

Once you have completed our free trial you will be ready to upgrade and take advantage of **all** our offers.

As well as the free bet offers, you will be advised of 'reload offers' as soon as they become available.

Once you see how easy it is to make money, you will probably want to upgrade your membership to our **Premium Yearly** or **Premium Lifetime** membership. This will assure you of more and more income for many years to come.

If there is anything you wish to know, just use the email ticket box and we will get straight back to you.

You are our valued customer and our mission is to keep you happy and satisfied so that you will remain a member of **Matched Profits** for many years to come.

So don't delay - click one of the 'sign-up' boxes and become a member of our friendly, profit earning community today. We're waiting for you.

Contact Details:

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MATCHED PROFITS

We Answer Your Questions

If it's so easy, why can't I try to do it by myself?

You are welcome to give it a try, but please be very careful. It is only risk-free as long as you know EXACTLY what you are doing. Understanding the complexities and all the 'ins and outs' of matched betting can be very daunting and is not for the feint hearted.

If you make only a single mistake, you can easily lose everything. You will also have to spend countless hours at your computer working through the offers and selecting the right bets - you won't have the benefit of the **Matched Profits** software to make the task easy and error free.

That is why it is much better to become a member of **Matched Profits** - we are the experts and you can be 100% confident of success before you make your first ever bet.

Why don't more people take advantage of this incredible offer?

The answer is that more and more people are doing just that every day. Thousands are already benefitting from matched betting, but the truth is that they have barely scratched the surface. It will take a very long time before they make even the tiniest dent in terms of the overall population. We are quite sure that this regular, risk-free and tax-free income will be available to you for many years to come.

What if I have no interest in sporting events and I have never placed a bet in my life?

It doesn't matter at all. Matched betting is not about having some knowledge of sport, and it is certainly not about gambling. It is about taking **legal** advantage of a situation which the bookmakers themselves have no problem with.

"The betting industry does not have a problem with matched betting. There's no illegal element; it's a free bet and you can do what you like." (William Hill spokesman)

How much money can I make?

A general rule of thumb is the more time you put into it the more you will take out of it. However, you will never be spending all day doing this as there are not enough bookmakers to fill up the hours. You can make as much as £500 per month by spending just 20 minutes a day at your computer and there is at least £1,500 to be earned from sign up offers. Your earnings will steadily increase as you receive free bet offers and 'reloads' that are made to you as an existing customer.

So who is suitable to join up?

The simple answer is anyone at all - provided you have a debit card and you are living in the UK. Whether you are a student, looking for an easy way to pay off your fees, or a single mum struggling to feed your children and pay your household bills, or an executive or manager or even if you own your own business - people from all walks of life are looking for a way to make ends meet and improve their quality of life. Have you ever wanted to travel? The profits you will earn from matched betting would be a great way to fund your trips to the far corners of the world.

What happens when all the 'sign up' offers are exhausted? Does that mean my income will dry up?

Many people ask the same question. The answer is that many of our long-term customers make more money from the continuous 'reload' and free bet offers made to existing customers than they did at the start of their membership. The money doesn't dry up - in fact the opposite can often be true. There are hundreds of bookmakers operating online and more are setting up business every day. This means their businesses are highly competitive and they offer free bets and reloads every day - both to attract new customers and to retain current customers.

What happens if I have problems in understanding or following the instructions?

Don't worry. The instructions are very clear, but just in case there is something puzzling you, our friendly and dedicated support staff are here to help you with any questions and we will painstakingly walk you through the steps.

Can I join if I already have multiple accounts with bookmakers?

Yes, you can - there will still be a great number of bookmakers that you are not signed up with and there will be plenty of 'reload' offers that we will steer your way.

I still don't understand why bookmakers make these free offers. If they know we are making risk free profits from them why do they do it?

This is one of the most frequently asked questions. The simple answer is that bookmakers are continually trying to attract new customers - it is essential to their business models.

Even after taking into account the 'losses' they may suffer from matched betting, giving away free bets is still one of the most effective ways to attract new punters.

When they calculate their betting odds, they always angle the odds in their favour, after taking into account their potential losses on free bets. They know that however many free bets they give away, they will always win in the end. But not from **Matched Profits!**

IT STRATEGY - FINDING SCALABLE SOLUTIONS FOR LEGACY SYSTEMS.

In today's fast moving world of technology, the reality is that most organisations - to one extent or another - will be running outdated computer systems, programming languages or application software.

Such systems, known a "Legacy Systems" are usually associated with old terminologies and processes that can longer fully meet the growing and changing business demands, and as a result, often creates endless business headaches.

Wouldn't it be great if all we had to do is throw away our old systems and replace them with new ones that contain the latest advances in technology - much the same as we might change out a laptop?

Unfortunately it doesn't work like that, as many organisations have found to their cost. Most businesses - large and small - that have been around for a while, nearly always experience major difficulties when trying to migrate from the traditional IT systems of the 80's, 90's and even the early 2,000's, to today's modern, interactive and secure information technology systems.

There are a number of reasons why companies increasingly see the need to upgrade or change out their old systems, many of which are creaking with age.

Here are some of the main issues:

- It invariably takes far too long to implement upgrades on legacy systems, and they are often delivered too late to satisfy urgent business demands.
- Demands from business managers for system enhancements are not possible at all or if they are, they will be very expensive, with no guarantee of success.
- Companies that are in fast growth mode have increasing requirements for new technology, both to develop their business and also to meet customer expectations. Business models tend to change rapidly in new and innovative ways. In these situations, old legacy systems haven't got a hope in keeping up with modern IT demands.

- The cost of maintaining, and enhancing legacy systems can be prohibitively expensive and frequently have a serious impact on bottom line profits.
- IT staff often tend to live in their own little world where they are dedicated to maintaining their legacy systems in isolation. They often lack the mindset to understand and appreciate the new demands of modern businesses, and provide the necessary support and passion to be a key part of the business.
- Many businesses are reluctant to ask their passive IT staff for urgent enhancements. They end up compromising their business growth plans due to lack of faith in IT staff to deliver the necessary changes. Sometimes, departments feel obliged to develop their own bespoke PC systems which not only diverts resources, but also serves to make the company's IT infrastructure even more of a mess.
- IT Staff who have the required technical knowledge on the maintenance of legacy systems are becoming few and far between. Imminent staff retirements will make this knowledge gap ever more critical.
- Vendors who provide the maintenance contracts for legacy systems have
 often withdrawn their support services due to the long passage of time.
 Often, the system designers have moved on and the documentation has
 either been lost or incomplete. Or more typically vendors have been
 acquired by or merged with other companies and can no longer offer
 support.
- The security on legacy systems often falls short of what is required in a modern IT environment.

In a nutshell - Your business has changed, but your software hasn't.

Your ancient, smoke belching Rover 2000 needs to be replaced with a sleek, economical hi-tech Audi Quattro.

So what is the Solution?

There are a number of varying strategies available to companies who have legacy systems which are either hampering their business growth or becoming prohibitively expensive. Most businesses will have a measure of both problems.

The first step towards finding the right solutions is to engage an experienced IT Service provider.

The service provider should be able to demonstrate an impressive track record of advising and working with organisations to deal effectively with their legacy systems in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

How can an IT Service Provider help?

Assess the size of the problem - We will undertake an in depth examination of your business and existing systems to identify the various alternatives open to you. We will assess the precise levels of risks, and the ongoing costs associated with each option.

We will carry out a weaknesses and threats analysis. Maybe you are not fully aware of the extent that your business is at risk. We will determine whether your system is well past its 'use by date', whether it is keeping up with increased and changing demands, and whether it's becoming a technodinosaur that is a constant drain on valuable resources.

Recommend the best way forward - Some of the options we will consider include:

- A complete replacement of your legacy system from scratch with modern hardware and software solutions that will meet your varying business needs. A new system that will be much easier to use, to change and to maintain; and will be cost effective. However, it is unlikely that this option will be suitable for most companies especially large businesses whose legacy systems have been the mainstay of their businesses for many years possible decades.
- ➤ Carry out a partial upgrade of your existing legacy system to satisfy your new business needs and security concerns.
- ➤ Carry out some maintenance work on your existing system which will increase the functionality and extend the lifetime.
- ➤ Create better documentation to ease the maintenance of your existing systems.

In considering the above options, we will need to determine whether a pragmatic approach to the existing system will be the best course forward, after taking into account 'what works' and what needs to be enhanced and/or fixed.

Creating a new system from scratch will be a major undertaking but with our expertise and experience there is no reason why it shouldn't work, provided that it is properly planned and that full attention is paid to data migration from day one. **The quality of the migration will determine the success of the project**, and if carried out successfully, your new system will more than pay for itself by providing a more efficient, user friendly and flexible service.

But in today's ever-changing hi-tech world, it is more than possible that none of the above 'traditional' IT solutions will provide you with your best course of action.

In recent years, the advent of **Virtualisation and Cloud Computing** have revolutionised the ways that can bring your legacy systems to a new level of functionality and make them work better for you.

In today's hi-tech climate, the key is often to maintain necessary legacy systems that simply cannot be put out to pasture, while at the same time, you go full steam ahead with developing new systems that will enable growth and innovation.

It sounds complex - and it is. It will need to be well managed by top professionals, but it can provide you with the best and most cost effective way of moving forward.

What is virtualisation?

In IT terms, it has come to mean the creating of a virtual (rather than actual) version of computer hardware platforms, operating systems, storage devices, and computer network resources. A virtual computer acts like a real computer with an operating system. Software running on these virtual machines is separated from the underlying legacy hardware resources.

In hardware virtualisation, the 'host' machine is the actual machine on which the virtualization takes place, and the 'guest' machine is the virtual machine. Virtualisation can be achieved in a number of ways. For example, by adding new interfaces that provide a web-based interface to a terminal-based mainframe application.

Or, by switching to Automated Business Process (ABP) software, it will generate complete systems which can interface with the organizations' legacy systems. The users are then insulated from the inefficiencies of the legacy systems, and the changes can be easily and quickly implemented.

New security measures, (e.g. biometric), are difficult to implement on legacy systems and one solution is to use a proxy server to sit between users and the mainframe to implement secure access to the legacy application.

To summarise, there are a number of different types of hardware virtualisation.

Full virtualization - This is a complete simulation of the host, (actual), hardware to allow the guest operating system software to run without modification.

Partial virtualization - this is when only some of the host functions are simulated, and guest programmes may need some modifications.

Para virtualization - Here, the host hardware environment is not actually simulated. The guest programs operate in their own domains, as if they are running on a separate system. In this case, guest programs are modified to run in this environment.

The main aim of virtualization is to centralise the administrative tasks and improving the scalability and hardware-resource utilisation. It enables several operating systems to run on a single central processing unit (CPU). This will reduce overhead costs, and facilitate updates and rapid changes to the operating system without user downtime or disruption.

Virtualisation is a great tool and a good solution to the thorny issue of updating legacy systems to make them work in today's business environment.

There is no question that Virtualization can provide a more straightforward migration path. It avoids the usual pitfalls by retaining the separation and run-time attributes of each legacy compute load in its own virtual machine.

What is Cloud computing?

"Cloud" is a metaphor for the "Internet". It is the storing and accessing data and programs over the Internet instead of from a physical computer's hard drive. It usually involves using a network of remote servers on the Internet to store, manage, and process data, rather than on a local server or personal computer.

You can order computing services on demand - such as server time, network storage, whenever it is needed, without the need for any human interaction with your Cloud Service Provider.

One of the major advantages of Cloud Computing is in the substantial cost savings that can be achieved.

You only pay for the services provided. You avoid the huge capital investment that you would normally expect to pay in setting up your own physical computer hardware and processing networks.

Cloud computing avoids the need for major capital outlays that can only be recovered over a long period of time. It enables piecemeal investment in a shared infrastructure which avoids large outlays and results in faster implementation.

Benefits of new applications can also be assessed at a much earlier juncture, minimising the risks of costly software failures.

Companies with legacy systems can particularly benefit from the fast development of sophisticated Cloud computing facilities. Here are some of the ways your legacy system issues can be at least partly resolved.

Hide your IT messes - The only thing that users and customers see is the intuitively designed smart solutions from your cloud applications. These are easily accessed from multiple devices and can be quickly scaled up to meet increased demands.

Easy Access to Legacy System data - Cloud applications can be deployed which can extract data from back-end legacy systems, without the need for users to understand the complex processes involved.

Reduction in training time and costs - Most users will be easily trained as they only use state of the art devices and do not need to understand where the legacy system fits in to the overall scheme of things and how to access it.

Eliminates or reduces the need to replace or upgrade your legacy system -

Your old systems can be allowed to tick-over in the background while the users are only involved with sate of the art cloud applications. You will be able to meet your customer expectations by using the latest technological developments. Many bespoke business systems that you may have developed through the years as 'addons' to your antiquated legacy systems, can now be migrated to the cloud applications and become part of your consolidated IT infrastructure.

The most common cloud models are software as a service (SaaS), platform as a service (PaaS) and infrastructure as a service (IaaS).

The kind of model that will be needed for legacy application hosting and data storage will depend on the sensitivity of the data, as well as the ease of migration.

Virtualisation and Cloud computing

Virtualisation plays a major role in cloud computing as it provides a virtual storage and computing services to clients which is only possible through virtualisation.

In cloud computing, space/memory is virtually allocated to the users in the servers which requires a host (platform) on which the software runs, so virtualization software makes it possible to run multiple operating systems and multiple applications on the same server at the same time.

So it is possible to implement a Virtualisation of your legacy systems as part of a Cloud computing project.

Conclusions

Clearly, the task of effectively dealing the myriad problems created by having legacy systems is extremely complex. If they are not dealt with in professional and timely manner, they can become a hammer blow to your business.

But for most ambitious companies, doing nothing is not an option.

In this article we have discussed some of the many issues involved and the ways that IT Service Providers look to solve them. It is patently obvious that the choice of your ISP to advise and assist you with this process is critical.

There are many different ways to solve your legacy systems problems, and it's going to take a 'best in breed' IT professional to find the solution that is going to work for you. If the proposed solutions do not work, or if there is a failure to adequately deal with the risks of security breaches, your business will suffer serious setbacks.

If you would like to discuss these issues further, please don't hesitate to contact us and we will be delighted to talk to you and look at your particular options.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW

Never has the competition for jobs been more intense, and never has there been a greater need to present yourself in a highly professional light.

If you are worried that you do not perform well at interviews – don't despair. A few hours of diligent preparation before you attend can make a significant difference to your chances.

To help you in your efforts, here are our **ten essential steps** which, if implemented, will provide you with a much stronger basis for success when you go for your next interview.

1. Before you apply.

It is surprising how many candidates fail to properly analyse the job descriptions to check if their experience and qualifications compare favourably with the skills and background required for the job advertised.

It may well be that you have a good 'fit' but that your CV is out of date, or in some way it does not set out your relevant skills in a way that matches those listed.

So before you apply, make sure that the CV you send will convince your prospective employer that you can do the job. This becomes an essential step in your interview preparation, as you must be able to explain in detail why you are right for the job.

2. Determine the type of interview and the interviewer(s)

You wrote your letter, you attached your revamped CV and you have been called for an interview. Now you must get to work.

Your interview may be by telephone, video link, (Skype, FaceTime etc.), or for the majority, a "one to one". It may take place in the company's offices, or it may be at the offices of a recruitment agency.

If your application is for a technical position, you may be interviewed by a panel of people, containing specialists from different parts of the organisation, or you may find yourself in a group of applicants who will all be interviewed at the same time.

Try your best to find out who exactly is interviewing you. If you are unsure, you should call to inquire. Try to find out your interviewer's name and position, and what are their expectations?

Clearly, if the first interview is by someone in HR, you will not need to prepare so strongly on the technical side, as you might if the person conducting the interview is is your prospective line manager - or higher. That isn't to say that you shouldn't be ready for anything, but at least you will not be taken by surprise and put off your stride.

One trick is to check twitter and other social media put out by the company's employees who may provide some insight into how their interviews are conducted.

3. Do your research.

The more you know about the business of your prospective employer, the better. Look at the organisation's website. Read their financial reports, business plans, corporate and social responsibility strategies, social media profiles, articles/blogs, business magazines and so on, to try and get a good feel for the company.

Understand the company's direction, its technological issues, whether they have political, economic, social or environmental visions, where they fit into the industrial sector, their attitude to fossil fuels, the countries where they operate, the types of people who work there.

To do this properly, you should also look for anything on the news websites. Check industry trends, check out their competitors, the history of the company and also any adverse publicity. You can often learn more about a company by reading social media that is put out by third parties.

If possible, try to talk to current employees to get more insight into the culture of the company and how you might fit in.

4. Anticipate your interviewer's questions and prepare your answers.

Firstly make a list of the obvious questions - for example:

- Tell me about yourself.
- Where would you like to be in 5 years' time?
- Talk me through your CV.
- What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- How do you think your skills and experience will match our job description?
- Why do you want this job?
- Why did you leave (or want to leave), your last/current job?

Engineers and others with a technical background should expect questions such as:

- Provide examples of your technical/engineering/work achievements.
- What do you enjoy most/least about your technical "speciality"?
- What new technical skills have you learned in the past two years?

Write down all your answers – this is a good practice and it will help you to remember them. Don't forget to stress how your skills, achievements and successes have benefitted your previous employers.

Another good idea is to jot down three short stories about yourself which demonstrate your skills and versatility and how you have achieved measurable success.

5. Prepare questions to ask your interviewer

Most interviewers will invite you to ask them some questions. Anticipate this and write down a few that come to mind. Depending on the circumstances, it would not be inappropriate to take a list out from your bag or pocket. It shows you have given these matters prior thought.

Questions may be along these lines:

- What markets do the company plan to explore and expand into over the few years?
- Tell me more about the organisation's culture.
- Clarify (if not already clear) the salary and compensation package on offer.

- What are the opportunities for advancement?
- What are the next steps in the hiring process?
- Follow-up on subjects that have been touched on during in the interview.
- Ask your interviewers about their own roles in the company and try to bond with them.

6. Practice your interview techniques

Firstly, practice looking in a mirror; speak out loud, and picture yourself - poised, confident and articulate. If at all possible, find a good friend who you can practice with – as many times as he/she will allow. Take note of his/her feedback, but also use your own judgement on how it went.

You can even record yourself on video and play it back to see how you come across.

If this is a very worrying issue, and if you have enough time, try to obtain professional help and attend 'mock interviews' and get experts to evaluate your performance and advise you.

7. Plan how you will behave during the interview

Following on from above, here are some general tips on how to conduct yourself.

- Look everyone in the eye and smile. Try to be as personal as possible just be yourself.
- Answer questions clearly and concisely. Don't mumble.
- Ask relevant questions at appropriate moments.
- Show courtesy to everyone during the interview process.
- Be honest and enthusiastic.
- Keep your accounts of your career to date and personal matters short and simple. Don't ramble or become boring.
- Avoid slang or questionable humour.

- Don't criticise former employers.
- Try to control your nerves. there are many ways to do this, such as being fully prepared, taking deep breaths, keeping notes to hand in case your mind goes blank, and so on.

8. Plan the interview day and your journey to their office.

Have a good night's sleep and don't wake up with a hangover. If it's a morning interview, have a good breakfast, and leave home allowing yourself a lot more time than you will need to get there. The worst thing you can do is arrive late, or rush to get there on time – and become hot and flustered.

Make sure you have the precise directions to the office to hand, and ideally arrive early enough to have a hot drink in a nearby café. This will help you to relax and allow your nerves time to settle down. You can also have a last minute review of your interview notes and CV.

9. Dress appropriately.

If you are dressed well, not only will it impress your prospective employers, but it will make you feel confident and more at ease.

What is the dress code for interviews?

There are no hard and fast rules. For most people, it means that they should dress how they normally would do for work, but making sure that their clothes are clean and well pressed. Avoid wearing material that will easily crease or wrinkle. No flashy accessories or overt designer labels, and materials should be of subdued colours.

It is always better to be too formal than go too casual. This will usually mean wearing a suit – even though the company may be noted for its informality. You will not lose any points for this. If the dress has been defined as casual, then turn up in business casual, rather than jeans and a t-shirt.

If in doubt, men should wear a white shirt, a dark-colored suit and tie and dark-coloured shoes. Women should wear a smart knee-length skirt suit in a dark colour, sheer, non-patterned hosiery, closed toe shoes and subtle makeup.

You can always call the HR department and ask for advice on what to wear.

10. What to take to the interview

Last but not least, here is a handy list of what to take with you. Add or delete items according to your particular situation.

- A note containing full details on how to get there, or a street map, or at least the postcode of the organisation so that you can find it on your mobile phone.
- > The names of your interviewer and the initial contact upon arrival.
- ➤ Qualification certificates and a portfolio containing samples of your work, (if relevant).
- ➤ Photo ID (e.g. passport or driving licence).
- > Job description.
- > CV, letter of application and interview invitation.
- > Extra copies of your CV on quality paper.
- ➤ A notepad or professional binder and pen.
- > A list of references.
- Any personal information you might need to complete your job application.

THE CASE FOR RECURRING CARD PAYMENTS VS DIRECT DEBITS

In many ways, **Direct Debits** are very similar to **Recurring Card Payments**, but "the devil is in the detail". If you examine how each method works, you will find that there are a few crucial differences that tip the balance in favour of Recurring Card Payments for most merchants.

Let's set the scene:

- A recurring card payment often referred to as a "Continuous Payment
 Authority" (CPA), is an authorisation provided by the customer that permits
 you, as the merchant, to take payments from them by either debit or credit card.
 These payments can vary in frequency and amount and will remain in force
 until the customer cancels the arrangement.
- A direct debit (DD) is a very similar process to the above, except that in this case the customer authorises the merchant to take money directly from his bank account.
- Direct debits have been around for many years, whereas recurring card payments have been a relatively recent phenomenon, and in the past few years there has been a growing demand from the buying public for merchants to offer customers CPA's rather than the traditional DD's.
- If you can respond to the demand from customers who want recurring card
 payment arrangements, you will clearly be at advantage over competitors who
 do not offer such a service, and you are more likely to improve your customer
 retention rates.

Why do many customers prefer a CPA to a DD?

There are a number of key reasons for this, which we will now discuss.

- In this digital age, the younger age groups are far more in tune with the use and flexibility of credit and debit cards especially where short to medium term payment arrangements are concerned. They use their cards for most things in their lives and they feel more at home with managing such arrangements with their cards. The perception amongst many is that direct debit arrangements are old-fashioned and belong to a bygone age.
- Direct debits are often regarded as more appropriate for long-term payments arrangements such as annual subscriptions and the like.
- In many situations, it is easier for customers to tick the box on a CPA form at the checkout, rather than having to fill out a laborious direct debit mandate form.
- To many, the act of authorising their bank to make payments feels like a more significant financial commitment than simply authorising recurring card payments.
- They are less bothered about handing over details of debit/credit card information, which expire regularly and can be easily cancelled, rather than giving out bank account details which are much longer term and may prove more problematic if anything goes wrong.
- Many cardholders prefer using their cards to pay bills as they benefit from interest free payment terms which can be quite considerable and often become an important feature of personal financial management.
- Cardholders will earn loyalty points, air miles and other benefits, based on usage.
- They trust the card brands like Visa and MasterCard.
- Banks will charge them if they cannot make a direct debit payment, but credit cards do not.

"Good! I've got that - but apart from giving my customers what they want, how else will it benefit my business?"

- 1. If you are a small or recent start-up merchant, you may not yet be in a position to offer direct debit services (PDD), as you will first have to gain "Automatic Direct Debit Instruction System" (AUDDIS) status from the bankers. This involves a vetting and technical checking process before they will grant you authorisation.
- 2. Even once you have a direct debit system set up, variable and often lengthy settlement processing times can create major reconciliation headaches.
- **3.** On the other hand, CPA is easy to set up and doesn't require any special training, or dedicated resources. You will usually receive your payments quicker through a CPA than a DD.

Indeed, all your headaches will vanish overnight if you choose the right Payment Gateway Provider.

- **4.** Direct Debits are sometimes returned unpaid *after* you have provided the service. Even though a membership will be immediately activated upon signing the DD authorisation, the bank may reject the payment due to insufficient funds several days later, after the customer has had enjoyed the benefits of membership.
- 5. With CPA, you will recieve instant authorisation or rejection of the payment request, which again means that the reconciliation process is much more straightforward. CPA is altogether a much more contemporary and simple approach to recurring payments.

"Which categories of merchants will benefit the most by offering a recurring payment service?"

Almost any merchant who is selling goods or services that requires regular or periodic payments - whether they are hard goods that will be paid for over a short to medium period of time - or more likely, they are offering a wide range of services such as:

- ➤ Memberships and periodic subscriptions to fitness centres and other clubs/organisations.
- Magazine, news subscriptions (hard copy and online).
- ➤ Online software and computer security subscriptions and other internet services.
- > Security contracts.
- ➤ Wine & food clubs.
- > Private health providers.
- > Rent & utilities.
- > Internet service providers.
- > Satellite or cable TV service providers.
- Mobile and fixed phone contracts.
- ➤ Mobile phone apps, etc.
- ➤ Insurance services auto, home, holiday health, etc.

As you can see, the list is endless, so if you are serious about offering a first class recurring payment service to your customers, here are the steps you will need to take:

- 1. Select a **reputable gateway provider** who will provide you with the software to set up an online interface with your customers. You will then be able to effectively manage your customers' payments and ensure all the transactions are properly processed by the banks in a timely manner.
- 2. Explain the process to your customers so that they understand how it works and when they will have the payments charged to their card.
- 3. In order to provide the maximum security to your customers, you should seriously consider working with your gateway provider to set up **tokenisation solutions**. This will mean that no credit card information is

kept in your own online or IT environment and the customers' personal card data is replaced by a token, which has no intrinsic or exploitable meaning or value.

If you wish to discuss any of the issues relating to the setting up a recurring payments system for your company, please contact us and we will be happy to provide you with an obligation-free consultation.

http://burningtree.co.uk/what-does-brexit-mean-for-eu-data-protection-laws

WHAT DOES BREXIT MEAN TO EU DATA PROTECTION LAWS?

As far as the Data Protection Landscape is concerned, BREXIT couldn't have come at a more challenging time - some might say fortuitous time. In this article, I will examine all the implications and deal with some of this 'false optimism'.

Earlier this year, the EU regulators adopted a new EU data protection framework, which will **come into force in all EU countries on 25 May, 2018.**

It takes the form of a **Regulation**, which means it is binding on all member states, without the need for national legislation. The new **General Data Protection Regulation**, (**GDPR**), replaces the current Directive and it places many new and heavy obligations on those affected. In order to comply, all relevant organisations within the EU will need to invest considerably, in terms of time and money.

Before we look at the likely impact of BREXIT on these new rules, let us take a brief look at what is involved here.

- 1. Data Processors outside the EU The new GDPR includes all data controllers and processors that are located outside the EU, if some, (or all), of their processing activities are directed at data subjects within the EU. Under current legislation, this is not the case. Under the new rules, many external organisations will be required to appoint a representative in the EU.
- 2. **Expanded Role for Data Processors -** The new rules impose onerous obligations and responsibilities on data controllers. These include:
 - Carrying out a risk assessment on processing procedures. Controllers must implement new procedures, identify high-risk operations and consider the potential risks. They must put into place appropriate systems to minimise these risks. There are crippling fines for getting this wrong.
 - Implementing data protection by design and by default Ensure that privacy for data subjects is properly protected.
 - Keeping a detailed written record of processing activities carried out by each controller.

- Appointing a Data Protection Officer, (DPO) if the processing is carried out by a public authority, or is considered to be on a 'large scale'.
- Appointing an EU representative if the organisation is not established in the EU.
- Notifying any data breach to the Data Protection Authority (DPA) within 72 hours. In most circumstances the breach should also be notified to affected subjects without undue delay.
- Providing information to data subjects at the same time as the data is obtained. Existing procedures which provide for "fair processing notice" will need to be checked, as the new requirements in the GDPR are much more detailed and demanding.
- Obtaining the consent to the processing of a subject's personal data.
 Consent must be as simple to withdraw it as it was to give in the first place. Explicit consent must be obtained for the processing of sensitive data. Existing consents will only apply if they comply with the new conditions.
- 3. **Fines** (**Penalties**) A tiered penalty system has been established, ranging from fines of 2% of worldwide turnover plus €10m for each breach, up to 4% 5% of turnover and €20m for each breach.
- 4. **New European Data Protection Board -** An independent EDPB will be set up to replace the existing 'Working Party'. Its obligations will include providing opinions and guidance, and ensure the consistent application of the GDPR.
- 5. **Binding Corporate Rules -** BCR's must be legally binding on every member of the group of undertakings/enterprises, **inside or outside the EU**, **including their employees**
- 6. **International Transfers of Data**. The issues of a "Safe Harbour" have not yet been fully resolved, but the new regulations include many new requirements, such as whether data subjects have been properly informed of the risks of transfer.
- 7. **Data Subjects' Rights -** The new regulations considerably reinforce individual's rights as can be seen from the foregoing. It includes the right to have access to subjects' data, the right to restrict or object, the right to

receive back their data in a commonly used format, and the right to erasure and to "be forgotten" - all of these without undue delay

How will BREXIT affect companies and organisations within the UK?

The simple answer is that BREXIT will probably have little effect on the need to comply with the new GDPR. Most - if not all - organisations doing international business should be already taking preliminary steps to comply.

Even before the results of the referendum were known, the UK's **Information** Commissioner's office, (ICO), issued a statement that "the UK will continue to need clear and effective data protection laws, whether or not the country remains part of the EU."

More recently, the ICO stated:

"The Data Protection Act remains the law of the land irrespective of the referendum result... If the UK is not part of the EU, then upcoming EU reforms to data protection law would not directly apply to the UK. But if the UK wants to trade with the Single Market on equal terms we would have to prove 'adequacy' - in other words UK data protection standards would have to be equivalent to the EU's General Data Protection Regulation framework starting in 2018."

Much will depend on the negotiations that precede BREXIT. But whatever is finally agreed, the fact remains that in all likelihood, the UK will still be an EU member in May 2018, when the new Regulation comes into effect. This means that UK companies should take steps to comply - or risk massive fines.

So the ICO statement and the likelihood of fines for non-compliance are two good reasons why UK should take the GDPR seriously.

But there is more.

As the ICO states, if companies in the UK wish to continue to trade with the EU, they really will have little choice but to comply.

What are the benefits and/or alternatives to non-compliance with GDPR?

"DP Haven?" - Some have talked about creating a 'data protection haven', (similar to a tax haven), to attract business to the UK. But it is really difficult to see how the UK could get away with implementing privacy laws that are not substantially similar to the GDPR. The EU already has regulations regarding the transfer of data from the EU to other countries, and they are currently engaged in a protracted dispute with the USA over the issue of US data flows. This can only become more protracted under the new Regulation.

"DP Light?" - Others have talked about the UK reviewing all its data laws on data protection and that the UK should move to a much 'lighter regime'. We would then need to convince the EU that our new, alternative regulations are acceptable.

But if the UK tried to avoid some of the more onerous provisions of GDPR, it is highly unlikely that the UK could win their agreement. The UK and the Commission have a long history of disagreements concerning the implementation of data protection laws to the standards required by Europe.

The recent invalidation of "Safe Harbour", following the decision handed down by the Court of Justice of the European Union, (CJEU), clearly indicates the likely approach of the Commission. If it has to make an assessment of the UK's post-Brexit new data protection regime, the plain truth is that the UK is already pushing at the limits of what is permissible under current EU DP law. It is unlikely to succeed with anything much short of total compliance.

If the UK wants to position itself as a global hub for international business, technology, data, science medical research and so on, it will have to be very circumspect in finding the right balance in their post BREXIT DP legislation. They will have to keep the EU happy, as well as being able to deal on an equal footing with the rest of the world.

In view of all this, I reiterate what I stated at the top of this article. Businesses and undertakings in the UK will be well advised to commence initial planning for the introduction of the main provisions of the GDPR, and keep a close watch on events.

Here are some key actions that you should now consider.

- 1. Implement procedures and policies that allow for a quick reaction to data breaches.
- 2. Establish a framework for accountability, and prepare to implement procedures and policies that will ensure that you will meet the required standards, as set out in the Regulation.
- 3. Ensure that privacy is an integral feature of into any new processing procedures or new IT products.
- 4. Review the data processing you currently undertake and establish the legal basis upon which you use subjects' personal data. Do you purely rely on 'data subject consent', and if so, can you demonstrate legitimate interest in processing the data which is not overridden by the interests of the data subject?
- 5. Check your privacy notices and policies they should be transparent and easy to access and understand.
- 6. Review the additional rights of data subjects as set out in the Regulation. Ensure you have a legitimate reason for the storing of personal data, and that these reasons override the interests of data subjects.
- 7. If you provide DP services to third parties, carry out a thorough review of your systems and identify areas that may need enhancing or changing. Assume that customers will expect your systems to be GDPR compliant
- 8. Review your international data transfers, be they 'intra-group', or to third parties. You must ensure there is a legitimate basis for transferring personal data to jurisdictions that are not recognised by the EU as having adequate data protection regulation. This is not a new problem, but under the new GDPR penalty regime, non-compliance could be disastrous.

In summary, there is much to think about and immediate actions need to be taken. These thoughts and actions will have little to do with the BREXIT negotiations - as we already know the likely outcome as far as UK's compliance with GDPR is concerned.

http://www.securetrading.com/blog/two-step-authentication-how-will-this-affect-my-business/

TWO STEP AUTHENTICATION – HOW WILL THIS AFFECT MY BUSINESS?

Last November, the EU lawmakers formally adopted the new **Payment Services Directive**, (**PSD 2**), into law, and the current 28 member states will be required to introduce national legislation to implement these new rules by 13th January 2018.

Payment Service Providers, (PSP) which are currently authorised under PSD 1, will have until 13th July 2018 to fall into line with the new directive.

While the UK's positon on this is uncertain, there is little doubt that PSD 2 will also be implemented in the UK by the Financial Conduct Authority, (FCA).

This is because firstly, the directive will come into force during the 2-year negotiation period for the UK's exit, but also, crucially, because **payment service providers that wish to operate within the EU will be required to adopt PSD 2 regulations,** whether or not their host country is a member of the EU.

Indeed the FCA has already stated on its website that they are "...fully supportive of the objectives behind the guidelines..."

The PSD 2 directive contains a number of regulations that will strengthen the security for online retailers and their customers, including such matters as **end-to-end encryption**, **limiting login attempts and strengthening servers with secure configurations** well as making some important changes in how they charge their fees.

But the most significant change will be the compulsory introduction of a two-step authentication process - also known as "two-factor authentication" (2FA) - for customers when registering cards, and making credit transfers or card payments.

This is in response to the unacceptable volume of hacking and data breaches, which are rarely out of the news, and which caused **European card fraud losses** in 2013 amounting to €1.55 billion. Most of this fraud involved "card not present" (CNP) fraud, and a single major PSP has reported 133,000 fraudulent

conversions in March 2015 alone in the UK - equating to a card's details being stolen every 20 seconds.

All too often we hear about stolen password databases, phishing attacks, malware that reads our keystrokes and even credit card skimmers.

Clearly something must be done.

So what is two-step authentication?

This is a combination of something the user *knows*, (e.g. a pin or password) with something the user *has*, (e.g. a token or mobile/smart phone) or something the user *is*, (e.g. a fingerprint or retina recognition).

The days are gone when we can ensure transaction security with the use of just a single password or pin number for all manner of reasons; not least of which is the failure by so many users to memorise strong passwords and the potential for password theft and hacking.

We are now well into the world of two-step authentication and it was only a matter of time before the regulatory authorities turned their attention to introducing additional security measures for PSPs.

Most, if not all banks, have already introduced two-step authentication - typically by use of a token, a card sentry machine or a "onetime password", (OTP) via mobile phones in addition to the traditional password. Even social media organisations and other internet institutions such as Google, major email providers, FaceBook, Twitter and LinkedIn now offer users the option of two stepauthorisation.

On-line retailers cannot turn back the clock - nor would the sensible ones want to. It is the age of the "Pareto principle" where it is calculated that by using two step authentications, we can safeguard approximately 80% of all transactions, at relatively little cost.

That's all very well, but what about the potential increase in Cart Abandonment?

There is no point in pretending that this may not be an issue for retailers. Many of you will already be aware of the **recent research that has concluded that over** 67% of online sales are lost due to cart abandonment. But you should also be aware that there are a host of reasons why customers abandon their carts, and in any event, many customers return later. Top of the list of the 14 main reasons for cart abandonment are:

- Unexpected costs.
- Just browsing.
- Better price elsewhere.
- Decided against buying.

All of these issues need to be addressed, but they have little to do with any changes in the payment authentication process.

Then we come to the area that concerns us as far as the payment process is concerned. Amongst the 14 main reasons for abandonmnet - more than halfway down the list in order importance - we find reasons such as:

- Website navigation too complicated.
- Process was taking too long.
- Concerns about payment security.
- Payment declined. and the key one:
- Excessive payment security checks.

Many of the reasons for cart abandonment can be addressed by retailers by improving their websites and the way they do business. Here is a list of key 'improvement points' you should seriously consider.

- Upgrade your software to simplify the checkout process by reducing the number of fields/steps in the checkout process.
- Allow the use 'back buttons' so that customers do not have to start all over again.

- Arrange fields in a user-friendly order, and include a progress bar.
- Collect email addresses early on in the process allowing you to follow
 up in the event of cart abandonment. Have a good, efficient automated
 system of email follow up.
- Upgrade your website servers to ensure there are no website crashes or 'hangings'.
- Offer price guarantees and refunds if a customer is not satisfied.
- Add explanation/ clarification labels
- Have a "guest" checkout never insist on customers registering and logging in.
- Show all your costs upfront, including VAT, delivery charges etc not at the final check-out stage. Consider free shipping.
- Show thumbnails and enlarged images.
- Prominently display security logos.
- Offer a chat box/ telephone support

If you implement some or all of the above, you will reduce your cart abandonment rates and mitigate the effects of having to introduce a two-step payment authentication process.

Customers will be drawn to your website rather than your competitors, because of your fast, efficient and safe checkout process.

But the most important way you can convince your customers to accept the twostep authentication process is by pointing out:

1. **It is in the customer's best interests** - as it will substantially improve the security of their online transactions and help to put the crooks out of business.

2. By law, the two step authentication process will soon become mandatory for all payment service providers, which means that in future, for all customers, it will be part and parcel of shopping online.

Remember, in this digital age nothing stays the same for long. Be one of the first to embrace this new aspect of online shopping and get one-step ahead of your competitors. If you want to discuss this further, please feel free to contact us any time.

HOW TO AVOID 10 COMMON REASONS FOR FAILURE WITH YOUR IT OUTSOURCING PARTNERS.

It is common knowledge that there is an unacceptably high failure rate in outsourcing IT. It is estimated that 25% of all outsourcing contracts end up in total failure, with hundreds of millions of pounds being wasted.

Headline mega failures have involved some of the biggest players in the business, such as **IBM**, with the failure of their \$5 billion dollar contract with **JP Morgan**. Then there is **EDS who had to write off more than \$500M** dollars following its failed IT contract with The US navy.

Nearer to home, we constantly read about IT outsourcing failures in commercial organisations, especially in the banking sector, such as the ongoing **Royal Bank of Scotland IT fiasco**.

In the UK public sector, there are numerous instances of **IT disasters with local authorities**, such as the recent cancellation of a £160M contract between Cornwall County Council and BT, which was scrapped, only 2 years into its 10-year duration.

Then we have the costly IT failures within the **UK Government** itself. Head of the list is **ATOS**, who has continually failed to deliver on its commitments, prompting the Government to review more than £500M worth of IT contracts it holds with the European IT giant.

The list is endless: The NHS, the Universal Credit Scheme rollout, the failed £60M Scottish Police IT project, and so on.

Never has there been a time to be extremely circumspect in your selection of the right IT partner. Whatever your IT needs may be, failure to engage the right company will cost you dear in terms of financial outlay and future performance. In extreme cases it can lead the collapse of your business or the overhaul, (including staff dismissals) of a public department.

The first step in finding an IT partner that is right for you is to understand the reasons why so many IT outsourcing partnerships fail.

Here is an honest and forthright list of the "ten reasons for failure" that I have put together to help with your selection. My list sets out many of the common mistakes and errors that are frequently made on both sides of the partnership.

Let's not forget - it *is* a two-way partnership in which both parties have crucial roles to play. Both sides must take their share of the blame if things go wrong.

1. Choosing the lowest price and squeezing the IT provider's profit margins. If your main contract criteria is to choose the cheapest IT company, you will almost certainly get what you pay for. Many businesses opt to outsource to cheaper offshore companies without considering the problems that may lie ahead, in terms of communication issues, quality of staff, and cultural aspects.

Consider carefully how your structure you contract. Clauses regulating costs and delivery that are specifically designed to financially punish your IT provider for non-compliance may be self-defeating. If you try to pare down the contractor's profit margins to a bare minimum, they may look to recoup their losses in any way they can. It will set the partnership off on the wrong foot, with one side trying to strangle costs and the other side trying to generate an acceptable profit. It won't bode well for a happy outcome.

Rather than simply choosing the lowest bidder, you should award the contract on the basis of the company's ability to do the job. You should take into account their previous track record, the quality of their staff and whether you feel they are a good fit in terms of personal relationships

2. Failure to ensure that the technical specifications are an integral, comprehensible part of your contract. Know what you are paying for, and don't leave it to the IT company to throw the specs together in an

incomprehensible technical rider full of IT jargon. It is essential that you fully understand what you are paying for, precisely what is being provided and why. Don't be afraid to discuss and ask until you are satisfied.

3. **Poor Communications**. As mentioned above, miss-communication often occurs if you opt to outsource the project or IT service offshore. As well as language issues, there are time-zone differences, which means that you and your staff will have to work extended hours in order to keep in touch, which will lead to fatigue, bad morale and mistakes.

But there can also be communication issues with UK based IT companies. Make sure the IT staff are on the same wavelength as your own staff and that there is a good mix of personalities who can work together in harmonious teams. Bad communication can seriously impact the success of the service or project.

4. Failure to recognise and accept the need for flexibility. IT infrastructure can be out of date - even obsolete - within months of implementation. Technical advances and new developments in IT happen so fast that you have to decide from the outset whether you are going to be flexible or inflexible on what is being delivered.

In the long-term, failure to agree to common sense changes as the contract plays out could spell failure and a huge waste of money. 'Contract flexibility' as the project develops will ensure that you keep up with the latest IT advances and that your project remains relevant.

5. Micromanage the Service Provider. If you have selected the right contractor who has all the necessary skills execute the work as defined in your contract, it makes little sense to continually tell them what to do. Having built good communications and working relationships, you should allow them to use their skills to manage the project or service for you.

By all means keep yourself regularly informed. Understand what is being done and discuss any problems with their senior representatives, but let them get on with it. Micromanagement can lead to bad morale, even resignations, which will result in a less than 100% effort. In extreme cases, it can lead to failure of the project.

6. **Expectation mismatch**. It is often the case that salesmen will oversell the contract. They frequently promise many things that are not included in the final contract, so it is essential that you and the contractor are in total agreement on what is to be delivered.

All too often the client signs the contract, assuming that all the "bells and whistles" that were initially promised are still included. They then let the IT team get on with it, without paying attention to the detail. So it's not only essential to know what is being delivered, but it's also important to become an integral part of the delivery process and to be kept informed at every stage.

- 7. Failure to recognise the Service Provider as a strategic Partner. In long-term IT projects and provision of IT services, your service provider can become a valuable partner in helping your business to grow. Let them know that they are contributing to the success of your business, and they are not just performing IT tasks in isolation. The rewards of this approach can be considerable.
- 8. Outsourcing the wrong functions. Make sure that you understand what IT functions are better kept in-house and which ones can be successfully out-sourced. Which areas of your business will offer the best value for money if outsourced? Which areas will benefit by being manged by IT professionals who can spearhead key changes and implement new technology? A good IT contractor will be happy to discuss these various options with you.

9. **Failure to properly manage any changes in requirements.** Many project failures can be attributed to the inability of management to manage add-ons and any re-definitions of the contract.

A flexible contract (see above) will help in this approach. But changes to the contract are often predicated by changes in the business model or aspects of IT that weren't properly considered at the outset. Delays and uncontrolled cost increases can often spell not only doom to the project, but also to your business as you fall behind your competitors. The solution is to get the contract as relevant as possible from day one, and if changes become necessary, it is essential that they are well managed and that costs are controlled.

10. Failure to recognise and manage the special issues associated with public service contracts. Public authorities often try to mirror the private sector in the way they deal with IT contractors, and while in some respects this is an admirable aim, they should also understand that there are some key differences.

They must take into account the needs of not only the general public (the customers) but also the staff who provide many essential public services. This can mean a different IT emphasis than in a commercial environment.

There may also be issues concerned with cuts in public spending which can have a detrimental effect on IT contracts. Arbitrary cuts to IT funding will be counterproductive if the projects end in failure.

Another thorny issue is the sharing of IT service contracts with other local authorities. If this can be achieved, there will be obvious savings and benefits to all parties.

So there you have it - my very frank summary of ten things to avoid or to seriously consider when awarding IT outsourcing contracts. I would be delighted to discuss any of these issues with you in more detail at any time.

http://www.energi.uk.com/news/blog/Benefits-Of-Emotional-Intelligence-in-the-Workplace-161

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

What makes a good employee?

Traditionally, attributes such as **knowledge & technical skills**, **qualifications**, **experience**, **and a good track record** - not necessarily in that order - used to be the prime qualities that recruiters and HR departments looked for when assessing candidates.

Inter-personal skills, if they were considered at all, would come in a distant fifth. Even then, judgements would likely be based on the 'chemistry' between the candidate and the interviewer, and also with the line manager.

But a revolution has taken place over the past twenty years that has increasingly become part of the professional recruitment process. What was originally called psychometric testing has now developed into the internationally recognised assessment tool known as **Emotional Intelligence** rating.

Emotional Intelligence ("EI"), which is also referred to as Emotional Quotient ("EQ"), has been increasingly adopted by the world's major companies as a key part of their recruitment. Across the commercial spectrum, companies such as Google, Amazon, Starbucks, Xerox, JP Morgan, Ford, Pepsi and Berkshire Hathaway - have one thing in common. They all have CEO's rated very highly on the Emotional Intelligence scale, and they have all adopted EI as a crucial element of their recruitment and HR processes.

These days, when we at **XXX AGENCY** prepare a short-list for a vacancy, **Emotional Intelligence** is always at the top of our checklist when measuring each candidate's key attributes. It often ranks even higher than the candidate's traditional qualities, such as experience, qualifications and skill-set. Many leading companies now rank **EI** above the degree classification when hiring newly qualified graduates.

You may wonder why this should be. The answer is that we - like so many recruiters and HR departments in the UK and USA - have found that staff and

managers with high **Emotional Intelligence** means **better-managed departments. It means higher productivity, lower absenteeism, better staff morale, higher employee retention** and, the most important reason of all, a **measurable increase in profitability.**

Even in the recruitment business, we know that our most successful recruiters scored significantly higher in EI, and the most successful consultants also have high **EI**.

Case studies have shown that in jobs of medium complexity (e.g. sales clerks, mechanics), a **high EI performer has been found to be 12 times more productive than those at the bottom**. Another study involved high EI salesmen who were consistently the best achievers.

It applies across the board to any position, such as factory supervisors. In another case study, staff received training in "emotional competencies," including how to listen better and help employees resolve problems on their own. Following this, the number of lost-time accidents reduced by 50 percent, and formal grievances reduced from an average of 15 per year to 3 per year.

How can we know if a person has high EI?

In broad terms, we are talking about skills such as **leadership**, **communication**, **decision-making**, **logical thinking**, **and ability under pressure**.

More specifically, it is the individual's ability to recognise their own as well as other people's emotions. Whether they can they differentiate between different feelings and label them appropriately. And use the emotional information to guide their thinking and behaviour towards fellow employees.

Here are some of the key attributes that you will help you recognise a person with a high EI.

- ✓ They acknowledge other people's feelings
- ✓ They show that they care.
- ✓ They are aware of their own emotions and are able to control them.
- ✓ They don't talk in a negative manner.
- ✓ They have self-deprecating humour.

- ✓ They are able to empathise with fellow staff.
- ✓ They have excellent inter-social skills.
- ✓ They are not afraid of change.
- ✓ The have self-awareness. They know themselves, their skills and weaknesses and what they still have to learn.
- ✓ They're not perfectionists.
- ✓ They lead well-balanced lives, divided between work, family and outside activities.
- ✓ They are always polite and gracious to fellow-workers, at whatever level.
- ✓ They are self-motivated.
- ✓ They don't dwell on the past and always focus on the positive.
- ✓ They set boundaries for themselves and others.

Is it possible for my staff and me to improve our EI?

Yes, of course. There are a number of self-help EI courses online. Or you could arrange for your staff to go to a specialised course, either at a third party location or in-house. From experience, I can assure you that there are many things you can work on every day to slowly improve your IE. Here are a few suggestions to get you started and to pass on to your staff.

- 1. **Reduce negative emotions** try to think positively about everything in your life and recognise every time you drift into negativity. Try to stop worrying about the fear of rejection. If you worry, it can only make the fear more likely.
- 2. Try to stay calm and manage your stress levels. If you are nervous and anxious, get some fresh air, and rinse your face with cold water. If you are feeling depressed and discouraged, try to energise yourself with physical exercise.
- 3. **Try to be assertive** and when necessary, learn how to express difficult emotions.
- 4. **Always try to stay proactive and calm**, particularly when having to deal with difficult people. Before you say something you may later regret, count up to ten. Then when you have calmed down a little, try to put yourself in their shoes try to empathise with their point of view.

- 5. **Don't let adversity get you down** and try to bounce straight back. If things have gone badly, ask yourself what you can learn from it. Maybe by thinking outside the box, you can handle it better next time.
- 6. **Develop your ability to express emotions in personal relationships**. If you can, you will solidify those relationships.

If you put into practise a few of these tips, you will soon find that your state of mind is improving and that those around you are happier and more productive. Good luck.

BLACK FRIDAY - DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE

Origins

"Black Friday" is an American import into the UK retailing scene. Its origins date back to 1932, when the day after Thanksgiving Day, (the fourth Thursday of November), was regarded as the beginning of the Christmas shopping season. So most stores opened early - and in recent years, overnight - and they started to offer promotional sales.

Opinions vary as to exactly when and where the term "Black Friday" originated. Some say it dates back 1961, when the city of Philadelphia used the term to describe the excessively heavy traffic on that Friday; while others maintain there is a more recent explanation, namely the day when retailers turn their results from being "in the red" to "being in the black".

Black Friday in the UK?

The first **Black Friday** in the UK took place in 2013 when the giant American retail company, Walmart, announced that its UK subsidiary, ASDA, would be promoting the American concept of a **Black Friday**. The announcement received mixed reactions. Some online and instore retailers followed suit, while others called it an "Americanism" that would never work across the pond.

In 2014, many more UK-based retailers, including Amazon, John Lewis, Tesco and Argos, decided to join in the Black Friday marketing promotion and all of them offered huge discounts to tempt the pre-Christmas shoppers.

However, many participating stores were totally unprepared for the chaotic crowds of mass shoppers who packed their stores - which led a number of unsavoury incidents. Online, the demands were so great, that many major retail websites crashed.

What happened in 2015?

Asda, the chief originators of Black Friday in the UK, decided not to participate in 2015, citing their need to provide a better shopping experience for their customers. Other stores, such as Mothercare, New Look and Oasis, followed Asda and declined to participate - citing damage to brand reputation, the high rates of returns and a skewing of sales during the Christmas period.

But more retailers decided to join in this new marketing phenomenon. Major brands, such as Apple, Very, Currys. PC World, M&S, John Lewis, Game, and many more all increased their Black Friday discounting activities.

The withdrawals of some retailers didn't stop the 2015 Black Friday being an enormous success, and the massive discounts offered helped to drive a surprising jump in retail sales.

Official figures showed retail sales volumes were up 1.7% from the month before, beating forecasts of 0.5%, and the "year on the year" sales volumes were up 5%, beating the 3% growth forecast. Although discounting accounted for much of the increased sales volume, Black Friday sales in 2015 helped the UK to end the year on a positive note.

Amazon claimed that 2015 Black Friday was its biggest sales day in the UK ever, with 7.4 million items being ordered, and overall, shoppers in the UK spent £3.3 billion during the weekend, with £1.1 billion on the Friday itself, up from £810 million in 2014.

The major retail stores had learned from their mistakes in the 2014 fiascos. They developed more sophisticated ways to offer discounts on selected products - rather than just slapping discounts on everything. They also had a better command over their stock control. Some stores hired extra staff to provide customers with a more orderly service, and as a result, there were few of the unpleasant incidents of the previous year. This was also helped by the fact that more shoppers opted to shop on line, rather than visit the stores.

Online retailers had also learned from their mistakes and had upgraded their systems to make them more robust. They knew when to expect peak demand - which is after midnight and during the early in the morning - and they upgraded their software so that customers would be held in queues, rather than suffering annoying system crashes.

The Future of Black Friday in the UK?

There is little doubt that Black Friday is here to stay, as the figures speak for themselves. In 2014 there was a 62% sales increase over 2013, and in 2015, the sales increase was a whopping 223% over 2014. Although there may be some sales 'balancing effects' over the entire Christmas sales period - particularly from the traditional Boxing day sales which will continue to decline - the overall results for Black Friday are expected to be a resounding success.

There is no sign that the retailers who led the Black Friday charge last year won't be back with bigger and better bargains in 2016. Discounts will be negotiated in advance with suppliers, and store customers will be even better served - by hiring extra staff and extending opening hours. For the online retailers, their systems will be more robust and more able to handle peak demand.

Online giants such as Amazon, Argos, and eBay, as well as Curry's, River Island, Debenhams, Marks and Spencer, John Lewis, Tesco, Sainsburys, PC World, Topshop, New Look, Asos, Very and Boots are all expecting more sales than ever before. Without a shadow of doubt, more and more retailers will be joining the Black Friday action.

Analysts are predicting total sales for the 2016 Black Friday weekend to be around £5 billion, as compared to £3.3 billion for 2015. So it is vital that all retailers ensure that they do not miss out.

They need to ensure that their staff and systems deliver the best possible customer experience and to ensure that the expected massive spike in sales on Black Friday is properly planned and executed.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO DRIVE GROWTH AND INNOVATION.

These days, the key to most business growth is by harnessing the new ideas and advances in digital technologies, which if used to their full potential, have the potential to revolutionise your business.

In this complex and fast-changing business landscape, not only can technical innovations drive down your costs, but more importantly, they can offer new and exciting ways to attract more customers and get you one-step ahead of your competitors.

Are you an ambitious CEO?

Are you are driven by a desire to increase your market share, to outdo your competitors and to boost your bottom line profits?

If so, you should be aware that one of the best ways to achieve this is by working closely with a like-minded and proactive CIO.

Your CIO.

Far too often, new ideas are blocked before they can get off the ground by 'inward-looking' CIO's who are primarily concerned with maintaining complex 'legacy systems', which are often out of date, but are essential to keep your business running. The CIO considers his main responsibility is to ensure his systems do not break down, and as such, any overtures for changes or upgrades are met with frosty stares and concerns that the status quo may become disrupted.

In a recent survey, over 90% of CEO's agreed that IT-led innovation is essential for their business growth, and that they were willing to devote substantial new capital investment to further these aims. Yet only just over half admitted that their organisations were at the forefront of making the best use of new technology.

It is essential therefor that your CIO is given a critical role in business innovation and development. Modern-day CIOs must have a comprehensive, indepth understanding of your business, play a major role in its development, and understand what needs to be done. They must be continually on the lookout for

new digital tools that might benefit your business and improve your business models.

Your CIO's business 'know-how', combined with his/her technical expertise, should be the focal point of your company's digital revolution.

CIOs must be relentless in their pursuit of innovation, and ensure that their systems are made sufficiently flexible to adopt and adapt to the new technology challenges.

- ✓ They have to find ways to remove barriers to digital innovation.
- ✓ They must reorganise existing technology structures so that they can embrace new technology.

This can be achieved in a number of ways:

- ➤ Incremental enhancements Implement small but significant changes to the company's existing systems over a period of time.
- ➤ Major enhancements Carry out a major upgrade to the system and business model. However, similar to the above, many major upgrades can be implemented over period of time, testing and ensuring validity of each change before moving on to the next phase.
- New system and processes implement a brand new system which will embrace modern technologies and provide a stable platform for future growth and innovation. This rarely happens, unless it is a new business start-up.

What sort of technology changes are we talking about?

The four key technologies that drive business innovation are:

1. **Social networking** - This has created a sea change in attitudes and expectations - from both customers and employees. All stakeholders now expect more transparency, more openness, and an engagement in the

selling/buying process. Customers like to interact and review what they are buying and the staff expects to be a part of the decision making process.

2. **Mobile Computing** - 'smart phones' have transformed the business environment. Customers carry the internet with them wherever they go and are better informed and more interactive than ever before. Businesses who understand this phenomenon are well placed to create a competitive advantage by building on customer/employee relationships, experiences and expectations.

Mobile computing enables communication in its myriad forms without employees having to be at their desks. This provides a more flexible approach to their work. Smartphone applications, which assist both management and staff in organising their daily work routines, such as making appointments, keeping track of their diaries and tasks, carrying out management initiatives etc. can all become integrated into an innovative systems platform.

Many types of businesses can also take advantage of the smartphone's builtin capabilities for GPS and location finders, high quality cameras and videos.

3. **Analytics** - These days we have huge amounts of information at our fingertips, courtesy of the internet and modern systems which have the capacity of to seek out, collect and store vast amounts of data.

Just about everything we do in our personal and business lives generates digital data that can be used for analysis to improve our business models. It is the CIO's duty to provide the correct analytical frameworks that can turn this mass of data into something useful to the business.

4. **Cloud Computing** - A relatively new beast that is now taking the computing world by storm. Not only does cloud computing enable all of us to communicate through social networks but it also provides CIO's with many opportunities to streamline their systems and reduce costs.

The migration of business systems to Cloud Computing platforms frees up IT staff to focus on improving their business processes and driving innovation to deliver new products and services.

The Role of the IT Service Provider

There are a number of ways in which a good ISP can become an important cog in the drive for business growth and innovation.

Consultancy Sounding Board - We can work with your CEO and CIO to identify the best ways that your business processes can be improved or changed to stimulate business growth. We can carry out an in depth appraisal of your business needs and help to identify and set out a plan for the quickest and safest ways to implement changes to your systems.

Help you to become a Digital leader - Most businesses are extremely reluctant to innovate until they are convinced that the new digital benefits have a proven track record. This mind-set always puts them behind the digital curve and condemns them to be 'followers' rather than leaders. Even companies with highly proactive CIOs will often not give the go ahead on new systems development until they are convinced it will work.

An IT Service Provider is well placed to work with you and your CIO on proposed innovations and provide the necessary assurances and 'health checks' to enable new processes to be implemented sooner rather than later. The future of your business is far too important to wait and see how your competitors are doing. With our help you can be the vanguard, rather than the backstop.

Let us take the backroom strain - We can provide the expert resources you may need to keep your existing systems running and properly maintained, while your CIO and team concentrate on developing new business models and processes. When the time comes to implement changes - whether they are incremental or a one-time major upgrade, we will be there to take the strain and ensure the minimum disruption to your ongoing business.

If you are looking to grow your business and are worried about being left behind in the new digital revolution, give us a call and we will be happy to discuss the many options available to you.

FORMULA E - THE WINNING FORMULA

Are you a motor racing fan? If so, are you happy with the current state of play? Maybe you are bored with the same, highly pampered, millionaire teams dominating the Formula One championship, year after year with tedious races that rarely set your own pulses racing, let alone the cars.

But more crucially, are you becoming increasingly concerned with Formula one's enormous carbon footprint - and what it says about the motor industry's commitment to CO2 emissions and climate change?

Are you, like us, becoming ever more frustrated by the major motor manufacturers' feeble efforts to tackle head-on the issue of fossil fuels, along with their painfully slow efforts to bring new, alternative fuel models to market?

If so, don't fret as there is an eco-friendly light at the end of the tunnel. In fact, we firmly believe the solution has already arrived. Over the past two and a half years, a quiet revolution has been taking place in the world of motor racing; and it's time to pump up the volume.

With the arrival of the exciting world of Formula E, we have a brand new, allembracing, sustainable clean air solution. A solution that provides racing fans with the greatest day of racing they have ever experienced – either trackside or on TV or social media.

What is Formula E?

"Formula E is "the electric street racing championship with sustainable technology at its core."

- It is an exciting motorsport that takes place in the streets of the world's city centres where fans can have greater access to the drivers and enjoy a fun day of great music along with exciting motor racing.
- ➤ It has a carbon footprint which is only a tiny fraction of the size of conventional motor racing and is well on the way to being 100% sustainable by 2018.

- ➤ It embraces social media in truly innovative ways and even gives fans the power to influence the result.
- ➤ It provides more access to the drivers on race days and allows fans to wander through the eVillage and enjoy a great family day of music, entertainment and racing.

How did Formula E first start?

The FIA Formula E Championship is the world's first all-electric motor racing series. It was originally the idea of FIA President, Jean Todt, back in 2012, who wanted the FIA to demonstrate the potential of sustainable mobility.

Then Alejandro Agag, the current the CEO of Formula E, took up the challenge and Formula E was born, having its inaugural race in Beijing in September 2014, with 10 teams and 20 electric racing cars on the grid.

Subsequent races were held in some of the world's major cities, such as London, Paris, Berlin, New York, Mexico City, Las Vegas and Montreal. In the first season, 12 races were held in 11 cities; in season two, ten races were held in nine cities, and in the current season, 12 races are scheduled to be held in 11 cities.

Getting the project off the ground was no small feat, and it is thanks to a few enlightened industry stalwarts such as Williams, McLaren, Renault-Michelin, and Dallara, together with DHL, Qualcomm and TAG Heuer who all backed the project. Then along came teams such as Andretti, Audi Sport ABT, Renault and Virgin Racing who all helped to make the dream a reality.

If that wasn't enough, with drivers of the calibre of **Senna**, **Prost**, **and Piquet** and with high profile team owners like **Leonardo DiCaprio**, the new venture was guaranteed an auspicious start.

But is it a success?

By any standards, Formula E took off to a flying start, in more ways than one.

In the first season alone, 391,000 spectators watched the races live and more than 190 million fans in 100 countries watched on TV - thanks to sponsorship by media

giants such as **Fox Sports, ITV, and TV Asahi**. And if you need any more proof of success, there was an unbelievable **4.7 billion "mentions" on social media** – and that was just the first season!

What makes Formula E so different from traditional car races?

1. First and foremost, the ethos of Formula E is to convince a sceptical world that sustainable energy is not only possible but essential for the future of our planet.

The research and continual development and refinement of the electric vehicles' (EV's) drivetrains have already accelerated the technological advances in the new EVs – cars which will soon find their way onto the highways and byways of the world's roads.

The advent of Formula E will trigger a 'snowball' effect and finally break through the well-established industry "EV Barriers". As the popularity of Formula E grows, the motor industry will be forced, (or shamed) into to playing catch-up. Car owners will demand it.

Let's take a look at a few interesting facts:

- The generators in the current Formula E cars use 0% emission glycerine fuel.
- The tyres are hybrids; they last the entire race and are then recycled.
- It is estimated that in season one, Formula E generated 25,000 tons of CO2, which was reduced to 20,000 tons in season two. This footprint was entirely composed of freight, business travel, infrastructure and overlay, and meals and drinks.
 - By the 4th season of F E, its footprint will be offset 100% by sustainable projects. This will not only benefit the environment but will also provide social benefits to local communities.
- EV's are more energy efficient than internal combustion engines (ICEs) 90% compared to only 20%. Just think the world's vehicles have been burning all these fossils fuels for generations, achieving a mere 20% in energy efficiency.

Sooner or later, motor manufacturers will realise that a major investment in EVs is not only a *viable* way forward, but the *only* way forward. As the

number of EVs on our roads gradually increases, we will exponentially reduce greenhouse gasses by millions of tons, and save billions of dollars in healthcare and other costs. Crucially, we can really start to achieve a measurable slowdown in the rate of global warming.

- 2. FE races are demonstrably more exciting than F1. Formula E cars have at least 250 HP of power, and EVs can provide full torque from a standing start, accelerating from 0-62 mph in 3 seconds. They have better weight distribution ratios than conventional cars which mean faster cornering and more opportunities for overtaking on the exciting city centre road circuits.
- 3. Although the points awarded for the top ten positions in each race follow the standard FIA model, additional points are awarded to the driver securing pole, (which is determined by a "super-Pole Shootout" with the five quickest cars), along with extra points for the driver who sets the fastest lap. This makes qualifying much more exciting than in conventional racing.
- 4. FE uses the social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to promote **FANBOOST.** FanBoost is a unique fan/FE interaction concept. Fans can vote for their favourite driver for up to 12 days prior to, and for six minutes after, the start of the race to award their driver with an additional "power boost" during the race. This means that the teams and especially the drivers reach out to the fans and have a much closer social interaction with them than in conventional motorsports.
- 5. Formula E provides fans with video highlights of crucial action on the track within seconds of it happening. 360-degree cameras and onboard cams give the fans amazing views and provide them with a thrilling interactive experience.
- 6. Formula E is more than just a motorsport it is an all round, entertainment, and interactive experience. Music is at the heart of the city-centre race days, with dedicated DJ's providing great music around the track, and building up the suspense as the minutes and seconds are counted down towards chequered flag. Then there is the eVillage, where fans can meet the drivers, obtain autographs and get close to the podium ceremonies.

Do you want the past or the future?

The plain truth is that old style Formula One belongs to an old-fashioned, uncaring fossil fuel guzzling world. Their monolithic race circuits, located out of town, have vast car parks containing tens of thousands of cars on race days. The F1 carbon footprint is enormous

Formula E is the future. Races take place in the heart of some of the greatest inner the cities of the world, on temporary road tracks. And there is not a car park in sight. You either take public transport or you arrive by foot. Either way, it is a million times more eco-friendly than sitting in a long line of cars, waiting to park your car at a circuit car park.

Formula E brings a new type of motor racing to a new generation; a generation who cares about the environment and wants to save our planet for future generations.

In the short time that Formula E has been in existence, it has received incredible support from all sections of the world community: rich and poor, young and old. The young are flocking to races in their cities and major corporates have become willing sponsors.

The great visionary entrepreneur, Richard Branson, recently predicted that in four or five years from now, Formula E will overtake Formula One in popularity.

FE's outreach is to those who are genuinely concerned about air quality issues and want to make life-changing decisions that will have a positive effect on our planet.

Formula E is part of that new life.

FULL TEXT & LAY-OUT DESIGN FOR A NEW THAILAND-BASED WEBSITE

HOME

Hello and Welcome to the Home Page of **Joe Briggs & Associates**, ("**JB&A"**) - one of the most respected and successful retail consultancies in South East Asia. Our exemplary track record in working with many of the major retail players in the region, such as Tesco-Lotus, Central, Big C, Carrefour and HomePro speaks for itself. (See our full list of clients)

HBA have worked with over 1,000 retail executives in 20 major retail companies spread over 22 countries to successfully achieve a *significant increase in their business and commercial performance.*

"I plan ahead, ask great questions and complete tasks by reviewing what worked, what didn't and what could be done better next time."

JB&A are unique in the retail consultancy sector for three reasons:

- 1. All of our consultancy and training is totally dedicated to **improving our clients'** bottom lines.
- 2. In addition to consulting, we offer a comprehensive package of **coaching**, **mentoring and training**, which is specially tailored to your situation.
- 3. We have an extensive roster of highly experienced, **expert Associate Directors** who can bring the necessary skills that are needed for each specific retail assignment

"We are so confident that we can make a positive impact to the bottom line of retail business that performance guarantees are an integral part of our consultancy proposals and agreements."

What Services do we provide?

 Consultancy - We are dedicated to improving the retailers' bottom line by concentrating on the three key aspects of any retail business, namely: Buy, Move, and Sell.

Our consultancy assignments are wide-ranging - as in the case of a business which is experiencing serious financial problems. Or it can be specifically targeted to an area of concern that needs an urgent solution. (Read more about our consultancy services here...)

- **Coaching** Joe often coaches at Board and senior executive level, to improve skills and competence in key areas such as negotiation, category management, vendor management, sourcing and supply chain. (Read more about our coaching services here...)
- Mentoring Is usually performed at middle management level, to improve and teach new skills and to prepare staff for promotion and/or wider roles
- Training and Skills Development This is usually carried out on the retailer's premises, typically lasting 2-3 days, and is aimed at groups of approximately 16-20 persons. All of our training programmes are tailored to meet the varying needs of the retailer's teams, which will be identified during the evaluation process and in consultation with the client. (read more about our training and development services here...)

Take Advantage of our Free 45-minute Strategy Session!

Retail businesses always have dozens of issues that require urgent resolution at

senior level. HBA are ideally placed to respond quickly and effectively to any significant event such as:-

- Mergers and Acquisitions
- New CEO coming in
- New market entry
- New competitor
- New government tax/vat change
- Urgent new request from holding/parent company
- Need to increase/maximise profit
- Long business term planning requirement
- Urgent short-term needs & focus

These and many other similar problems often benefit from focussed expert advice by given a seasoned professional.

"If you are a c-suite executive and have a 'one-off' problem that you would like to discuss with an expert, I will be delighted to give you a free, 45-minute strategy session. That way, we can get know each other better, build rapport and see if there is a fit."

"I will be happy to talk your problems over with you and offer the benefit of my advice, free of charge with no obligation. The session can be carried out by telephone, video link or "face to face" at your office."

Joe Briggs is a widely known and respected international retail strategy advisor - particularly in the South East Asian region.

Joe has 47 years' commercial experience in working for major retailers at senior executive level, and has been a successful retail consultant in Asia for over 10 years.

Joe knows better than most the most effective and efficient ways to increase sales and reduce costs across all food and non-food categories. (Read more about Joe Briggs here...)

Additionally, Joe's **Associate Directors of Consulting** have similar levels of experience and proven track records in their own speciality areas. They also share Joe's commitment to improving your bottom line - the only thing that really matters. (Read more about Associate Directors here...).

JB&A's prime focus is to ensure that everything we do - **consulting**, **coaching**, **mentoring or training** - is always undertaken with the sales and **profitability** of our client's business firmly at the forefront of our minds. We never allow the minutiae of lower-level management and technical issues to divert us from our purpose.

We only focus on changes that will:

- ✓ Increase the quantity and value of your sales.
- ✓ Reduce the cost of your purchases.
- ✓ Improve the supply and availability of your products.

All of our strategic advice is geared to sales and profit - pure and simple.

We will advise you on how to implement innovative strategies which will be tailored to your specific requirements, including: improve and/or change weaknesses in your business processes; coach and mentor your senior management, train your key staff and arm them with superior skills and better

commercial acumen.

We will also respond quickly and effectively to significant events such as:-

- Mergers and acquisitions
- New CEO coming in
- New market entry
- New competitor
- New government tax/vat change
- New request from holding/parent company

If you want to know more about how we can help your business to meet and improve your profit targets; then give Joe a call, or fill in *the contact form*. Joe will immediately get in touch and explain in detail what it is that we can do for you.

About

Joe Briggs & Associates ("JB&A") were founded in 2005 by Joe Briggs. He has had 46 years of senior level experience, (28 years in the UK and 18 years in Asia) in the retail industry.

Joe is recognised in Asia as a leading authority in the retail industry. He has worked at Board Level as a Commercial Director for top multinational retailers in the UK such as Tesco and B&Q, Tesco Lotus and Reliance.

Joe's highly successful retail career includes five years as a Commercial Director and Senior Executive Vice President for Tesco Lotus in Thailand; three years as a Buying Director for Kingfisher (B&Q) and 16 years as a Trading Director for Tesco **Stores in the UK.**

Joe has acquired a vast wealth of knowledge from directing and managing all food and non-food categories that are typically sold in a hypermarket, supermarket or convenience store channels.

Since starting **JB&A** more than ten years ago, Joe has consulted with food and non-food retailers in the UK, USA, Europe, China, India, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Bangladesh; and within the developing markets of South East Asia, including Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia and Myanmar.

"Although I am most comfortable working with c-suite executives and board members, I also have my feet on the ground and work equally well with commercial directors and their teams, from 'experienced hands' to 'new starters'"

As an international retail consultant, Joe is committed to delivering 'best practice' and insights from developed retail markets and adapting them to fast-growing retailers in the emerging markets of South East Asia.

Joe understands how to tailor the store format and category development to meet the varied consumer needs in each local market; and how to maximize results in any situation where selling, marketing, merchandising, buying, or negotiation takes place.

Joe is well known as a leading authority on commercial strategy and merchandise management and for his ability to provide insightful analysis which is both practical and pragmatic.

As a trusted advisor to c-suite executives, Joe's open and collaborative style enables him to network and connect at all levels of retail organisations. He is the perfect choice for any organisation South East Asia in Asia that needs to accelerate its business growth.

Joe is a member of the **Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply**, the **Project Management Institute**, the **International Coach Federation** and the **Thai and British Chambers of Commerce.**

Joe is also experienced in solution consulting, coaching and training in the areas of sales, negotiation, communication, team building, strategic planning, and many other customised training solutions. He is an **ICF certified ACC coach and certified NLP Master Practitioner.**

JB&A "Associates" Directors

When you sign up with JB&A, not only do you get the expert services of Joe Briggs; but you can also call upon a wide-ranging roster of Associate Directors to take a leading role in specific tasks or focus areas requiring deep industry specialisation.

All of Joe's associates are from similar backgrounds and have considerable experience in specific areas of expertise within the retail, manufacturing and distribution sectors; such as store operations, supply chains, fresh foods, branding, marketing, data management, space, range and display. (Read more about associates here...)

Our Clients

JB&A have worked with over 100 prestige retail clients in 27 countries in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the USA.

Over 1,000 executives have benefited from JB&A's expertise, processes & templates; to increase their store sales, to reduce their buying costs, to improve their gross margins, to achieve their business goals and most importantly to enjoy better returns on their investments.

Here are some of the well-known brand names that we have worked with over the years.

Services – Consulting

"I have a deep understanding about the relationship between buyer and seller."

Our mission is to make your business better and more profitable. **Joe Briggs** has a four-stage approach to every consultancy assignment.

- I will personally arrange a first visit to develop a good rapport with the senior executive team and identify the issue(s) that requires support and advice
- I will evaluate the size of the problem/opportunity and consider the various remedial options available and best proposal for the client.
- I will conduct small workshops and 'one to one' interviews with key players
 which will enable me to assess the "commercial health" of the organisation
 and identify its current processes and capabilities and team structure and
 capacity.
- I will then submit a proposal based on our discussions and give a thorough understanding of the issues.
- I will make recommendations on the scope and specifics of the consultancy assignment in order to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- I advise and coach executives on how to respond and deal with such matters as: contract negotiations; category management; vendor management; the sourcing of stock; solving supply chain issues; managing senior staff and how to go about dealing with serious and/or challenging business situations.

"I excel in my field because in the world of retail I have been there and done that and have learnt much about the people processes behind much retail activity."

A retail organisation's ongoing success depends on its ability to swiftly react to an ever-changing world and business environment. The sooner it can anticipate changes in the market place and adapt its strategies, the better it can maintain

and increase its sales and profit margins.

Retail Strategy

"I know how retail businesses work and how to make them more profitable."

All retail strategies must be geared to meeting and improving upon their expected return on investment.

With this in mind, it may be necessary to identify or re-think the aims of a business and establish clear strategies and the various ways to achieve these aims.

We will look at the areas of above and below-par performance; the areas that can be accelerated or improved; how to measure the improvements in performance, and what, if any, are the risks involved.

We will recommend practical and pragmatic consulting solutions and provide coaching, training, and mentoring support to implement our recommended solutions.

We will apply our unique experiences, insights and skills to support your organisation. We will work closely with you to respond effectively to changes in the business environment.

In summary, our consultancy is designed to achieve the following:

- ✓ Increase sales by reviewing your category range assortment, space allocation, merchandising layout and adjacencies
- ✓ Increase sales by reviewing your pricing and promotion strategy to drive traffic.
- ✓ Increase profits by completing a commercial health check to identify areas of opportunity to improve the quality of your people and processes.

- ✓ Increase profits by setting more demanding objectives by category, vendor and item.
- ✓ Increase profits by training key staff in vendor management & negotiation skills to achieve stretch targets.

Buying Strategy

"I love being in stores and (like an eagle) looking overall at the environment, layout, and display before diving into the detail about range, price, promotion etc."

Buying or Merchandising in the retail industry is both an art and science; and as with every aspect of retail businesses, finely honed buying and merchandising skills will help your team to achieve your expected sales and profit targets.

We will coach, train and mentor your buying team in negotiating skills; help you to improve your sourcing, vendor management and buying approcesses; and ensure your Buyers understand the need to respond to market demands and the need to liaise with Category Managers as part of an integrated and aligned team.

We will show you how to make sure your supply chains are always reliable and how to avoid poor availability and the terror of empty shelves.

"I love meeting suppliers and hearing their "selling story" and evaluating its potential"

Merchandise Strategy

The first step towards improving the effectiveness of your merchandise strategy is

to develop a clear 'Vision & Mission' statement; setting out exactly what you aim to achieve, and exploring the best way to do it. We will show you how to:

- Read the market trends
- Understand your competitors' product range.
- Develop effective promotion plans
- How to price-position your products.
- How to constantly keep your product range under review
- How to measure the effectiveness of your strategies
- How to measure their contribution to the bottom line.

Range Strategy

Effective range strategy requires a constant resolving and in-depth review of product performance to establish the right mix and assortment.

We will show you how to measure performance so that you can effectively eliminate range duplications; manage the 'tail' and ensure that fast moving items within the range are always in stock.

Price Strategy

In today's competitive marketplace, where customers have more information and are more cost conscious than ever before, it is absolutely essential that you achieve a winning pricing strategy. Positioning your pricing correctly and knowing

how to manage it over time can 'make or break' a retail business and it will have a long-lasting effect on its profitability.

We look at the relevance of 'destination' categories and the key value items (KVIs) and the evolution of these items and categories in today's digital retail environment.

We also look at the relevance and effectiveness pricing strategies such as discount pricing, multiple pricing, loss-leading pricing, psychological pricing etc.

We have the skills, experience, know-how and the 'touch & feel' to show you how to position your pricing in the most effective way; and how to monitor the results and manage your pricing, as frequently as required.

Category Management

Effective Category Management is a core skill and fundamental to success in any retail business.

There are many ways to approach this key issue and we, at JB&A will show you how to implement an efficient, result driven process. **Joe Briggs** has extensive experience with some of the most sophisticated retailers in the world. Our Category Management approach is a process that works and will pay dividends.

In 2016 all retailers need more sophisticated ways to create new customer experiences, design attractive assortments and create effective planograms. Successful category management includes such matters as the category's role and strategy, space allocation, financial budgeting, pricing, brand development, promotion and event planning.

Joe Briggs can lead and mentor your staff through this commercial dilemma. He will concentrate on the essential elements that will help you develop category strategies that will work well for your organisation.

JB&A have a 2-3 day Category Management training course which is totally

devoted to this subject. (See Training...)

Vendor Management

"I love negotiating, having a long shopping list, finding out what the variables are, trading them, always asking for more, agreeing and moving on to implement the agreement."

Having an effective Vendor Management Strategy is about making the best possible use of your cash and getting the best possible deals from your vendors or suppliers. It is also about ensuring continuity of supply and continuous availability.

Amongst his other qualifications, Joe Briggs has been a member of the **Chartered Institute of Procurement & Supply for 26 years.** He brings his years of retail experience, including 18 years as Commercial, Trading and Buying director for major UK retail stores.

Joe will show you how to identify the right suppliers to work with and how to negotiate the best possible terms. He will help you to understand the potential pitfalls in supplier agreements and to ensure your terms and conditions are 'fit for purpose'.

He will show you how to identify the best sources for your products; how to check their performance; and where appropriate, how to explore new and innovative ways to work in collaboration with the chosen vendor.

Joe will lead you through the structured processes and templates containing your terms and conditions. He will show you how to plan and prepare for negotiations and to ensure that no aspects of proposal contracts will be detrimental to your business interests.

Retail Insights

Joe Briggs has 45 years in retail, including 18 years in the Asian market and is

uniquely placed to provide incisive insights into the Asian retail industry. He will show you why market analysis and consumer insights can help you to understand the issues that exist within most Asian multi-channel retailer business models.

Insights into all aspects of the Asian retail market place can help retailers make informed and better decisions; and to develop fresh ideas that will increase their business and improve their profitability.

In developing retail markets where the 'modern trade' is weak, the manufacturers initially hold most of the power in negotiations. In more mature markets, jointly satisfying the consumer is dominant. More and more supplier/retailer trading partnerships are recognising that joint business plans are more efficient for both parties; that having shared objectives and working together can be highly effective in winning over the loyalty of the customer.

We will show you how essential it is that both sides of the trading desk understand the function, goals, strategies, problems, aspirations and developments of each other.

JB&A hold a 2-3 day **Retail Insight training course** which is totally devoted to this subject. (See training...)

Services - Coaching

"Executive Success Coach"

With Joe Briggs's vast wealth of experience in every conceivable commercial and 'life' situation, he is well placed to help senior executives improve their personal and business skills.

He can show you how to respond and deal with a wide range of business and personal issues and learn how to confidently manage challenging business situations.

Here, in Joe's own words, is how he can offer his unique skills for your personal benefit:-

"Do you have any idea how much your business and personal life might change if you were able to unleash your full potential?
What if you could have anything you desired, and were able to live your life as you always wanted to?

Today, you could be one-step closer to discovering a "new you". As your Executive Success Coach, my role will be to help you uncover your hidden talents that will lead to a new life - one that you will celebrate every single day.

My focus is to help you to make significant improvements in your business and personal life. I will provide support and guidance to help you identify and transform those issues that stand in the way of you achieving your most important goals.

Whether you want my help to achieve a specific single outcome, or you wish to enhance many areas of your business and personal life; as your Executive Success Coach, I can help you get there faster with even better results.

I would love to work with you if you wish to commit to a more fulfilling and meaningful life."

Contact me today for a FREE CONSULTATION SESSION to start your personal journey toward achieving your goals, and to live the life of your dreams.

Joe Briggs's coaching qualifications:

 Certified ACSTH Coach (International Coaching Federation Belgium License 1234567890)

- Certified Master Practitioner of NLP Coaching (NLP Top Coach)
- Certified Master Practitioner of Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP Top Coach)
- Certified Master Practitioner of Time Line Therapy (NLP Top Coach)

Contact details:

0000000000

Services – Training and Skills Development

"I have an arsenal of content, to draw upon and utilise in any training or workshop situation."

JB&A conducts a host of wide-ranging training courses that are tailored to the specific needs of our clients. We offer these courses as a 'one-off', or they can be part of a wider consultancy that can also include 'retail strategy', 'coaching' and 'mentoring'.

In all of our training and development programmes, we teach groups of staff the theories, tools and techniques they will need to achieve positive changes in their lives; and in their approach to work.

All our courses are designed to deliver training and development based on the individual needs and requirements of our clients.

Our primary focus is on developing the skills and capabilities of "C" level and senior executives, and to those with specialist responsibilities for strategy, culture, leadership and change management.

Prior to the finalisation of training programmes for a new client, we carry out a two-day familiarisation exercise. During this stage, one of our JB&A Directors will spend time with a selection of the delegates working individually with them for

half a day per person. This allows us to understand our client's main issues in the market and to tailor the training accordingly.

During the familiarisation stage, the delegates will be asked a series of questions, designed to cover each aspect of their area of responsibility. Copies of reports, presentations and emails used by the delegate will be viewed as part of this exercise.

Our experienced **JB&A Directors** will then design a specific programme to address the client's unique requirements. Our approach is to prepare training modules which are focussed on the day-to-day, specific needs of the client's staff in the work environment.

Our workshop presentations are well structured and delivered in a friendly, openstyle, which encourages participants to question established 'retail wisdom' and the status quo.

We encourage the culture of the workshop team, and participants will share experiences with each other. Where English is not their first language we find that those with a better grasp of English often play a leading part in these sessions and act as team spokespersons.

Joe Briggs and his long roster of Associates have all the necessary skills and experience to manage these sessions; to facilitate team meetings and to ensure that the end result achieves its aims and is of the highest quality.

Amongst his many qualifications, Joe is an ICF Certified Coach at ACC level and a certified NLP Master Practitioner.

All of his **Associate Directors** are similarly qualified and together they deliver outstanding training courses to world-class standards.

Training courses last 2-3 days and are usually conducted at the client's premises.

Here is a non-exclusive list of the training courses that we currently offer:

- Retail Insight
- Category Management
- Vendor Management
- Negotiation Skills
- Project Management
- Team Management
- Presentation & Communication Skills

http://www.vipremovalistssydney.com.au/local-removalists/

VIP REMOVALISTS SYDNEY

Home

Welcome to **VIP Removalists Sydney** - the removalists you can trust to move your home or office professionally and safely at a price you can afford. Our ten years of experience in the removalist business has made us one of Sydney's top removal companies. Whether you need to arrange a small local move or you have to move a large office or house to another state; we will do a do a first class job and set your mind at rest.

A good removalist has all the equipment and skills necessary to undertake removals. They will deliver all your prized possessions, furniture or expensive office equipment to your new location, free of damage. Removal staff usually have many years of experience in moving every conceivable item; such as fragile pieces of china or heavy loads, like gym equipment. They also have all the tools to do the job, such as trolleys and lifting hoists, padding and packing materials; plus, of course, a fleet of purpose-built removal trucks.

This is why it is important to use a tried and tested professional removalist with an excellent reputation to carry out your removals.

Why us?

- VIP Removalists Sydney guarantees to deliver all your belongings to your designated location in perfect condition. Our staff have been with us for many years and they are all trained to do any kind of packing or removal task.
- We treat our valued customers with respect at all times. Our friendly removalist team will discuss with you any particular concerns you may have; such as boarding your pets, or moving valuable or heavy items. We will plan

the move with you in detail and make sure that nothing is forgotten or left to chance.

- Our prices are amongst the most competitive in the market. Our discounts and special offers which will ensure that you get the best possible deal available.
- We never take any short cuts where the safe delivery of your possessions is concerned. We carry out thorough background checks on all our staff, so you can be assured that not a single item will go astray.

Don't take any chances with a 'no-name' removal outfit, or 'two men and a van'. Moving your home or office is stressful enough as it is. Don't make it more stressful by having to worry whether your removalists might break something or 'lose' some of your valuables.

Our range of services

Local Removals - We can carry out any move within the Sydney Metropolitan area, including: Sydney CBD; Eastern Suburbs; Inner West; Sutherland Shire; North Shore; Northern Beaches; and Hills District. Maybe you only want to move a couple of heavy items; or maybe you have an entire house load of furniture to be relocated. Whatever it is, we can do the job for you at a price you can afford. We can supply you with packing materials so that you can do your own packing; or our professional packers can come in advance of the move and do the packing for you. *Click here for more details on our local removal services*.

Interstate Removals - We have the trucks and the logistical know-how to move your home or office interstate to any city in the Australia. This includes Canberra, Melbourne, Perth, Adelaide, and Brisbane, and generally to anywhere in the country including the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast.

Click here for more details on our interstate removal services.

Office Relocations - The logistics and pre-planning before relocating an office or industrial building is as important as the move itself. At **VIP Removalists Sydney**,

we have the skills to manage the packing up your offices, and to move everything to your new office location. Whether you are relocating within the Sydney area or across the country to a different state, we can do the job for you.

Click here for more details on our office relocation services.

Packing - Our expert packers can pack anything - from delicate and valuable items, to large, heavy items in your home or office. We have all the specialist packing materials - a range of adhesive tapes, packing paper, bubble wrap sheets, mattress covers, boxes (various sizes), tea chests and so on. We can do some or all of your packing - it's up to you.

Click here for more details on our packing services.

Storage - We offer a range of storage facilities for all your short or long-term storage needs - valuables, furniture retail stock, etc. All our storage is weatherproof, pest proof and totally secure. If you are moving, we can offer a comprehensive removal package that will cover the temporary storage of some or all of your property.

Click here for more details on our storage services.

Whatever your removal, packing or storage requirements may be, call us today to arrange for a fast, affordable no-obligation quote. Our friendly staff will be only too happy to chat with you and visit your home or office.

About

VIP Removalists Sydney is a long established, Sydney-based removalist. We have over ten years' experience in providing a first-class, professional removal, packing and storage service to the Sydney residential and business community. We handle the whole range of removalist services; from the smallest of local moves to moving an 8-ton truckload of furniture and effects across Australia. We have a comprehensive range of services, including the moving of heavy items, such as pianos or pool tables; the provision of storage facilities; the supply of packing materials and the transportation and boarding of pets and other animals.

VIP Removalists Sydney have achieved an enviable reputation for providing a top-quality service for the following reasons:

- 1. Our staff: The professional conduct of our staff is second to none. We only employ skilled, fully trained staff who have undergone background checks on their employment records and their honesty. They also receive ongoing training, including courses to ensure compliance with occupational health and safety (OH&S) and handling regulations. Most of our staff have been with us many years and are dedicated members of our hardworking 'family'. You will be hard put to find a friendlier, more courteous and more dedicated team.
- 2. **Our Project management:** We are experts in managing the most complex of moves. A team leader will plan every step to ensure the move runs smoothly, and that everything ends up in the right place at the new destination.
- 3. **Our equipment and materials:** We use the latest equipment and materials to pack and load your belongings. Our modern removal truck fleet is tailormade to move any load small or large safely and securely to its new destination.

- 4. **Our credentials**: VIP Removalists Sydney are fully insured, and licenced to carry out every type of removal work be it home, office or industrial removals. We can also offer additional insurance to our customers.
- 5. **Our Affordability.** You will soon discover that our prices are the most competitive in the business. Our fast, no-nonsense quotes, with no hidden extras, separate us from the herd.

Our **Mission** is to deliver a professional, cost-effective, efficient, and stress-free service to all our customers; and our **vision** is to grow our removalist business to become the best in the country.

Call us today for a chat about your moving, packing or storage requirements. Rest assured that no job is too small for us to handle. Our friendly staff will be happy to give you a no-obligation quote.

Local Removalists

When it comes to local moves, **VIP Removalists Sydney** are the first choice for countless Sydney residents. We can move you anywhere within the Sydney suburbs and across the state. No job is too small or too big for us to handle.

Do you need to move a couple of heavy items down the road? Or do you have an entire household of furniture and personal effects to move across Sydney? We will be delighted to do any removal job for you at a price you can afford. Our prices are amongst the most competitive in the market.

Our friendly team of well-trained, professional staff will carry out your move safely and seamlessly. You can relax in the knowledge that all your prized possessions will arrive in their new location in perfect condition.

Every move is unique. Whatever your particular removal requirements may be, we will have a solution. Do you have a pet that will need boarding? Do you have very heavy items - such as pianos or a pool tables - that require special loading equipment? Or maybe you need to put some or all of your belongings into storage. Whatever your needs, we have the facilities, the expertise, and the equipment to handle it. We will also guarantee that all your fragile and treasured possessions are delivered to their new location without a single breakage or scratch.

Even if you only have a few items to move, don't take chances. If you ask a friend to help you move, or you hire "two men and a van", you may be taking risks. Not only may your things be damaged or stolen, but you may also have to deal with the injuries suffered by inexperienced movers.

VIP Removalists Sydney are fully insured and licenced to carry out your move in a professional and safe manner. We never cut corners and always provide sufficient staff and the proper equipment to do the job properly. Before your move date, one of our senior managers will come to your home to discuss your move down to the tiniest detail. We will then plan the logistics. Boxes and packing materials will be delivered to your home. If you wish, our professional team of

packers will come to pack all or some of your belongings in advance of the move date.

On the date of your move, our friendly removal team will arrive with all the necessary equipment to load and move your things. Heavy items will be moved using specialist trolleys and will be loaded onto a purpose-built removal trucks by means of a hydraulic tailgate. Very large items may be dismantled and all your furniture will be protected for the journey with blanket padding etc. Once loaded onto our truck, everything will be secured to avoid damage during transit.

Where required, we can deliver some or all of the belongings to our storage facilities, for later delivery to your designated location.

At your new home, everything will be unloaded and delivered to specific rooms as agreed with you. When required, our packers will also unpack your belongings and put them away for you. We will not leave until you are completely satisfied with removal process.

Call us today to get the process going. We are sure that we can come up with a package that will suit your budget.

Interstate Removalists

Whatever your destination, **VIP Removalists Sydney** can deliver all your belongings in perfect condition to your new state location. We have ten years' experience in interstate removals. Our large fleet of removal trucks is regularly moving people and offices across Australia. We've got the no-how and the dedicated teams to undertake your interstate removals efficiently and with the minimum of fuss.

Our drivers are fully acquainted with every major destination in Australia. Whether you are relocating to Melbourne, Canberra, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth or further afield, we can offer you a stress-free, professional interstate removal service. We can also move you from any of these locations back to the Sydney area.

Typical interstate distances and driving times are as follows:

Sydney / Brisbane: 950 km - Driving time 10 - 11 hours

Sydney / Gold Coast: 844 km - Driving time 9 - 10 hours

Sydney / Sunshine Coast: 1,024 km - Driving time 11 - 13 hours

Sydney / Canberra: 287 km - Driving time 3 - 4 hours

Sydney / Melbourne: 878 km - Driving time 10 - 11 hours

As with our local removals, we will project manage your interstate move down to the smallest detail. Moving long distances across the country often requires meticulous logistical planning. We will supply you with packing materials and boxes and if required, we will come in advance of the move to pack your belongings. On the day of the move, our removal team will arrive with their specialist equipment. They will ensure everything is safely loaded onto our purpose-built transport and fully secured for the move across Australia.

We will coordinate the move so that your belongings arrive at your new home at the time and date that suits your plans. We can also arrange to put some or all of your things in storage for a short-term or longer basis.

We will assist with other details, such as transporting and boarding your pets, clearing unwanted items and rubbish from your old residence. With our nationwide 'local knowledge', our removal team can help you to settle into your new home. We can also arrange removal insurance that is tailored for your specific interstate requirements.

No removalist company in the Sydney area is better qualified than us to handle your interstate move. We are confident that our charges are the lowest in the business. So give us a call and let us quote for a no-obligation, interstate package that will be specifically tailored for your needs.

TERMITE INFESTATION

Are you concerned about a termite infestation in your home?

Almost one-third of the homes in Victoria are subject to termite attacks, particularly in urban areas. Your house is even more vulnerable if gum trees exist within 100 metres of your home.

Have you noticed little tubes on the walls and foundations, or masses of mud-like earthen packing on wall surfaces where they meet flooring or wall bearers and joists? Or blistering paintwork on window frames and skirting? Or maybe you have noticed a strange smell or even a light tapping noise at night. If so, in all probability, termites are slowly destroying your home.

What can we do to help you?

Firstly, we will carry out a thorough survey of your home, buildings and the surrounding area to establish the level of termite activity. We will provide you with a written report along with the key steps we recommend to deal effectively with an existing termite problem, or to prevent a future infestation.

Depending upon the extent of the infestation, our main recommendations will include the chemical treatment of the soil around the perimeters of the buildings; and a 'termite baiting' programme with the aim of destroying nearby termite colonies.

Termite baiting will involve the installation of unobtrusive 'bait stations' - which we will monitor and add bait when evidence of termite activity is detected. The termites carrying the bait will eventually return to their colony nest which contains hundreds of thousands of termite workers. There they will infect and eventually destroy the nest. The bait used in these stations is deadly to termites but non-toxic to pets and children.

Termites will stop eating your timbers within hours and your home will be completely free of termites within 90 days.

Where appropriate, we will also provide you with a list of suggested modifications to your buildings, such as: improving sub-floor ventilation; the removal of any timber in contact with the soil and creating open access points for future inspections.

In summary, we will provide the following services:

- A written, detailed survey report with a recommended course of action.
- Chemical soil treatment around the house perimeters to prevent entry.
- Installation of 'bait stations' near the perimeters of your home to destroy colonies.
- Monitoring of bait stations and adding bait to the system whenever termites are detected.
- Recommendations on building modifications to prevent termites from entering in the future.
- Regular follow-up inspections.

BLOG - MENTORING FUTURES TRADERS

The Importance of having The Right Mentor when Learning To Trade.

Learning how to trade can be a lonely business.

The difficulty of meeting and working with the wider trading community is a common problem experienced by many traders when they first set out on their trading careers.

Their need to meet like-minded people and their desire to learn often results in new traders agreeing to the first *hard sell* mentorship pitch they receive.

The internet contains dozens of websites promoting trading schools and freelance traders who are all offering mentorship at high prices.

Each website will advertise the names of *eminent* traders, who, we are told, have enjoyed great track records in the futures market and are ideally placed to provide mentorship.

The question new traders should ask themselves is:

Why are all these so-called successful traders working as 'professional mentors', when they could be out trading in the market and getting richer?

Without doubt, some professional mentors *are* successful traders and are genuinely offering students the benefit of their experience. Some may wish to pass on the benefits of their trading experience to the next generation, especially when there is some extra pocket money to be picked up along the way. Others may simply be frustrated teachers.

But whatever their experience and motivation, very few of these *professional* mentors will offer mentorship daily in a live trading room.

There is no substitute for 'live' trading mentorship.

The best course of action for a new trader who wants to learn the ropes is to join a trading room where the trading team is willing to mentor them on a daily basis. Why spend all that money at trading academies when you can learn to trade in the room? The only cost to you will be the room membership fee.

If you really want to learn how to trade from the experts, there is no substitute to watching them call trades on the floor. You will learn why the head traders make the calls they do and how they use the enormous amount of data at their disposal to make successful trades.

Learning on the job is far more valuable than any trading school or offline mentors, where they teach numerous trading theories that may or may not work in the real world.

What makes good mentors?

- They must have a proven record of success in the Futures Market.
- They use *live* trading as the main feature of their mentorship. You can watch your mentor and his team trade daily on the floor, and they will explain what they are doing and why.
- They must be brutally honest they must be prepared to discuss all your faults. If they tell you that *you* can never blow an account or that *they* have never blown an account, then you know they are full of B.S. Trading the futures market is always risky and nobody is exempt from occasional losses.
- They must be able to communicate clearly and concisely. No matter how keen they are to mentor you, if they cannot explain succinctly and quickly what they are doing, you will struggle to understand.
- They must be able to get on with you, but also prepared to make you feel <u>uncomfortable</u> when the occasion demands. The best mentors are people you respect, and who can tell you in no uncertain terms when you mess up.

Mentorship at Trading Futures in Action.

TFiA offers **free** mentorship in their trading room to anyone who wishes to come and watch them trade and pay the monthly room fee.

There is even a <u>free</u> five-day trial to make sure that **TFiA** is for you.

Sandy Sehgal and Bob Amico, **TFiA**'s Head Traders, have an impressive track record which is transparent and open to scrutiny. Using their vast trading experience, Sandy and Bob have joined with two developers; and together they have built one of the most sophisticated **Order Flow** and **Indicator** software packages available in the Futures Market.

Why choose Mentorship at TFiA?

- > You will learn from success.
- > You will never have to trade alone.
- > You will have the benefit of joining a strong community of traders
- > You will learn how to avoid common pitfalls and develop trading consistency.
- > You will learn the essential rules of futures trading.
- > You will learn how to plan every trade based on what you see; and also how to accept your losses.
- > You will learn the discipline of a tried and tested system.
- > You will receive expert guidance 'in the heat of battle'.
- > You will learn how to overcome the psychological challenges of daily trading.

> You will have access to education and training aids that will improve your knowledge and skills.

Interested?

Want to chat further?

Just fill in your details on the *contact* page and we will get back to you.

(Click for contact page)

http://www.tradingflowinaction.com/

ORDER FLOW WEBSITE

Page 1

TFIA - TRADING FUTURES IN ACTION

Learn a better way of trading!

TFIA - ORDER FLOW MATRIX

"The most sophisticated and reliable Order Flow software in the market."

- > Rip open a candle to find great trade locations.
- > Make better trade decisions in real time.
- > Level the information field between institutions and retail traders.
- > See the markets completely naked.
- > Avoid a retail flush and improve your stop management.

By using the **TFiA Order Flow Matrix** you will have access to a huge amount of trading data that wasn't previously available. You will have more detailed information that will enable you to refine your entries and exits.

Look inside a *candle* and see this extraordinary information to take your trading to the next level.

What is Order Flow?

Order Flow is a new and exciting revolution in the way retail traders can execute orders in the futures market. Up until recently, traders relied on *Fundamental Analysis* (analysis of the economy, industry conditions the financial health of companies etc.); and *Technical Analysis*, (historical analysis of security's market activity); to predict the flow of orders into the market.

Although these two methods of analysis are still essential tools in the successful trader's armoury, there is now a crucial third tool for the retail trader.

Order Flow Trading.

TFiA Order Flow Matrix enables the trader to have real time, detailed information on all the trades being executed. This allows a disciplined focus on the actual orders being placed. It will enable **Order Flow Matrix** traders to take advantage of the activity by the other traders to provide consistent profits over time.

Video Clips of trades Taken

TFiA Order Flow Matrix enables traders to look **inside the candlestick** and see exactly what is happening at the micro-level in real time. It will reveal to traders how the orders are entering the market; how they are being filled and whether the orders are being executed at the *offer* or on the *bid*. Evaluating the order flow in real time will enable the trader to see how the trade is moving and in what direction.

Time and Sales data moves so fast and is so quickly out of sight that it cannot be properly assimilated. But **Order Flow Matrix** software can reveal trading patterns within the candlestick that the trader had never been previously aware of.

Existing market analytical practises are combined with the detailed trade data provided by the **Order Flow Matrix.** This provides retail traders with the best possible support to enable them to make the right trading decisions.

Video's and Clips

How Does TFiA Order Flow Matrix Help Traders?

Once traders have achieved a basic understanding of order flow, they can start to avoid making preconceived decisions, based on historic analysis or theories handed down by so-called experts. Instead, they can start to make their decisions based on real time, micro-level data. Traders can assemble the data elements into meaningful patterns from the information provided by the workflow software.

Here are examples of the many ways in which the **TFiA Order Flow Matrix** data can be utilised to make successful trades.

Delta.

The delta of a bar will highlight the bidders or sellers at market price who are aggressively trying to push the market in a particular direction. These aggressive traders are not bothered about the price at which they enter the market.

TFiA's Order Flow Matrix will track the day and cumulative delta for all bars so that traders can examine the trends and look for scalp trading opportunities. The software can be configured by the user for any bar-chart timeframe or chart type.

• Imbalance Zones.

Imbalance zones are where aggressive sellers or buyers have historically pushed the market down. The random walk model suggests that this history may repeat itself.

TFiA's Order flow Matrix software will highlight imbalance zones, so that there is no need for manual identification. The software can also be configured by users to look for predetermined price specifications; such as identifying a 3 tick, 4 tick or 5 tick set of imbalances.

Imbalance zones are effectively *support and resistance* areas where the market will stop and turn. They can be *precision rejection points* for the support and resistance trades.

Point Of Control.

Point of Control is the bar with the highest volume of contracts traded. If traders are below the bar they look for *shorts* and if above they look for *longs*.

TFiA's Work Flow Matrix software tracks the daily Point Of Control bar for trade scalpers.

• Inventory.

Inventory is a unique feature of the **TFiA Work Flow Matrix**. It enables traders to track the future ending orders so that they can see where traders are waiting to execute in the *support or resistant* areas.

• Price magnets and unfinished auctions.

If there is a price gap - up or down - in the market when it opens, the market is attracted to return and close the gap. A price magnet or an unfinished auction attracts the market back to certain price points. These magnets are highlighted as white bars and unfinished auctions are highlighted as gold bars. They provide price targets for final targets on traded or entry points if they line up with inventory of imbalance zone.

Profile or composite profile.

This is a histogram of volume traded at every price. Imagine a histogram showing the height of children in a school class would show a bell-shaped distribution of the children's height from a minimum of (say) 3 feet to maximum (say) 7 feet.

Traders with **Order Flow Matrix** software will know to buy at '3 feet' and sell at '7 feet'. Our software shows the pending buyers in green and the sellers in red.

Picture of histogram (graphic from James)

Block trades.

TFiA's Order Flow Matrix software searches for the big contract traders and where they are trading. The software can be customised to look for a pre-set number of contracts, such as *over 10*, *or over 20* contracts. In this way, traders can see where the institutional traders are pitching their orders.

Sequential decline

TFiA Order Flow Matrix software provides an indicator which will signpost sequential decline. It will assist in tracking capped candles where the market is becoming exhausted and running out of steam.

Floor pivots or value areas and short term pivot points

The default indicators, in blue, red and green lines, are set at 95% and 68% level of distribution. These levels can be customised to different percentages.

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Why switch to using the TFiA Order Flow Matrix?

The team who built it

Sandy Sehgal and Bob Amico are TFiA's team of two head traders who have both achieved incredible track records as traders in the futures market.

Sandy has worked at JP Morgan, Citibank, Merrill Lynch and Santander before starting his trading journey in 2003. During this time, he has achieved some impressive milestones, including being a member of a team of three traders that was the No.1 ranked trade room of 2015.

One of our traders has had a 30-year career on Wall Street where he achieved the million-dollar producer designation and has managed major hedge funds. He brings a wealth of information as well as trade ideas ranging from options to equities - as well as esoteric investments.

Last year, Sandy and Bob joined forces with two industry developers to bring to market by far and away the best order flow software product that traders have ever seen.

Prior to developing this exciting software, Sandy and Bob had over 4 years' experience in using 5 different order flow software products. So they put their

heads together to combine the best features and benefits contained in each of the products they had been using. The result is a truly amazing product.

Pictures two traders::

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In the Media

TFiA Order Flow Matrix contains all the good features and none of the bad. Furthermore, they have incorporated some new features of their own which they felt were lacking in existing software.

TFiA Order Flow Matrix is the highest rated product in the market

Not only is **TFiA Order Flow Matrix** the best product available, but it also the most reliable. There is none of the glitches and annoying crashes that are commonplace in rival products. Once traders try out the **TFiA Order Flow Matrix**, they will never want to use any other.

Using this software, **TFiA** has been very highly rated by Dr Dean A Handley, one of the USA's leading specialists and commentators on futures market trading. In his search to find truthful, transparent and profitable rooms, out of an estimated 1044 trading rooms, Dr Handley identified TFiA to be in the top 12.

He states "I find TFiA to be the most accomplished Trade Titans and the most diverse trading environments."

He further states that:

- They post a track record of number of trades, contract and final P&L
- They net greater than \$50,000 per year on a 3 contract/trade
- They show all their trades in real time

- The head traders are patient and courteous
- They trade in multiple indices
- They provide mentorship and an education programme
- Free trials are provided
- They offer managed account trading.

The above would not have been possible without the use of **TFiA Order Flow Matrix.**

Page 5

The benefits of our product:

- **TFiA Order Flow matrix** is the best software available to enable traders to make consistent profits. Provided traders are not too greedy, they will be able to trade order flow futures for small but consistent profits.
- **TFiA Order Flow matrix** enables traders to avoid traps set by professional Imitational traders who regularly attempt to flush the retailers out from the action.
- **TFiA Order Flow matrix** enables traders to trade more safely with a retail account.
- **TFiA Order Flow matrix** enables traders to trade *with* the institutions, rather than against them.

The Next Step?

- ➤ Are serious about seeing ''inside the candle'' and finding a whole new world?
- ➤ Do you want to find out more about our fantastic product?

Still not sure?

Sign up for a 5 day live trial in our trading room for \$5.

Watch us trade live

Look at our video's

I want to see you trade for 20 hrs over 5 days 25c per hr (buy button)

Are you ready to be shown the light and see "inside the candle"?

If so, here are your options:

- 1. **Buy the software package from us**. Promotional price is \$2,995, normally \$3,495. (Our competitors charge up to \$4995.)
- **2. Buy TFiA Action** this month, and your first month's room access fee, along with the \$700 monthly software charge, will be included *free of charge*.
- 3. **Buy TFiA "Bang Bang" indicator**. (Proprietary indicator developed by the team). Member's price is \$199. (Special offer) Normal retail price \$299.
- 4. **Buy TFiA "Renko Scalp".** (Proprietary indicator developed by the team). Member's price is \$199. (Special offer) Normal retail price \$299.
- 5. **TFiA Action** (Propriety indicator developed by the team evaluating price action).
- 6. TFiA Profile
- 7. Chart templates

I want to buy now

Purchase button.

We can explain how our packages will meet your varying needs. Contact us at any time for more information. Sandy and Bob will be very happy to talk to you and discuss it further.

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PRO BOND CLEANING SYDNEY

HOME

Pro Bond Cleaning Sydney is a long established, professional bond cleaning company that will provide all your cleaning needs at affordable prices.

Whether you require an 'end of lease' professional clean to ensure your bond money is returned in full; or you are a property owner/manager/ real estate agent who needs to get a property in perfect condition for a new lease; or you need regular cleaning at your home or commercial premises - we are the perfect professionals for you.

Take the stress out of your cleaning needs by letting our expert and friendly team do the job for you. You can get on with you busy lives, happy in the knowledge that Pro Bond Cleaning Sydney will complete your cleaning projects to your total satisfaction.

We are Sydney's leading experts in 'end of lease' bond cleaning and have had many years of experience in the professional cleaning of commercial and residential properties. Let us ensure that you get your bond money back or that your property is ready for the next tenant.

Cleaning any property to professional standards - particularly when it comes to putting it into perfect condition to ensure the return of bond money - is something that can only be properly handled by professionals like **Pro Bond Cleaning**Sydney, as we understand precisely what is required.

A bond clean is much more than a regular clean. Property managers and real estate agents can be very sticky on this so it is always best practice to try and have the property looking even better than it did before you moved in. If you have kept the checklist of all items in the property and their condition when you signed the lease, this will be a very useful reference.

It is essential that an end of lease property is in pristine condition so it is ready for the new tenant to move in. Difficult or awkward landlords will expect that even the smallest things you may never have cleaned before (or even knew existed) are left in spotless order. They will also expect that all fixtures and appliances are wiped down and thoroughly cleaned, the shower walls, floors and toilets are scrubbed, the skirting boards are dusted and wiped down and even the ceiling fan blades are wiped down and free of dust.

If you do have a difficult landlord, or you are the landlord and have to deal with messy tenants, let us take control and ease your mind.

Even if you are the most willing amateur cleaner, it is likely that you will miss many key aspects of 'end of lease' or 'moving out' cleaning that will bring the property back to exactly the same condition as when you moved in.

Pro Bond Cleaners Sydney will attend to such matters as: carpets, windows (inside and out), mirrors, windowsills, ledges, cupboards & wardrobes (inside and out), skirting boards, doors and door frames, kitchen cupboards (inside and out), ovens, microwaves and washing machines (all inside and out), hobs sinks, baths and showers, shower doors, toilets, floor tiles, counters, balconies, staircases and much more - all vacuumed, polished, washed, scrubbed, descaled, sanitised and dusted, as appropriate, and the entire property will be swept clean of cobwebs.

Whatever your cleaning needs may be, we guarantee to transform your property into an immaculate state of cleanliness. We have the latest equipment and although most jobs can be completed within a single day, we will always stay as long as necessary to complete the job to your satisfaction.

If for any reason you - or the property owner or agent - is not satisfied with our work, we will return to redo or correct any deficiencies or will refund your money in full.

Pro Bond Cleaning Sydney's highly experienced team offer the following services:

- Comprehensive End of lease / Exit cleaning, with bond back guarantee.
- One off house cleaning.
- Regular house cleaning.

- Commercial cleaning of offices and other commercial/public buildings.
- Carpet, rug and upholstery cleaning.
- Roof and gutter cleaning.
- Individual room cleaning, e.g. bedrooms, kitchens & bathrooms.
- All general cleaning and laundry services, including windows, ovens, bed linen, curtains and blinds.
- Yard and garden services, including lawn mowing, patios, strata and general garden maintenance.

Five reasons to choose **Pro Bond Cleaning Sydney**

- 1. Bond Back guarantee on 'end of lease' cleaning.
- 2. Our price structure is affordable and highly competitive and we can match it to your budget.
- 3. Our experienced and well-trained teams of workers guarantee a first class job, with a money back guarantee.
- 4. Jobs can be tailored to meet your specific requirements.
- 5. Our friendly, considerate service. You are the boss and we will work hard to keep you satisfied at all times. We will drive away your stress and have you smiling at the result.
- 6. Our reliability. We always respond promptly and deliver within the agreed deadlines. You will soon realise that you can leave the job to us and stop worrying about it.

Contact us today to obtain an instant quote, and book us without delay. We are waiting for your call.

http://www.proasbestosremovalmelbourne.com.au/

PRO ASBESTOS REMOVAL MELBOURNE

1. HOME

Welcome to **Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne** - your leading Melbourne Asbestos removalist.

What is Asbestos?

Asbestos consists of one or more of a group of six types of naturally occurring minerals made up of fine, durable fibres which are resistant to heat, fire, and water and many other chemicals.

Asbestos used to be regarded as the wonder building material and was widely used for a variety of purposes in building construction from the 1950's to the mid-1980's. Any residential, commercial or public building built before 1990 may contain asbestos.

Asbestos was extensively used for roofing, flooring, insulation, steam pipes, boilers, furnace ducts, soundproofing, decoration, patching mixed in paints and much more.

Asbestos has been banned for use in construction for many years and it is universally accepted that asbestos is carcinogenic. Exposure to it causes asbestosis and mesothelioma - fatal cancers which damage the linings of the lungs along with a host of other fatal, lung-related medical conditions.

By law, all commercial buildings must have an audit/inspection and a register of any asbestos in the building maintained.

If you suspect you have any asbestos in your home, you should have it inspected to ensure that it is still in good condition and hasn't been disturbed.

• If a building contains asbestos that is worn or damaged, it may be exposing people to its toxic fibres. Immediate remedial action must be taken. This

- may entail sealing off the affected area, or the complete removal of the offending material.
- If you need to do some building maintenance or refurbishmentl, rebuilding, add an extension or even carry out the total or partial demolition of a building containing asbestos, you will require a specialist asbestos removalist.

This is where **Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne** comes in.

We have over ten years' experience and are our staff are Government qualified and licenced to carry out every kind of asbestos removal work.

We have the technology and no-how to do the job, be it a small garage, a single room in your home, your house roofing or the demolition of an entire commercial building. We have the expertise to carry out the work, efficiently, safely and at affordable prices.

Your safety is of paramount importance, and we have the skills to ensure that the project is handled with the maximum of care. After thoroughly inspecting your premises and ensuring that all harmful materials are identified, we will remove all the asbestos without releasing any harmful carcinogenic fibres into the atmosphere. At the end of the job, we will ensure the whole area is thoroughly decontaminated.

All our work is 100% guaranteed. We will comply with all the regulations, and we are confident that you will find us easy and friendly to work with. Furthermore, you will be amazed and very satisfied with our professionalism.

Here are some of the services **Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne** can do for you.

Inspection & Testing

We will inspect your premises and provide you with a report detailing where the asbestos is located and which asbestos needs to be removed. We will give you an obligation free quote and we can go from there.

Where necessary, our quotation will include the extraction of samples which we will take back to our lab to confirm (or otherwise) the presence of asbestos and identify the type of fibres.

We are confident you will find us professional and our quotes highly competitive.

Removal

- **Domestic.** We will remove any evidence of asbestos from every room in your house (ceilings floors, walls etc.), your roof, gutters, and eaves, your garages, sheds, carports and anywhere else on your property.
- **Commercial.** We are highly experienced in carrying out removal services at commercial buildings, factories, offices and public buildings. Where required, we can work with and liaise with other onsite contractors.

Upon approval of our quote, our team of highly trained specialists will immediately get to work. We have a wide range the latest, hi-tech equipment which will enable us to remove even the tiniest particles of asbestos dust from your building.

After Service

- **Decontamination**. Although we will make every effort to protect your property by using specialist dust protection sheeting, upon completion of our work, the entire property and all the things left in it will be thoroughly decontaminated and made 100% safe.
- **Pick up / Collection**. All the asbestos and contaminated material will be collected, taken offsite and disposed of at a properly licenced State of Vitoria asbestos waste disposal facility.

Notifications, Consultations and Notices.

We take care of all notifications and statutory consultations. This includes the Victoria State Government, neighbours or anyone living or working near to the affected property, the 'asbestos disposal notification processes' and the issuance of an Asbestos Clearance Report.

Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne is one of the top asbestos removal companies in the Melbourne area. We guarantee that our properly vetted, well qualified and friendly team of specialists have the expertise and equipment to do the job for you - no matter how small or how large and complex.

We will come to your premises and give you a detailed list of the asbestos problems we have uncovered and we will talk through our plans with you for removal and clean up. We want you to fully understand our proposals and relax in the knowledge that **Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne** will solve all your asbestos nightmares.

Call us today to arrange an inspection and obligation free quote. You won't regret it.

2. ABOUT US

Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne has been removing asbestos from homes and commercial buildings in the Melbourne area for over 10 years and we have become a leader in Victoria at the business of asbestos removal.

Our main services include: asbestos roofing, garages, warehouses, factories, internal and external wall cladding, asbestos fencing, bathroom asbestos, asbestos in floor tiling, all kinds of commercial asbestos removal, and soil contamination.

We are fully insured and licenced to carry out all asbestos removal work by the State of Victoria. Our hard-earned reputation has been built on the backs of thousands of satisfied customers whose homes or business premises are now 100% asbestos free. They know that safety is always our number one priority and they are happy in the knowledge that can go about their busy lives in a safe, asbestosfree environment.

Whether your asbestos problems are big or small, we will send one of our experts to carry out a full inspection and provide you with a detailed report. This will contain our proposals to seal-off and/or remove any dangerous materials.

Everything will be explained in a friendly and non-technical manner so that you can fully understand what we propose to do. If you have any hazardous asbestos on your property it is a very serious matter. We will keep in close contact with you - from your initial enquiry, right through to the post-completion of our work.

We believe it is essential that you have peace of mind and feel 100% safe at all times. Removing asbestos safely is a highly complex task and can only be carried out by government-approved experts with the correct skills and qualifications. We have invested in the latest tools & equipment to do the job properly as it is essential that during the removal process, no dangerous carcinogenic fibres are released in the air. For your extra safety, a thorough decontamination of the entire area is carried out at the completion of the removal work.

Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne will respond promptly to any and all enquiries. Our friendly staff will try to meet you on the same day and we will provide you with a free, no-obligation quote.

We are a very experienced, reliable company with a great reputation and we are confident that you will find our prices affordable.

Asbestos removal is too important to entrust to the 'also runs' - let the winning professional's do it for you. Call **Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne** today.

3. ASBESTOS REMOVAL

Removal of asbestos from your home or commercial building is a complex, highly specialised and dangerous undertaking. It can only be undertaken by highly skilled, properly trained, qualified technicians who are registered with the Victoria State Government to carry out such work.

So go no further than **Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne**. As our name states, we are the leading professionals who can carry out your asbestos removal work efficiently and safely at affordable prices and with the minimum of disruption.

We use the latest tools and equipment and our removal practices and techniques are the safest and most thorough in the business.

Asbestos contains carcinogenic fibres and dust which causes cancer and lung diseases which are often fatal. Only properly qualified and registered companies can handle this difficult and delicate work in a proper manner.

Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne can remove asbestos that is found in countless residential and commercial buildings that were built prior to the 1990's.

The main areas of concern are:

- Corrugated roof sheeting, eaves and gutters.
- Interior and exterior wall sheeting/cladding.
- Flooring.
- Interior ceilings.
- Kitchens and Bathrooms.
- Garage roofs and walls and carports & sheds.
- Asbestos fencing.
- Boilers.
- Furnace ducts.
- Sound proofing etc.
- Shops, warehouses and factories and offices.
- Soil contamination.

Before we commence our asbestos removal operations, our experts will undertake a thorough inspection of your premises and provide you with a report detailing the removal work that needs to be carried out. Any Asbestos that is still in good condition and is not worn or decaying may be left in place, but must be regularly inspected for any signs of deterioration.

If you are planning work on your building, such as repairs and maintenance, redecoration, refurbishment, adding an extension, carrying out partial or wholesale demolition or any similar type of work, *the risk of exposure to asbestos must be assessed*.

Call **Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne** to make an inspection and to carry out any asbestos removal work that is necessary.

During the asbestos removal process, our technicians on site - and anyone else who needs to enter the area - will be issued with personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect them from the deadly fibres.

Where appropriate, the asbestos removal will be carried out in liaison you're your developers and any other contractors that are working at the premises. We will ensure that all workers, employees and residents are kept safe at all times.

Although we use specialist equipment and dust protective sheeting when we remove the asbestos, it is still possible that tiny amounts of the fibre may be left behind. Once all the asbestos has been removed, and we have disposed of the hazardous material at a licenced toxic waste facility, we will carry out a decontamination of the entire site. This will ensure that it is safe and completely free from any remaining deadly fibres.

4. ASBESTOS TESTING

If your property was built before 1990 and you are planning to carry out some building or repair work; or you are applying for a change in site zoning or land use, or you want to sell your house; you will need to establish whether there is any asbestos present anywhere on your property.

Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, anyone owning or conducting business in a building has a legal responsibility to ensure that the health and safety of its workers and other persons are not put at risk. Moreover, real estate agents are obliged to disclose the presence of asbestos or any other hazardous materials to potential buyers.

Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne are fully qualified and registered to carry out inspection and testing for the presence of asbestos in your home or commercial building. We are an approved asbestos tester and our laboratory is accredited by NATA (National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia). NATA accreditation is not easy to obtain and we guarantee that our testing processes conform to strict scientific criteria. Our results are 100% reliable.

We do NOT recommend the use of asbestos home testing kits as they are simply a means of obtaining a sample which you must then send off to some unknown laboratory. There will be no guarantees as to turnaround time or the quality of service.

To be sure of an accurate result, you must use experienced industry professionals such as **Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne** to carry out your testing requirements. Sample testing may entail you sending a sample to us. For larger jobs, you will need to arrange for our technicians to visit your premises and carry out a thorough inspection and obtain the relevant samples for testing.

We will provide you with full and detailed instructions on how to collect your own sample, which will entail wearing a 'P2' protective mask to deal with the potentially hazardous materials. Your sample, which should be between 5grams to 100 grams, should be obtained using pliers with a wet wipe wrapped around them

and then placed in a click lock plastic bag. This must then be double-bagged inside a second, separate bag.

You must either deliver the sample to us in person or contact us to arrange collection, For larger jobs, our technicians will come and extract the samples from your premises and transport them safely back to our lab.

The samples will be properly tested using the latest state of the art equipment which involves the fibres being viewed under a polarised light microscope to identify the types of asbestos - if any - that may be present. The types of asbestos to be found are usually:

- Chyrsotile (white asbestos)
- Amosite (brown asbestos)
- Crocidolite (blue asbestos)

Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne's testing fees are very competitive and you can be assured of a first class, completely accurate, guaranteed service.

Some testing companies offer services which may appear to be very cheap, but beware. The fees usually contain many hidden extras, such as high surcharges for quick turn-arounds; batch fees for each individual sample; additional charges for exceeding certain sizes or weights.

So you can't do better than call **Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne** for all your asbestos testing needs. You will find us friendly, professional and trustworthy and we will quote affordable prices with no hidden extras.

5. ASBESTOS DISPOSAL

Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne has the expertise and equipment to dispose of any asbestos that has been removed from your home, factory or commercial / industrial building.

The disposal of asbestos waste, whether from your home or workplace, is strictly controlled by the EPA (Environment Protection Authority). This is covered under two separate acts of parliament - the Environmental Protection Act 1970 and the Environmental Protection (Prescribed Waste) Regulations 1998. The EPA also has authority over commercial waste disposal companies that transport the asbestos waste to properly approved waste sites.

By law:

- You **cannot** dump your asbestos waste on private or public land as it is in breach of the Health Act 1958 and the Environmental Protection Act 1970.
- You cannot dispose of asbestos materials at your local recycling centre.
- You **cannot** place your asbestos waste in your home or work rubbish collection bins.
- The disposal of all asbestos materials must be made at a waste treatment centre that is properly licensed to accept such waste.

Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne has the licensed transportation vehicles necessary to carry out the disposal of any asbestos material that has been removed from your home, your factory or commercial /industrial buildings.

Whether it was us or someone else who removed the asbestos 'in situ' from your building, we will be happy to undertake the disposal and take all the hazardous waste from your premises. We are fully licenced and controlled by the EPA and can legally provide the necessary asbestos disposal services. We will take your waste offsite in specially made asbestos removal bins and deliver the contents to an approved waste facility.

The state of Victoria has eleven landfill sites that accept domestic asbestos waste; three landfill sites that accept commercial asbestos waste and sixteen sites that accept both domestic and commercial waste. You will be able to rest easy in the

knowledge that **Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne** will dispose of your hazardous asbestos waste in a professional, efficient and legal manner.

Call us today for free quote with no obligations. We look forward to hearing from you.

6. DEMOLITION

We, at **Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne,** have wide-ranging experience and expertise in building demolition work - anything from domestic property to large commercial and industrial complexes. We are fully licenced and insured to carry out any kind of demolition work - in accordance with the "Demolition of Structures Australian Standards 2601 – 1991" and other relevant legislation covering demolition work in the State of Victoria.

Pro Asbestos Removal Melbourne is the ideal company to undertake your general demolition work if the building(s) you wish to demolish contain asbestos. Not only will we take care of your building demolition in a safe and professional manner, but you can also rest assured that all the hazardous asbestos on site will be dealt with safely and expertly.

Before demolition work can commence, you will need to have all the necessary papers and permissions to hand; including a Planning Permit (in the case of heritage, environment or building proximity issues), and a demolition or building permit. You will also need to establish that you own the property, or that have the owner's permission to have the property demolished.

Our demolition services include but are not limited to the following:

- Removal of tree stumps and footings.
- Excavations.
- Rubbish removal
- Partial demolitions.
- Shed/ garage/driveway demolitions.
- Total building demolition.
- Site clearance for domestic, commercial & industrial complexes.
- Strip out the interior of buildings.
- Undertake tight access works.
- Dismantle, salvage and recover materials and fittings as required.
- Earth removal.
- Dealing with hazardous and toxic substances particularly asbestos.

Our specialist asbestos team will professionally remove all asbestos waste, including asbestos wall cladding, asbestos shingle roofing, corrugated asbestos cement fencing and asbestos roofing and asbestos/vinyl floor tiles. We will take all the necessary precautions to ensure the safety and health of all the people on site and arrange for any toxic waste to be transported offsite to an approved disposal facility.

Our large fleet of demolition plant & equipment is on hand for a wide range of demolition and clearance jobs. We have excavators, rotational hydraulic sheers, rock-breakers, flame cutters, wrecking balls, and so much more which we can utilise for any demolition job - regardless of size. Our well-trained and dedicated staff will carry out all our work efficiently, safely and at a cost- effective and ecofriendly manner.

Whatever your requirements, we can be very flexible and will work with you in any way you require - which includes liaising with other contractors on site.

Call us today for a free quote without any obligations. We are here to serve your demolition needs.

SALES LETTER

Looking to make your mark in 2016? Not sure how to break through?

Maybe you need a 'health-check' to polish up your trading techniques?

TFiA's live trading 'clinic' is just what the doctor ordered!

Come and see **TRADING FUTURES IN ACTION** and learn from the team with a proven track record.

With our industry-leading **Order Flow & Indicator** software products we can teach you trades you never thought possible.

With TFiA Order Flow and TFiA Indicator products, learn how to:

- ✓ Look inside the candlestick.
- ✓ Find great trade locations and make better trade decisions.
- ✓ See the markets trends easily.
- ✓ Find support and resistant levels with greater accuracy.
- ✓ Access the market when there is enough volatility to trade.

We trade in multiple indices and you can watch ALL our trades in real time.

Sign up for our **FREE Three Day Trial Offer** today and see how Sandy Sehgal, and Bob Amico and the team mentor and educate.

Learn how to use our unique software tools to level the field and beat the market.

Claim your 3-day complimentary seat in our room by clicking on the link below.

You will never regret it!

SALES 2





TFiA's New Order Flow Matrix is here at last!

- ➤ Did you ever wish you could look under the hood of the market and inside the candle?
- > Did you ever wish you had better market data to improve your trading?
- ➤ Did you ever wish you had a greater understanding of market trends to help you fine-tune your trades?
- ➤ Did you ever wish you had an Order Flow product that contained the best features of every Order Flow product rolled into one?

Wish no more.

TFiA's two head traders have spent more than 4 years working with every order flow product in the market to assess their pros and cons. Then they sat down with our own software engineers to develop a product that is second to none.

Now, after months of 'live market' testing, we are proud to announce that the TFiA Order Flow Matrix is ready to roll out.

Click here to see our brand new TFiA Order Flow Matrix Website with all the details of this incredible product

TFiA Order Flow Matrix is special because:

- It contains all of the good features of other products and none of the bad.
- It contains additional features that no other product has.
- It is very robust and reliable we have put it through its paces and ironed out any teething problems and technical glitches..
- It works well with any trading machine without compromising integrity and performance.

Click here to watch a 31 Minute Video of Bob Amico conducting a live trading and mentoring session in which he makes a 34+ tick trade.

As well as learning how the experts use Order Flow to make great trades, you too can follow them and "earn while you learn."

Click here to watch a 24 minute, "Final Cut" Training video which shows 4 live trades - *all wins* - in a row.



Click here to watch our 16 minute, "Highlights TFiA Order Flow" Video.

Bob Amico and the team want you to share in their success, and they will patiently explain while calling the trades. We also have regular sessions in the room with our top developer who can explain the finer points of how to use TFiA Order Flow software, and answer your technical questions.

Take advantage of our FREE One Week Trial Offer

Click here to claim your free seat

Special Offer for one month only!

Sign up for three month's membership and get a special discount.

Contact Bob or Sandy for details.

PRO TREE REMOVAL MELBOURNE

Welcome to **Pro Tree Removal Melbourne.** Are you in need of expert tree services? If you are a home or business owner, or you are responsible for a government department located in the Melbourne Metropolitan area; we are here for you. Maybe you only need one tree removed; or you require our arborist services to help you plan the pruning, lopping and removal of a large number of trees; we have the capacity and experience to take care of your needs.

What do Tree Removal companies do?

Naturally, they remove trees; along with a host of related tree services, such as as tree lopping; tree trimming; branch removal; stump removal; stump grinding; chipping; the pruning of trees, hedges and shrubs; palm tree cleaning and the whole range of arborist services.

Arborists are qualified experts in tree cultivation and the management, preservation and maintenance of the landscape ecosystem. They can access the difficult places on your property to undertake work such as tree reducing; tree transplanting; pruning and tree thinning. They can also help with the prevention and treatment of tree diseases and parasites.

Why might I need a Tree Removal Company?

There are a number of reasons why it would be wise to call in the professionals.

1. **Safety**. There may be trees on your property that constitute a danger to your family, your employees or the general public. Storm-damaged brittle branches can fall down and dead tree trunks can dry up and snap. Unsightly stumps can constitute a tripping hazard and attract pests such as termites. Out of control palm trees and other tall trees can threaten nearby structures or overhead power lines.

- 2. **Tree Maintenance**. Tree professionals can maintain a tree's integrity and extend its lifespan by removing decaying or dangerous branches. Tree specialists will also help you to care for your shrubs, hedges and plants.
- 3. **Aesthetics**. Improve the beauty of your property by removing unsightly, trees and shrubs; prune hedges that are out of control; remove dead palm tree fronds; increase the sunlight and provide a more pleasing aspect to your garden.
- 4. **Environment.** Tree surgeons and arborists will advise you on the management of your trees and shrubs to ensure they are healthy. They will remove trees, shrubs and vegetation that are deemed hazardous and invasive to the environment.
- 5. **Permits.** You will need to have a permit before you remove most types of tree from your property. There are special regulations and zoning laws which control the removal and even the pruning of certain trees. This can depend on the size and type of tree and its precise location. Tree removal experts can advise you on what permits are required and assist with the applications. Arborists will ensure all the relevant standards are complied with.
- 6. **Chippings**. Tree removers have the machinery to make wood chips from your trimmed branches and other vegetation. These chippings can be used as mulch and spread over the surface of your soil. This will improve the fertility of your garden, reduce weeds and help conserve moisture.

Our Services

Here is what Pro Tree Removal Melbourne can do for you.

• Tree Removal. The removal of trees can be for a wide of reasons. These include storm damage, earthquakes, disease or bad infestations. Sometimes trees are extracting too much soil nutrient and are affecting other plant growth. Overgrown roots are a common problem and can create a risk to

house foundations or underground piping. An ancient tree or one in bad condition can create a potential hazard to people walking near or underneath it and may require removal.

- Tree, trimming and branch removal. Overgrown trees that are not properly taken care of can die prematurely, creating a hazard which may also damage your property. Professionally pruned trees will look better, live longer, provide more sunlight and reduce the risks of damaging your property or overhead power lines.
- Tree, shrub and Hedge Pruning. Maybe your trees, shrubs and hedges have grown out of control. We can provide a professional pruning service to clean up your garden and make it look much better.
- **Stump removal and grinding.** We can either remove a stump completely or grind it down below ground level. This will ensure safety from people tripping, remove unsightly stumps and also eliminate the risk of disease from fungi and termites. Once removed or hidden from view you can pave it or plant over it.
- Chipping Services. We can provide chippings from your pruned trees, broken branches and cleared vegetation which will make excellent mulch for your garden.
- Arborist reports and services. Our qualified arborists can advise on all
 aspects of your trees, hedges and shrubs. They can help you plan your
 garden so that it looks better, is healthier and is more environmentally
 friendly.
- Emergency tree removal. Maybe your house has been damaged or your road has been blocked by a fallen tree. If so, we are on 24 hour standby to come to your rescue and safely remove the fallen or damaged trees.

Qualified - Skilled - Safe - Clean - Affordable.

Pro Tree Removal Melbourne has many years of experience in serving the Melbourne residential and business community. All our qualified tree surgeons have been professionally trained. Our arborists are certified to undertake any kind of tree removal and pruning service. We can advise on all aspects of your tree management and make sure that all the necessary permits are obtained before any work commences. They can also issue written reports on the overall condition of your trees and shrubs and make recommendations.

Our highly trained staff only use modern, professional equipment. This includes climbing harnesses and other safety apparatus, safety vests, safety gloves and protective helmets. They will be able to access all parts of your property; climb trees as necessary and carry out trimming and tree removal in a safe and secure manner.

We hold substantial insurance for our employees in the event of an accident. This is in addition to liability insurance, which covers any possible damage to our customer's property.

We always clean up after our work, take away any unwanted and waste material, and leave your gardens spotless.

We are passionate about our work and our mission is to provide a professional, safe and eco-friendly service to every customer; no matter the size of the job. Our vision is to be the top provider of professional tree care in the Melbourne Metropolitan area.

Our prices are very competitive and we are confident that we can give you an obligation-free, affordable quote that you will surprise you.

Call us today and talk to one of our friendly and knowledgeable representatives, and get the process started.

http://www.viplocksmithmelbourne.com.au/

VIP LOCKSMITH MELBOURNE

HOME

Welcome to **VIP Locksmith Melbourne.** We are Melbourne's premier locksmith for all your lock and security needs. Whether your security needs are at your **home**, in your **business**, for your **car** or for **emergencies**, we are the locksmiths for you.

In today's security-conscious world, master locksmiths are in demand to adequately protect homes and businesses. The days are gone when you can just put basic locks and simple padlocks on your doors to protect your property from intruders. Criminals have the knowledge and tools to easily enter premises which are inadequately secured.

Qualified master locksmiths use their specialised knowledge to ensure that you, your family, your employees and your assets are all safe from burglars. If the criminals see that your home or business has been well secured, they will go elsewhere.

Locksmiths will survey your property to identify any security weaknesses and upgrade and/or replace your locks and/or security systems where necessary. They can provide the most advanced locking systems to protect you and your property. Deadlocks, master key systems, restricted key systems, superior padlocks; and rekeyed locks are their tools in trade. They can install/upgrade security systems - whether alarm based or CCTV.

They are also on call 24/7 to come to your aid in the event of emergencies. Only the best commercial locksmiths are licenced and registered with the Police so that you can rest assured they will provide a professional and trustworthy service.

At **VIP Locksmith Melbourne**, our master locksmiths have many years of experience and are all fully qualified. They are vetted for honesty to ensure they are properly trained and their qualifications are genuine. Over the past ten years we have gained an enviable reputation for quality work that is executed in a prompt, friendly and efficient manner.

Why us?

- Our many years of experience in the Melbourne market and our commitment to deliver a speedy and professional service separate us from our competitors. In an emergency, we can be with you within 30 minutes.
- We only use the latest high-tech equipment and our locksmiths are kept up to date with technological developments. All our installations and upgrades come with long-term warranties and our workmanship is guaranteed.
- Our technicians are totally service-orientated. We are so confident of our workmanship that we offer a money back guarantee and never leave your premises until you are completely satisfied.
- Our pricing is highly competitive, and we tailor our quotes to suit your circumstances.

Our Services:-

- ➤ **Residential** Including: re-keyed locks; deadlocks; padlocks; front door locks; locks repaired & replaced, master key systems; restricted key systems; Door handles/ locks; patio screen and sliding door locks; window locks; front gate locks; security systems; garage locks; remote control locks; key cutting; repairing/installing safes; pool locks; home security surveys and installations and much more.
 - See our Residential Page for more details.
- ➤ Commercial We provide and repair locks and security systems for any type of commercial or public building, ranging from small offices to factories or hospitals. We can install/replace door locks, deadlocks, drop bolts, mortice cylinders, and so on. We can also provide a restricted key /

access systems; install/repair safes including changing combinations; CCTV, master key systems; roller door locks; security surveys and much more. *See our Commercial Page for more details.*

Automotive - We can handle all your vehicular security and locking needs, whether an emergency or you need additional car keys or a transponder key replaced. We can service, repair or replace locks for most makes of vehicle, including ignition keys, boot locks, car door locks, glove compartment locks etc.

See our Automotive Page for more details

Emergencies - VIP Locksmith Melbourne is on 24/7 standby. A call to our hotline will immediately connect you to a friendly knowledgeable locksmith who will come to your aid within minutes. If you have lost your keys or have been locked out, our expert locksmiths will arrange emergency access. We can remove broken keys in car doors or car ignitions and can secure your home or commercial building following a break-in. See our Emergencies Page for more details.

No job is too small or too big. We are always happy to come to your premises and provide a free, no-obligation quote. Even if you only require a single key to be cut, we will be pleased to take care of it. We, at **VIP Locksmith Melbourne**, believe in keeping our customers happy and satisfied at all times. This is the key to our success. Call us today to obtain a free, no-obligation quote. You won't regret it.

ABOUT

VIP Locksmith Melbourne is a well-established company that has been providing locksmith services to Melbourne and the surrounding area for more than ten years. We have built up an enviable reputation in the locksmith industry of delivering quality, reliable services on time and at affordable prices.

Mission Statement - VIP Locksmith Melbourne's mission is to maintain the highest levels of professionalism and to deliver a top quality locksmith service to our customers. We will never cut corners, and will always strive to keep our customers safe and secure at all times. We aim to provide an affordable service and to ensure that our customers are always happy with our prices and satisfied with our work.

Vision - Our vision is to be Melbourne's leading locksmith - to be the first choice locksmith for homes and businesses throughout Melbourne and the surrounding suburbs.

We are fully insured and licenced and we are registered with the Victoria Police as a security business. We are members of local and nationwide locksmith associations and we comply with best practice regulations. This protects our customers against shoddy, unsatisfactory work and unfair pricing.

We are always on call and our highly skilled, qualified master locksmiths provide a first class service. We carry out background checks on new employees to ensure they have no police record.

We only use high quality 'name' products and our workmanship is guaranteed. All our replacement locks are of the highest quality and come with long-term warranties. Many of our competitors also promise quality work and products but all too often they provide a sub-standard service and install dubious products.

How can you be sure that we are not the same as the others? Just ask any of our satisfied customers or check out our written quotes which contain cast iron guarantees.

We serve Melbourne and the surrounding suburbs within a 25-kilometre radius and our emergency locksmiths can usually be with you within 30 minutes.

You will find our prices difficult to beat and our well-trained technicians will impress you with their technical no-how and professionalism. If you are feeling vulnerable - maybe after a break-in or a late night lockout - our friendly team of master locksmiths will soon put you at ease. We will undertake instant, safe measures for your immediate security and later, will provide more permanent solutions.

Whatever your needs, Call us today for a free, no-obligation quote. We are sure you won't regret it.

RESIDENTIAL

Here, at **VIP Locksmith Melbourne**, we can take care of all your residential and domestic needs. Our fully qualified master locksmiths have over ten years' experience with handling all your home security requirements. It doesn't matter whether it is cutting a single door key, or designing and installing an entirely new security system from scratch. We can provide a comprehensive service that will leave you happy and satisfied.

Here are some of the things we can do for you.

- ➤ Key cutting and/or repair and/or replacement keys for your home, garage, security gates and gardens. We can cut new keys on site as well installing a master key system. and re-keying your locks. This will enable you to downsize your key rings and carry one key that will open all the door locks in your home.
- ➤ Provide a lock-out service if your home keys have been lost or stolen.
- Design and install security systems for your home and garden, including alarm and CCTV systems. Sensor cameras can be installed throughout your property and CCTV images can be remotely monitored from your smartphone or PC, wherever you are.
- ➤ Mobile locksmith services. Our mobile technicians can work on site to repair broken locks, install new ones. We can also gain access your property in the event of a lockout or a burglary.
- > Safe installations and repairs, changing combinations etc.
- ➤ Install front gate intercom security systems.
- Repair or install new locks in your garage, yard, garden, pool, and front gate.

- ➤ Provide locks and security for new extensions and patios, including sliding doors, and windows.
- ➤ Provide/replace door handles, dead locks, padlocks, window locks, drop bolts and so on.
- > Carry out a security survey especially for those buying or selling a property or for insurance purposes.

Our teams of master locksmiths have all the relevant skills to undertake everything on the above list, and much more. If you have an unusual or unique security problem, call us - we love challenges and are sure we can solve it for you. We are totally dedicated to delivering a professional service to our valued customers at affordable prices. Our technicians will do the work at a time and to a schedule that fits in with your busy lives. No job is too small and our attention to detail is second to none.

You may rest assured that all our locksmiths have been properly vetted and can be trusted to work in your home unattended.

Call us today and today and talk to one of our friendly representatives. You will not regret it.

COMMERCIAL

VIP Locksmith Melbourne has more than 10 years' experience of delivering quality work to the Melbourne business community at competitive prices. We have built up a hard-earned reputation of professionalism, reliability and honesty which our competitors find hard to match. We can provide our locking and security services to any size of commercial undertaking. Offices, shops, shopping centres, warehouses, factories and public buildings such as schools and hospitals are all within our field of competence.

Here are some of the jobs that we can do for your business:

- Installing/replacing/replacing doors locks, deadlocks, drop bolts, padlocks, mortice cylinders, and any other type of lock in your building.
- Re-key locks.
- Provide restricted access/ locking systems, whereby replacement keys can only be obtained by the manufacturer, on production of proper authorisation. Lost or stolen keys can be invalidated.
- Install door closures and other related hardware.
- Install a master key system whereby one key will open many locks.
- Repair, install roller door locks.
- Repair and install commercial safes and re-key or change combinations.
- Install, repair, upgrade and maintain commercial security systems, such as pin pad entry, swipe card entry, master or restricted key entry and many more. Install sensor-based alarm security systems.
- Install, repair and maintain CCTV cameras throughout your commercial premises.

- Install panic and exit devices
- Install time delay locks
- Install security gates and entrances for factories, yards etc.
- Provide security grills.

All the above, and more, will be carried out by our well-trained and professionally qualified master locksmiths and technicians. We carefully vet all our staff to ensure they have no police record and that their qualifications and experience are genuine.

VIP Locksmith Melbourne is dedicated to providing the best possible service to our business customers. We understand your security issues and will work with you to make your business safe. We can carry out an in-depth security survey and will recommend a course of action to ensure that your buildings are secure.

We only use the latest high-tech equipment and all our materials and products are the best available in the market. All our work is guaranteed and our locks and security installations carry warranties and will last for many years. Unlike some of our competitors, there are no hidden extras and our quotations contain clear guarantees on the quality of our workmanship and materials.

All our prices are highly competitive and we will be happy to sit down with you to tailor our quote to suit your particular circumstances and needs.

Give us a call and talk to one of our friendly and knowledgeable representatives. We will provide you with a free, no-obligation quote and we are confident that you will be our next satisfied customer.

AUTOMOTIVE

VIP Locksmith Melbourne can provide a full and comprehensive range of automotive services. We can handle emergencies to get you out of trouble, and we repair / upgrade your car locks and transponders. Our qualified and experienced automotive locksmiths and technicians can solve all your automotive security needs, from removing a broken car key, to re-cutting a transponder key. We have ten years' experience in dealing with all makes of car; whether they are older cars or the very latest models from Europe and Japan. We are also registered with Victoria Police as automotive security locksmiths.

Here are some of the services we can carry out for you.

- Get your vehicle going again when your keys are lost, stolen or broken. Our 24-hour automotive mobile services will come to your rescue and fix any problems on site. We can cut a new key on site or remove a broken or jammed key from your ignition. If you have locked your keys inside the car we are also experts in opening car doors without damaging your vehicle.
- Repair or replace ignitions and central locking systems. We can remove keys that are broken or jammed in your ignition without damaging the ignition. If required, we can replace the entire ignition system.
- Repair / replace / upgrade locks for your vehicle doors, boot and glove compartment.
- Cut additional keys for all your car locks. Many types of car keys can be recut on site by our mobile technicians.
- Repair, replace and provide additional transponder keys. Transponder keys contain a micro ship which transmits radio signals to activate central locking and the ignition. We can disable a missing or broken transponder key and supply and re-programme a new transponder key for most makes of vehicles. Cars built after 1996 have transponders containing more complex technology and are more expensive to replace. But we can still provide them for less than you can buy one from a dealer.

As well as cars, our expert automotive technicians can provide similar locksmith services to any type of vehicle or machinery. SUV's, pickups, motorcycles, trucks, tractors, forklifts and other mechanical plant and machinery are all within our sphere of expertise.

We vet all our technicians for competency and honesty - including police checks - and we carry out background checks with previous employers. So there is no need to worry that additional key copies may retained by staff. We use only the latest high-tech equipment and all our materials and replacement products are of the finest quality. All our automotive work is guaranteed and our products carry long-term warranties.

You will find our prices very affordable and they compare well with similar firms who do not always deliver the same standard of service. Our friendly, knowledgeable staff can always be relied upon to get you out of a jam. We will provide you with a professional service which is second to none.

Call us today for a free, no-obligation quote, and keep our number with you for your next automotive emergency.

EMERGENCY

Are you located in Melbourne or the surrounding area? Have you had a break-in? Or are you locked out of your home, business premises or car?

If so, **VIP Locksmith Melbourne** is the best possible choice to come to your rescue.

We have over ten years' experience in dealing with all kinds of emergencies. Our qualified technicians are fully trained to handle any problem promptly and efficiently. Our locksmiths and technicians are on call 24/7. We will be on our way in minutes - usually arriving within 30 minutes of your call. Examples of our emergency services include:

- Attend break-ins at your house, unit or business premises. We will make emergency repairs to your doors and gates, replace your locks and make sure that your home or business is properly secured.
- Gain emergency access to your home or business if your keys are lost, stolen
 or locked inside your property. We will also change locks on site and in the
 event of lost or stolen keys, ensure your property is safe from unauthorised
 intrusions.
- Carry out emergency repairs to faulty alarm systems, CCTV systems and other security systems.
- Cut new keys on site.
- Gain entry to your vehicle and, where appropriate, disable central locking, cut a new key, and remove jammed or broken keys from your ignition. See our Automotive Page for more details.

Our emergency locksmiths are specially trained to handle break-ins at large businesses and public properties. Places such as shopping centres, pubs & clubs, warehouses, factories, and public buildings such as hospitals, schools or libraries are all within our remit. We are licenced master locksmiths and we are registered with Victoria Police as security locksmiths.

VIP Locksmith Melbourne is already the first choice for many homeowners and businesses in the Melbourne area. They know our reputation for reliability and trustworthiness. No job is too big or too small and our friendly technicians will immediately respond to all your calls. We will soon put you at ease and you can relax in the knowledge that your emergency will be dealt with promptly and efficiently. Our prices are always competitive and we are sure you will find us affordable. We use the latest high-tech equipment and quality materials. Our 'name brand' products come with full warranties and our workmanship is guaranteed.

Always keep our number handy so that you can call us whenever an emergency arises. We, at **VIP Locksmith Melbourne**, are the emergency locksmiths you can trust.

PRO ELECTRICIAN SYDNEY

Welcome to the Home Page of **Pro Electrician Sydney.** If you're looking for a nonnesse, affordable, expert electrician you can do no better than contact us; we are one of Sydney's foremost electrical contractors.

Pro Electrician Sydney has more than ten years of experience in providing expert electrical services to Sydney's residential and commercial community. Our highly qualified team of electricians can handle any job, regardless of size or complexity.

We are a family-run company, and you find us very friendly as well as very capable. We are always happy to meet with you at any time to chat about your electrical needs.

Maybe you just need a new plug fitted on an electrical appliance; or you are wondering if your house needs rewiring; or maybe your business requires a new data-cabling network; or you have a major construction project that needs an experienced electrical contractor. Whatever your needs, the staff of **Pro Electrician Sydney** have all the electrical skills necessary to serve your wide and varying needs.

Included in our areas of expertise are the following:

• **Residential.** Including: rewiring; lighting, kitchen and bathroom installations; hot water systems; power points; TV, telephone & internet points, smoke alarms, safety switches, switchboards, safety inspections and emergency call-outs and much more.

Click here for more details

• Commercial. Including: automation systems; power saving lighting systems; office electrical fit-outs and upgrades; repair and maintenance of air conditioners; switchboard upgrades/replacements; electrical fault-finding; protected power points; surge protection, emergency call-outs and much more.

Click here for more details

• Electrical Repairs. One of the common problems in homes and offices is the 'tripping-out' of electrical circuits caused by defective appliances or faulty wiring. We can occasionally solve minor electrical 'tripping' problems over the phone, saving you the cost of a visit; but usually, a site visit will be necessary. Our technicians can carry out any type of repair in your home or business, such as: appliance repairs, hot water heater or electrical shower repairs, repairing faulty wiring and electrical circuits, switchboard repairs, fixing smoke alarms, and much more.

Click here for more details

• **Data Cabling**. For all your data communications and media requirements. We can design and install data cabling networks for your home or office. We can also repair, upgrade or expand your existing networks. **Pro Electrician Sydney**'s cabling technicians are ACMA registered cable technicians. They are cognisant with all the latest cabling technology such as optic fibre and Cat 6 and Cat6a

Click here for more details

• **LED Lighting.** We design and install a wide range of LED lighting products and designs for your home or office. LED lighting is becoming more and more popular as it offers great power savings compared with conventional lighting and it looks great. **Pro Electrician Sydney** can provide and install LED strip lighting; landscape lighting; LED downlights, dimmers, floodlights; shop lights; warehouse & factory lights, in-ground lights; LED panels & controllers and much more.

Click here for more details

- Test and Tag By law, all companies must have their electrical appliances
 tested and tagged to ensure compliance with health and safety standards. Pro
 Electrician Sydney has many years' experience in providing this very
 necessary service.
- Click here for more details

You Choose

These days, when it comes to electrical fittings for your home or office; there is a wide range of styles and colours. You can browse through the different sizes, shapes and colours of modern electrical products; light switches, power points, dimmers, push buttons, etc. and choose the electrical products that are right for you - the ones that match your home or office environment.

Pricing

Money can be very tight these days and we understand that many of our customers have limited budgets. We at **Pro Electrician Sydney** have put a lot of effort into our pricing to ensure that all our electrical work is affordable; that our charges compare favourably with our competitors.

Call us today for a quick, obligation-free quote - you will be glad you did.

ABOUT

Pro Electrician Sydney is a long established, family-run company and we have over ten years' experience in servicing Sydney's residential and business community. Our friendly employees are totally dedicated to making sure that our customers get the best possible service. Our aim is to always leave you satisfied with a job well done.

In today's legislative and safety-conscious environment, it is good to know that there is a trustworthy company like **Pro Electrician Sydney** on hand. You can call on us at any time to serve all your electrical needs.

All our electrical technicians are fully qualified and have the experience and knowledge to take care of every conceivable electrical job; whatever it may be, we have the experts for you.

In this age of spiralling prices, many people are concerned about their electricity costs. The bills never seem to go down however hard they try to cut back. **Pro Electrician Sydney** is here to give you expert advice on how to reduce your bills. We always handle our electrical work in the most economical manner.

When you talk to us, you will soon realise that we are a no-nonsense company. We treat the smallest jobs with respect and we provide the same level of expert service for small repairs in the home as we do with our largest commercial contracts.

Our **Mission** is to always get the job done right the first time and leave our customers 100% satisfied with our work. Our **vision** is to put ourselves so far ahead of our competitors that our name will be the only one on everybody's lips.

Why Choose us - what can we provide that the others can't?

Unlike some of our competitors, we always put our customer's interests first, and will always treat you as a valued customer. We will painstakingly explain how we plan to do the job and we guarantee that our charges are the lowest you can find

anywhere. We know the regulations and our qualified technicians will make sure our customers are always on the right side of the safety laws. Our work is always completed safely and securely, at the first time of asking.

Our main service locations are:

Sydney CBD Northshore Inner West Bondi Manly

Call us today and let us put your mind at ease. We will happy to chat with you and provide you with an obligation-free quote. Nothing is too much trouble for our friendly staff. We know you have a choice and we will treat you with respect and understanding; regardless of whether or not you decide to give us the work.

RESIDENTIAL ELECTRICIAN

Over the past ten years, **Pro Electrician Sydney** has built up a first class reputation amongst the residential community in Sydney. We are well known for reliability, honesty and great workmanship at affordable prices. We are often the first name that comes to mind whenever somebody needs an electrician.

Everyone has faulty appliances in their homes from time to time - whether it is a hairdryer or toaster that is not working properly or a washing machine or a TV that has lost power. Sometimes you are unsure if the appliance itself is faulty or whether it is due to a defective plug or circuit. These niggling electrical problems in your home may cause an accident, but you are worried about the costs of calling in an electrician.

Rest assured that a call to us will not cost the earth. An expert can soon be with you to check out all your electrical problems, no matter how trivial. Sometimes an appliance may have a blown fuse or have faulty wiring, or have a defective plug which can be fixed on the spot. If the problem is more serious we may have to take the appliance away for repairs, should you elect to do so.

Either way, you can be sure that our charges are extremely reasonable. We will tell you upfront the approximate cost, and again the choice is yours.

We keep all our prices so low that you will soon realise you won't get the job done cheaper anywhere else. Every customer is important to us and we want you to spread the word. After all, one day you, your friends or neighbours may need us again.

If you are looking to reduce your electricity bills you can do no better than talk to us. We can show you how to save money by changing to LED's.

Whatever your home electrical needs, we have to expertise to advise, plan and carry out the job for you. Here is a list of some of the services we can do for you:

- Rewiring your entire property or just a single room.
- Repair faulty wiring.
- Design and install new lighting, including yard and pool lighting.
- Install appliances in your kitchen, bathroom and elsewhere in your home.
- Install TV, telephone and internet points.
- Repair, replace power outlets and install additional outlets, (with USB sockets where required).
- Repair, upgrade or replace safety switches and switchboards
- Repair and install hot water systems.
- Repair, maintain and install ceiling fans and air conditioners.
- Install smoke and carbon dioxide alarms.
- Safety inspections.
- Carry out electrical contract work for home renovations or new extensions.
- Emergency call-outs.

Give us a call and surprise yourself on how affordable our rates are. We will provide an upfront, obligation-free quote with no fine print and no hidden extras. We are a straightforward, no-nonsense company who fervently believes in keeping our customers happy and satisfied.

COMMERCIAL ELECTRICIAN

Pro Electrician Sydney has a long established track record of working with the business community in the Sydney Metropolitan area. We have carried out a wide variety of electrical jobs and projects for commercial and industrial organisations. We have a reputation for getting the work done properly first time, and within agreed deadlines.

We understand the needs of businesses and are sensitive to any disruptions caused by electrical work and installations. We are happy to arrange our work schedules to minimise the inconvenience to our customers and are prepared to work unsocial hours whenever necessary.

We can handle any Electrical job

Our experienced and qualified technicians are ready to handle any task, however simple or complex your needs may be. Whether you have a small office that is expanding and you require additional power outlets; or you need electrical appliances moved and reinstalled in new positions; we can do all these small jobs for you with the minimum of fuss.

Growing businesses often require additional workstations for new staff - with extra data cabling and additional computer equipment wired in.

Older commercial buildings often have ageing and defective wiring which must be checked out and replaced where necessary.

Whatever the job, we know how to do it quickly, and efficiently at affordable prices.

Do you own a shop, a factory, or an industrial complex? Or are you responsible for a public building such as a hospital or school? Pressure is always on you to cut costs and one way to do this is to have new power saving lighting systems installed.

Or, like many organisations, safety has become one of your prime concerns; and you need to have the latest safety switches and surge protectors installed to protect your property and staff from the dangers of electrical fires.

Faulty electrical switchboards are also a common reason for safety concerns. In today's hi-tech environment, there are ever more demands on your power sources; and many existing switchboards are simply not up to the job. This results in numerous power outages and fire risks. **Pro Electrician Sydney** can investigate and solve these problems for you, along with any others that are electrically related.

Here is a list of some of the jobs we can do for you in your Office, shop, factory or public building:

- Electrical fit-outs, upgrades and expansions, and relocations.
- Repair and maintenance of air conditioners.
- Installation safety switches and surge protection devices.
- Check and replace faulty wiring, rewire entire offices and commercial premises.
- Repair, upgrade or replace electrical switchboards.
- Repair and replace power outlets and light switches and install additional ones.
- Install smoke alarms
- Automation systems
- Emergency, exit and exterior lighting
- Installation of new power saving lighting systems. (see separate page on LED lighting systems)
- Check and tag all electrical appliances (see separate page)
- Cary out data cabling projects (see separate page)
- Emergency call-outs.

Whatever your requirements, give us a call today and our friendly team will be ready to discuss how we can help you.

ELECTRICAL REPAIRS.

Pro Electrician Sydney has the qualified technicians to carry out a wide variety of electrical repairs in your home and businesses. All our staff are fully trained and will provide you with a fast, reliable and affordable service.

If you have some faulty wiring in your home, or an appliance doesn't work, or your ceiling fans have stopped working, don't try to repair them yourself. There are strict regulations governing who is qualified to carry out electrical repairs in your home or office. If you try, you may put yourself, your family or employees at risk if the job isn't done properly.

Typical repairs that we regularly undertake include the flowing:

- Faulty wiring. We can detect the faults in your wiring with our specialised meters and repair / replace as necessary
- Faulty appliances. We can check your kitchen and bathroom appliances and can often repair them on site.
- Ceiling fans.
- Air conditioners.
- Hot water systems.
- Microwaves.
- Electric gates and garage doors.
- Electric motors.
- Electric heaters.
- Lighting internal and external replace faulty bulbs and detect and repair faults.
- Power outlets, light switches and dimmers
- Smoke alarms.
- Safety switches.
- Switchboards (see below)

Switchboards are at the heart of the electrical power and distribution in your home or commercial building. The power in your building is connected to your switchboard from the external power lines - either directly from the street, or via a

second, external switchboard. The switchboard then distributes your power throughout your building through a number of individual circuits with their own fuses or circuit breakers.

A faulty switchboard can be potentially very dangerous, especially if you can smell burning, in which case it requires immediate attention. Switchboard problems often cause disruptions and intermittent power supplies to parts of your home or commercial building. If there are any indications that something may be wrong; it is essential that you call us in straight away to carry out an inspection and do the repairs for you.

Faults in switchboards can sometimes be traced to faulty wiring or a problem with an electric appliance. We can test this out by isolating the power and rectify as necessary.

Many electrical switchboard faults have their source in old style fuse failures. These problems can sometimes be fixed by replacing the old fuses with modern circuit breakers and if so, we can usually have you up and running in no time. However, overloaded switchboards can cause wiring and fittings to decay and fail over time. We can replace the worn components and wiring, or we can carry out an upgrade which will make the switchboard serviceable for a few more years. But at some stage in the future it may be necessary to replace the entire switchboard.

So whether you just need a few light bulbs replacing or you are having serious problems with your wiring or switchboard; you can rely on our expertise to deal with it in a professional manner.

Give us a call today and chat to one of our representatives who will explain our very reasonable charges and provide you with an obligation-free quote.

ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS

Electrical installations in your home or commercial building should by law, always be left to the professionals. **Pro Electrician Sydney** have more than ten years' experience of installing anything from a new power point to a major mains and electrical installation in a large commercial building. All our highly trained technicians hold the required OHS (occupational Health and Safety) accreditations to carry out any type of electrical installation; safely and without incident.

Popular Installations that have been carried out by Pro Electrician Sydney:

Mains Installations; Switchboards; Safety Switches and Surge Protectors.

There is a growing demand to upgrade the electrical infrastructure in many older buildings. This is needed to safely handle the increasing power demands; to ensure that the electrical components in homes offices and other commercial buildings run safely and efficiently.

New Wiring. Older buildings often suffer from sub-standard wiring that has become worn and decayed. Faulty wiring creates problems with your power supply and is also extremely dangerous if not replaced.

New Lighting Systems. Although we specialise in LED lighting (systems), we can design and install any type of lighting system; both internally for homes and commercial buildings and externally for gardens, landscapes, security and emergency lighting and so on.

Appliance Installations. Most electrical appliances, such as fridges, freezers, washing machines, ovens and hobs; and also electrical machinery in offices or factories need to be installed by professionals. Call our friendly staff and get the job done immediately and without fuss.

Air Conditioners, Hot Water Systems, Ceiling Fans Etc. These essential electrical items for home and office require experienced and skilled technicians to carry out these complex installations.

New Power Outlets (with USB Sockets), Light Switches and Dimmers. Maybe they are needed for a new extension, or just to upgrade existing outlets etc. Let us help you choose your favourite colours and designs.

Electric Gates and Electric Garage Doors. If you wish to upgrade your home with electric gates and doors, we can do the job for you.

Smoke Alarms. Have our technicians make your home and office safe by installing and testing smoke alarms.

We have carried out all these and many other electrical installations in homes and businesses. One call to us will ensure a friendly response and an upfront, no nonsense quote with no hidden extras.

DATA CABLING

Do you need to install cabling in your home for your computers, telephone, and TV?

Do you require a new comprehensive structured data cable network installed for your office or commercial building?

With the rollout of the *New Broadband Network* (NBN), the demand for data cabling experts has never been greater.

We at **Pro Electrician Sydney,** pride ourselves in being one of the most popular choices for data cabling projects in the Sydney Metro area. All our cabling technicians are registered by the Australian Communications and Media Authority, (ACMA). Our technicians are fully trained and our in-house programmes keep them up to date with the latest cabling technology. Our technicians are accredited to install a wide range of structured data cabling, including Cat5e, Cat6, Cat6a, coaxial, optical fibre and intercom cables. We can also modify copper wiring.

The most common demands are for Ethernet and telephone cabling, but we can tailor your communications and media requirements to suit any purpose.

Data Cabling in your home. We can handle any cabling job in your home; whether it is just adding another room to an existing network, or installing an entire data cable network from scratch. You might need to have access to the internet, telephone and television throughout your house or unit. A specialist cabling company like us can do the job with the minimum of fuss - and no mess - at a price you can afford.

Data Cabling services for the business community.

If you are setting up a new office or business or you need to install a completely new data cable network for an existing business; we can design and install the new network for you. We will lay the cables and install all the necessary access points and wall/floor outlets for your workstations and other areas. We can also install data cabinets, wire up your server rack and/or PBX.

Relocations. If you are relocating your office or business, we can plan the move with you. We will install all the necessary data cabling in the new location in advance of your move. Once your move is completed, we will be on hand to re-

connect all your computers and communications equipment. We will get you up and running in no time.

Repair, Upgrade, and expand. If you have an existing network that isn't doing the job for you; call us in to carry out a thorough inspection and find the right solutions. This may involve repairing your existing cables, or replacing and upgrading them.

We can also extend and expand your cable network to provide data to additional workstations and/or rooms. If you are having a major fit-out, we will work with you to ensure the integrity of your existing cabling. We will modify and add to existing networks where necessary. We can also move your data cabinets and server racks, as required.

No job is too small or too big; so call us today for a no-nonsense, obligation-free quote that does not contain any hidden extras.

LED LIGHTING

Did you know that electric lighting burns up 25% of the average household budget? It can also be as high as 38% of the fixed costs in a commercial or an industrial building.

Pro Electrician Sydney can show how to make large savings on your energy bills by replacing your incandescent (traditional) light bulbs; and even your CFC's (Compact fluorescent lights) and batten fluorescent lighting with **Light Emitting Diodes (LED's)**.

LEDs are very small, extremely efficient, solid bulbs. In recent times, LED's have been manufactured in clusters and with diffuser lenses. This has created a wide range of uses for them - both for the home and business.

Benefits of LED Lighting over conventional lighting

- Long Life. LED bulbs last more than 10 times longer than compact fluorescents, (CFCs) and even longer than traditional incandescent lights. Batteries will also last much longer in emergency, battery powered LED lighting systems.
- **Durability.** LEDs do not have a filament, so they are not as delicate as a regular incandescent bulb, and are rarely broken. They are hard and solid, and are less likely to be damaged when shaken or bumped.
- Maintain a cool temperature. There is no heat build-up with LED's,
 whereas conventional bulbs become very hot, contributing to the heat in the
 room. Rooms with LED's will stay cooler and air-conditioning bills are
 reduced.
- **Mercury-free.** Mercury is not used in the manufacture of LEDs, making them more eco-friendly.
- Substantial Cost savings. LEDs are initially more expensive. But as they use up a fraction of the wattage of other types of light bulbs, the saving on electricity bills is very substantial. Also, as they are more durable they have

a much longer life; so over time, the overall cost of replacing LED's is lower than replacing regular bulbs.

Pro Electrician Sydney can help you to design and replace your existing lighting with modern LED lighting and save you a lot of money. Not only will you be reducing your electricity budget, and benefitting the environment; but your home or business will be greatly enhanced by the stunning, modern LED lighting designs.

Would you like have stylish new LED lighting in your home?

Would like low power external lighting for your yard or garden?

Are you a business owner who would like to install LED lighting in your office, shop, warehouse or factory?

Do you need LED external signage, or floodlighting or emergency lighting?

Whatever your needs, we can service you. We can supply and install a wide variety of lighting designs. These include downlights, luminaires, strip lights, LED panels and tubes, high bays, floodlights, and much more in a range of colours; (single, double or triple).

Call one of our friendly representatives today. We will show you that by changing to LED lighting, not only will you make substantial savings on your electricity bills; but you can also transform the appearance of your home or workplace with our modern LED lighting systems.

TEST AND TAG

Pro Electrician Sydney has more than ten years' experience in testing and tagging electrical appliances for the Sydney metro business community.

By law, all businesses are required to ensure that:

- All electrical equipment that is used at a place of work is regularly inspected, tested and maintained by a competent person to ensure it is safe for use;
- ➤ All electrical equipment at a place of work that is found to be unsafe is disconnected from the electricity supply and is repaired, replaced or permanently removed from use;
- Employers must ensure that a record is made and kept of all inspections and tests made and maintenance carried out on electrical equipment.

Standards Australia has created *Standard AS/NZ 3760* which sets out the testing method and frequency for testing electrical appliances. It was created to minimize electrical hazards in the workplace. Frequency of testing will depend upon the type of equipment and the nature of the workplace.

This standard is generally referred to as *Test and Tag* and must be carried out by a properly trained and qualified electrician.

What are the dangers?

If electrical equipment is not regularly tested, it may malfunction and/or short out, causing potential injury and even death from electrical shock. These dangers apply in your home as well as at your place of work. So you would be well advised to arrange for **Pro Electrician Sydney** to come to your home and check out all your domestic appliances.

What needs to be tested?

Any portable appliance that uses electricity supplied through an electrical socket outlet ('plug-in' equipment); and any machinery which is connected to an

electricity supply with a flexible cord. (There are a few exceptions, such as fixed, hard-wired items, and items more than 2.5 meters tall.)

What does testing entail?

One of our technicians will come and inspect your electrical appliances; carry out electrical testing on them and put a dated tag on each tested item. They will also provide you with a record to show that you have complied with the electrical testing regulations and safety standards. The testing equipment we use is also properly certified to test electrical currents, find faults and any potential dangers. The process of testing is a follows:

- **Physical inspection**. We check for external damage and visible defects in appliance, plugs, sockets; whether power supply cords have inner cords exposed or are cut, tangled or create tripping hazards and if they are properly anchored.
- Insulation Tests
- Earth circuit Test
- Earth Continuity Test
- Functionality Test
- Run / Leakage Test
- Polarity wire Test
- **Power boards**: We check whether the indicator for 'maximum load' is visible and legible.

When we have completed the testing, we will provide you with a record which will specify the name of the person who carried out the testing; the date of the testing; the outcome of the testing; and the date on which the next test must be carried out.

There is no company better qualified and experienced to carry out your testing and tagging than **Pro Electrician Sydney**. For your own peace of mind, call us today; and ask for one of our technicians to come to your premises and do the job for you. Our prices are highly affordable and we guaranteed satisfaction with our work.

No.1 CARPET CLEANING MELBOURNE

Home

Welcome to No.1 Carpet Cleaning Melbourne.

As our name suggests, we are the top carpet company in the Melbourne area. Our well-trained and expert staff can offer a wide range of cleaning services for your home or office, including:

- Steam and dry cleaning carpets for **homes**, **offices**, and **commercial buildings**. (Shops, shopping centres, hotels, hospitals, restaurants etc.)
- Rugs and mat cleaning.
- Carpet stain removal.
- Upholstery and leather cleaning.
- Drapes and blind cleaning.
- Mattress cleaning.
- Tile and grout cleaning.
- Flood damage cleaning
- Special services, such as protective finishes and mould & mildew removal and carpet repairs.

Do your carpets have a bad smell? Have they been soiled by pets or food or wine or some other immovable stains? Are you concerned about the effect that your dirty rugs and carpets may be having on the health of your family or office workers? Are you worried about the bad impression your dirty carpets may give to visitors or clients?

Your carpets, furniture and mattresses can be exposed to all kinds of potentially unhealthy substances and stains; such as: toilet soiling by babies and pets, accidental spills of dangerous substances, dust mite infestations and food & wine stains. The result is a very unhealthy environment, in which dust mites and other

microscopic organisms (germs & bacteria) thrive. This will be particularly harmful to asthma and allergy sufferers as well as young babies and the elderly.

No. 1 Carpet Cleaning Melbourne is ready and willing to solve your all your problems.

We have more than ten years' experience in cleaning carpets, drapes & fabrics and upholstery in homes, offices and other commercial buildings. Our friendly, expert staff will promptly deal with your worst cleaning nightmares, efficiently and at an affordable price. You will be amazed how brilliantly your carpets, rugs and furniture will come up after we have gone to work on them. Wine, food and other stains that you thought were there forever will disappear like magic. This is what we can do for you.

- ➤ We can steam clean and dry your carpets for use the same day; or we can shampoo them and leave them with a fragrant smell. If you prefer, we can dry clean them. Either way, we will leave them looking bright and clean with a fresh smell. We will discuss all the alternatives with you and agree the best way forward.
- We will remove the stains and all nasty smells from your carpets and furniture and leave them clean and smelling fresh and new. Our powerful detergents can remove the agents creating the bad smells and we will finish off with fragrant deodorisers.
- ➤ We will take down your curtains, collect your small rugs and mats and other easily moveable items. We will then deliver them all back to you looking and smelling like new.
- ➤ All our cleaning products and solutions are all child-friendly, pet-friendly and non-toxic.
- ➤ We are fully insured, and properly licensed to do all our cleaning work.

- ➤ All our staff are thoroughly vetted for honesty (police checks), health and competency.
- ➤ Our work comes with a 100% guarantee. We will redo the cleaning if you are not completely satisfied.
- ➤ Our prices are competitive and highly affordable.

We will schedule our cleaning work to fit in with your busy lifestyles and you don't have to be there if you are not free. Our staff are fully insured and can be trusted to get on with the job in a prompt and professional manner. When we have finished, we will clean up thoroughly and leave your premises looking spick and span.

Give us a call and one of our friendly and knowledgeable representatives will be delighted to chat to you about your cleaning requirements. We can provide you with an affordable and flexible quote, tailored to your particular needs with no hidden extras. Our quotes are free with no obligations, and you will find them clear and concise and difficult to beat in today's market.

No. 1 Carpet Cleaning Melbourne is totally dedicated to delivering a 'No.1 service' to all our customers.

About

No.1 Carpet Cleaning Melbourne is a long established company in the Melbourne area. We provide a first class carpet cleaning service plus a wide range of related services to Melbourne residents and businesses.

It doesn't matter whether you need a single stain removed from a rug, or you need all the carpets in a commercial building cleaned. We have the expertise and capacity to serve your needs. No job is too small or too big for our experienced, multi-talented work force.

No.1 Carpet Cleaning Melbourne is fully licenced and insured. Our staff are vetted and properly qualified to carry out their work to the highest possible standards. We have built up an enviable reputation of delivering quality work in an efficient and professional manner and at affordable prices.

Our staff have proper accreditations from the relevant carpet cleaning organisations, and also have additional specialist certifications, including:

- Health & Safety.
- Hard Floor Care.
- Water Damage Restoration.
- Upholstery and Fabric Cleaning.
- Advanced Stain Removal.

We are dedicated to ensuring that our customers are always happy and satisfied and we are painstaking in looking after every detail. We will carry out your jobs at a time schedule to suit you and we will complete everything within agreed deadlines.

You will always find our staff friendly, well informed and helpful. We will explain every aspect of our work and how we need you to prepare before we arrive at your premises.

As well as carpet cleaning, we can clean your rugs, mats, curtains, blinds, mattresses, floor tiles, upholstery and so much more. (See the individual web pages for more details on our wide range of services.)

Our services can be undertaken at the following locations:

Melbourne Inner City Melbourne North Melbourne West Melbourne East Bayside Melbourne Melbourne Southeast Mornington Peninsula Geelong

We only use the latest equipment to carry out our work. This includes truck-mounted carpet cleaning systems and smaller carpet cleaning machines to access small or restricted areas. We make sure that all our equipment is regularly maintained and serviced. All the detergents and solutions used in the cleaning and stain removal processes are environmentally friendly and not harmful to babies and pets. A large percentage of them are biodegradable.

Our mission is to provide a top class, guaranteed service to our customers in the Melbourne area in a friendly and affordable manner. We aim to be professional at all times and carry out our work diligently and meet agreed deadlines. We love our work and we want you to love the results.

Call us today for a free, no-obligation quote.

Residential Carpet Cleaning

No. 1 Carpet Cleaning Melbourne is the first choice for many satisfied customers in the Melbourne area. If you need to clean the carpets in your home you can rely on us to carry out the work in an efficient and highly professional manner. We will leave them looking pristine and smelling as fresh as a daisy.

Our properly qualified, certificated technicians are all vetted for honesty and competence and are ready to handle the most challenging of carpet jobs.

Even if you are careful, your carpets will become soiled by spilled food, drinks and other substances that will leave lasting stains. If you have pets or very young children, your carpets may also become further contaminated by unwanted 'toilet' accidents.

These mishaps may also be the source of smelly odours, making life unpleasant for you and embarrassing when you have visitors. Noxious substances and dirt and dust expose your family to an unhealthy environment. Dust mites, bacteria and other microbes can be especially harmful to allergy-sufferers, young children and the elderly. It is a sensible and safe practice to have all your carpets regularly cleaned.

At **No. 1 Carpet Cleaning Melbourne**, we use the latest equipment - such as industrial strength vacuum cleaners, hot water extraction machines and rotary agitators. This ensures that your carpets are cleaned to the highest possible standards. Modern machines can remove dust and grit without harming delicate fabrics. We use the following cleaning methods:

- Steam cleaning. (Hot Water Extraction)
- Dry cleaning
- Shampoo cleaning.

The method we will recommend for you will be broadly dependent on the type of fabric and the overall condition of your carpet. You will find us painstaking in our attention to detail and we guarantee 100% satisfaction.

Flood and water damage. We are also experts in cleaning carpets that have been damaged in floods or have been submerged in water from a burst water pipe. We can remove any mould that has formed and bring them back to their original condition.

All our detergents, cleaning fluids and dry cleaning chemicals are non-toxic and will not harm children or pets. All our cleaning materials are eco-friendly and a high percentage are biodegradable.

See our separate web pages for more details on:

Steam Carpet Cleaning, Dry Carpet Cleaning, Carpet Stain Removal, Upholstery Cleaning and Rug Cleaning.

Call us today and talk to one of our friendly, knowledgeable representatives about your carpet cleaning requirements. We will be delighted to come and see you and give you a free, no-obligation quote.

Commercial Carpet Cleaning

Carpets in commercial buildings such as offices, shops, shopping centres, hotels, restaurants, pubs & clubs and so on, should be cleaned regularly. High walking-traffic and spillages, especially in restaurants and pubs, means commercial carpets must be cleaned on a frequent basis. This will not only make your office or shop look smart and fresh but will also help avoid premature wear; saving you money in the long run.

No.1 Carpet Cleaning Melbourne is here to serve the commercial community in the Melbourne area. No job is too small or too big. It doesn't matter if you have a small office or a large shopping centre. We can handle all your carpet cleaning requirements in a professional and affordable manner. Our carpet technicians are properly trained and accredited in many disciplines such as 'Advance Stain Removal' and 'Health &Safety'. We are fully licenced and insured to undertake carpet-cleaning work in any commercial or public building.

Why don't you make an obligation-free appointment with our representative who will come to your premises to carry out an assessment? Most commercial carpets need deep cleaning which usually means steam cleaning. Before we commence the steam clean, we will do pre-spot spraying and use a pre-treatment agitator. This will loosen deeply entrenched dirt in the carpet fibres. Then we will steam clean the carpet and remove all the dirt. Finally, we will deodorise your carpets which will leave them with a pleasant fresh smell.

All the detergents, cleaning fluids and chemicals we use in our carpet cleaning are non-toxic and eco-friendly. They will not harm children or pets and most are 100% biodegradable.

No.1 Carpet Cleaning Melbourne enjoys a hard-earned reputation for delivering a superior carpet cleaning service to the commercial community in and around Melbourne. We always respond to any enquiry in a prompt and professional manner; we will immediately dispatch one of our technicians to your premises to discuss your carpet cleaning requirements.

We will give you an obligation-free quote. Arrangements can then be made to do the cleaning work to a time and date that fits in with your business needs.

See separate web pages for more details on:

Steam Carpet Cleaning, Dry Carpet Cleaning, Carpet Stain Removal and Upholstery Cleaning.

Call us today, you won't regret it.

Steam Carpet Cleaning

No.1 Carpet cleaning Melbourne have over ten years' experience in steam cleaning carpets in homes and commercial buildings in the Melbourne Metropolitan area. Our proven steam cleaning processes will remove all the dirt and grime that is embedded deeply in the carpet fibres. Your carpets will be completely clean and smell fresh.

The water temperature is always kept lower than boiling point for steam carpet cleaning as boiling water can damage or shrink man-made fibres. So the process is more properly known as **Hot Water Extraction** (**HWE**). For large offices, commercial complexes, or any building without power, we use truck-mounted **HWE** equipment with long hoses. For homes with power and for small offices and commercial areas, we use portable units that can be connected to an internal electrical outlet. The steam cleaning, or **HWE** process, is as follows:

- Determining the extent of the stains and soiling.
- Pre-condition the carpet by spraying special cleaning solutions onto the carpet. (Alkaline- based detergents are sprayed onto synthetic carpets and acid-based detergents onto woollen carpets).
- Carry out the spot removal of stains.
- Dislodge the deeply ingrained dirt using an electric rotary agitator.
- Commence the **Hot Water Extraction** by spraying very hot, pressurized, chemically treated water onto the carpet, while at the same time vacuuming it out. This will remove all the dirt, loosened muck, dissolved soil, etc.
- Carry out a 'final rinse' with a deodoriser.
- Groom or 'comb' the carpet fibres to restore the pile to its original state.

Steam Cleaning, or **HWE,** is the most powerful and effective way of cleaning a badly soiled carpet and it uses far more water than any other method.

Drying time varies according to the ventilation, air conditioning etc. but is usually around 4-6 hours. However, carpets can be walked on straight away, provided the shoes are clean.

No. 1 Carpet Cleaning Melbourne always uses the latest hot water extraction equipment and techniques to 'steam clean' your carpets. We only use eco-friendly cleaning products, which are largely biodegradable.

Call our friendly and knowledgeable staff today for a free consultation with no obligations. We are confident that you will find our prices highly competitive and affordable.

Dry Carpet Cleaning

No.1 Carpet cleaning Melbourne have over ten years' experience in dry cleaning carpets in homes and commercial buildings in the Melbourne Metropolitan area. Our proven dry cleaning processes will leave your carpets looking clean and fresh. Some of the advantages of dry cleaning over steam cleaning are:

- The cleaning process is less labour intensive, therefore cheaper.
- Cleaning time is quicker, meaning less disruption
- Carpets are only left slightly damp and will be completely dry within 1 to 2 hours, which also means less disruption.
- Dry cleaning doesn't leave any detergent residue or 'wet smell'.

However, dry cleaning also has one major disadvantage, particularly if your carpets are very badly soiled. It is possible that dry cleaning may not remove all the dirt and grime if it is deeply embedded in the carpet fibres. In this case, steam cleaning may be the better alternative.

Let **No.1 Carpet cleaning Melbourne's** qualified carpet technicians visit your home or office and inspect your carpets and recommend the best options. If the dirt on your carpets is mainly superficial, then dry cleaning is probably the way to go. Dry Cleaning may also be the best option for those who want the job done quickly and with the minimum of disruption.

The dry cleaning process is as follows:

- 1. A thorough inspection of your carpet to identify bad stains.
- 2. Vacuum with industrial-strength vacuum cleaner to remove dry dirt & soil.
- 3. Pre-spray with dry cleaning solutions and stain removal fluids.
- 4. Careful attention is then given to spot cleaning and removing heavy stains.
- 5. Agitate the carpet with a rotary agitator to dislodge the dirt inside the fibres.
- 6. Apply an absorbent pad to the rotary machine and soak up all the dirt and moisture from the carpet.
- 7. Groom or 'comb' the carpet fibres to restore the pile to its original state.

Your carpet will be left slightly damp with a lovely fresh smell and it will be completely dry within an hour or two. You can use the carpet straight away, but make sure that everyone has clean shoes.

All the cleaning fluids and solutions we use in our dry cleaning process are non-toxic, will not harm pets and children. A vast majority are also biodegradable.

Call today and talk to one of our friendly and knowledgeable representatives and arrange for an inspection and a no-obligation quote.

Carpet Stain Removal

Carpet stain removal requires specialist technicians who are properly qualified and experienced in working on deeply embedded, stubborn stains. At **No.1 Carpet cleaning Melbourne**, we pride ourselves in being the leading Melbourne-based experts in the removal of even the toughest of carpet stains. We have the necessary specialised equipment and the most effective stain removal fluids to professionally remove your stains, using tried and tested processes. We guarantee satisfaction to all our customers.

Carpet spots and stains come from a wide variety of sources, including: food, coffee, soft drinks, red cordial, wine, blood, ink, rust, watermarks, bleach, nail varnish, paint, ink, urine (children and pets), faeces, vomit, unidentified oil and liquids and much more.

Some of these stains can be removed during the general steam cleaning process but many will require individual solutions. Whenever practicable, it is good practice to call us in as soon as your carpet has been soiled by a bad stain.

Stain cleaning can be perplexing for non-experts. It essential to know the chemical base of the stain, and also the type of carpet fibre. **No.1 Carpet Cleaning**Melbourne has a wide range of cleaning fluids and will use the appropriate fluid for each type of stain after determining the type of carpet material.

We guarantee the best possible stain-removing job for you and we will remove every single stain that it is humanly possible to remove. Unfortunately, a small percentage of stains are permanent. They may prove impossible to remove completely - although we can lighten their appearance to make them less conspicuous. Such stains can only be removed completely by a carpet restoration specialist who will dye or re-patch the area of the stain. We will advise you of the likely outcomes of removing all the stains before we commence our work. We will not charge for any stains remaining that we said we could remove.

Spots or stains?

- **Spots** on your carpets are usually caused by spillage of water and oils and they create dark areas where dirt collects. These can usually be removed as part of the general carpet cleaning process as the dirt has not penetrated deeply into the fibres.
- Stains are caused by a liquid or substance which has penetrated the carpet fibre and caused a colour change. These stains will require specialist treatment. We have a very high success rate in moving most types of stains. Urine soiling can be a particularly difficult problem, and it may be necessary for us to clean both sides of the carpet if the urine has soaked through and you may need to replace the underlay.

When we have finished cleaning your carpet, you can opt to have carpet protection solution applied which will protect your carpet from stains for a period of 6 months.

Call us today and ask for one of our friendly technicians to came and inspect your carpets and give you an obligation-free quote. You will obviously save money if the stain removal work is included as part of an overall carpet-cleaning package.

Upholstery Cleaning

No.1 Carpet cleaning Melbourne's qualified technicians have the experience and expertise to undertake a wide range of upholstery cleaning. Whether your upholstery is at home or in the office, leather or fabric, indoor or outdoor, we can take care of your needs.

It is recommended that upholstery in your home or used for commercial purposes is professionally cleaned at least once a year. This will help to extend the life of the furniture as well as providing a clean and healthy environment. It will also look and smell like new after we have been to work on it. Dirty upholstery fabric contains germs, fungi, bacteria and other harmful microbes which can create health problems for your family or workers.

Our upholstery cleaning processes can be summarised as follows:

- Pre-inspection to establish the type of fabric. This ensures we use the correct cleaning solutions that will not damage the fabric
- A colour-fast test to ensure the colours won't run
- Apply a special upholstery cleaning pre-spray which will break down and dissolve the dirt and grime and kill all the germs and bacteria.
- Remove any deeply embedded stains.
- Use a Hot Water Extraction machine to wash the fabric and extract all the soil and dirt.
- Apply a protective solution to the upholstery to protect your upholstery and prevent future soiling.
- For leather upholstery, we apply a leather-cleaning solution and then carry out a thorough but careful brush clean. Then we wipe over with a soft cloth and finish by applying a special moisturising solution which we polish to give the leather a shiny fresh finish.

Upholstery cleaning should be done at least once a year and regular leather cleaning will prevent cracking and fading. Leather upholstery will last up to four times as long as fabric if properly cared for.

No.1 Carpet cleaning Melbourne can also take care of all your commercial upholstery cleaning requirements, including office chairs, sofas, cinema seats and bus seats. We can also clean your home or business outdoor furniture upholstery which will help to preserve them and give a longer life.

We use the latest professional cleaning equipment and all our cleaning materials are non-toxic and will not harm children or pets.

All work is guaranteed, so call one of our friendly, knowledgeable representatives today and obtain a free, no-obligation quote. We are confident that you will find our prices competitive and affordable.

Rug Cleaning

No.1 Carpet cleaning Melbourne are the leading specialists in the cleaning of rugs and mats in the Melbourne Metropolitan area. We can take care of all your rug-cleaning requirements - be they in the home or office. We guarantee a first class service which you will find efficient and affordable. Our qualified and highly trained cleaning technicians provide an unrivalled rug cleaning service and we can clean them at your premises or we can collect for cleaning offsite.

Rugs are often used by children and pets and can become dirty very quickly. Regular cleaning will ensure your rugs are looking fresh and new and that they don't contain any harmful, allergens or microbes.

Before we commence cleaning, we will inspect your rugs to determine the type of fabric and whether the colours will hold fast. As most rugs are made of the same materials as carpets, it is likely that we can apply the same cleaning processes. We will use the Hot Water Extraction process to clean your heavily soiled rugs and will probably opt to dry clean your lightly soiled and delicate rugs.

Some delicate Oriental rugs, and rugs made from animal hide or silk may need to be taken offsite for specialist cleaning. But wherever possible, we will do the job onsite. Cleaning rugs onsite is much cheaper than taking them away and you will save even more if we clean your carpets at the same time. We are experienced in cleaning delicate fabrics and will treat your valuable rugs with great care. We can also deal with flood- damaged rugs.

We use the latest specialist cleaning equipment and our modern machines can extract the dirt and grime without damaging delicate fabrics. We only use the finest cleaning fluids which are non-toxic. All our liquids are eco-friendly and will not harm your children or pets.

No.1 Carpet cleaning Melbourne has had more than 10 years' experience in providing rug-cleaning services to the Melbourne community. We have built up a hard-earned reputation for delivering a prompt and efficient service that is of the highest quality. We will not let you down and all our work is guaranteed.

Give us a call today and chat to one of our friendly and knowledgeable representatives. We will be pleased to come and visit your premises and give you a free, no-obligation quote.

PRO PEST CONTROL MELBOURNE

Welcome to the home page of **Pro pest Control Melbourne**, one of the leading pest control experts in the Melbourne metropolitan area. We provide a professional and effective pest control service to homes and businesses. Our fully qualified staff are licenced by the State authorities to eradicate every kind of pest.

What is Pest Control?

As the title suggests, pest control is the extermination and prevention of all harmful pests on your property and in the surrounding area. This includes pests such as ants; fleas; mites; earwigs; silver fish; millipedes; flies; bed bugs; bird pests; cockroaches; beetles; dust mites; rodents; spiders; stinging and biting insects; rabbits; foxes; stored product pests; and of course - termites.

There is a variety of methods that is used for the control of pests. These include pre-construction termite prevention; baiting; fumigation; chemical soil treatment; reticulation systems, (perforated pipes laid around the property to facilitate fumigation); pest disinfection; pesticides (including and excluding fumigants).

Technicians must hold the relevant licences before they are permitted to use the various types of pesticides and other chemicals used in pest control. Licences are issued by the State of Victoria under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to technicians who have attained an appropriate qualification. There can be up to three different types of pesticides stipulated on each licence.

Why do I need a pest control company?

Are you building a house or a commercial building? These days it has become common practice to install pre-construction termite and other pest prevention measures.

For existing properties, pests can cause serious damage. In particular, timber damage from termites can be catastrophic and stored produce can be spoiled by pests such as grain beetles and meal moths. There are also many pests that can

become a serious health hazard for those who live or work in an infested building. So it is essential for all homes and businesses to have adequate pest control.

Although there are certain measures that you can take yourself, generally speaking, pest control is better left to the experts. This is particularly so as most pesticides and other chemicals can only be used by qualified technicians who hold the appropriate licences.

Home and business owners may not be always aware of any pest infestations in their property. It is only by arranging for a professional pest inspection, that you can really know the extent, if any, of an infestation.

Our Services

Pro Pest Control Melbourne has the no-how and the qualified technicians to handle all your pest control issues. We have many years of experience in dealing with every kind of problem. No job is too small or too big and we offer our wide range of services to **residential dwellings** as well as **commercial and public buildings**.

Our services include:

Pest inspections

Whether you are buying a property or you already own it, we can carry out a professional inspection of any type of building. We will ascertain the extent of termite or other pest activity and examine the amount of damage. Our timber pest inspection report will identify whether there are any pests in the property or in the grounds nearby. We will also determine whether the damage caused by termites and other insects or from fungal decay has rendered any parts of the structure unsafe.

Pre-Construction Termite Protection

It has been estimated that 25% of buildings in Australia will be attacked by termites at some time or other during their life. To counter this risk, more and more buildings are built to include pre-construction Termite protection. This means that we build a physical barrier that will keep out termites and provide long-term protection for the new building.

Ongoing Termite Protection

After determining the extent (if any) of termite infestation, we will protect your property by implementing a termite baiting programme. This entails the construction of 'baiting stations'. Termites will then pick up the bait and carry the bait back to their nests where it will destroy all the termites. The bait stations will be regularly monitored for effectiveness. In addition, we can apply chemical soil treatment around the perimeter of your property to prevent termite entry. We can also install a reticulation system.

Fumigation

Pro Pest Control Melbourne has access to all the latest pest control fumigants. We will select the best fumigation treatment to solve your particular pest control problems, be they mosquitoes, ants, cockroaches, spiders, rats and so on. Fumigation is particularly effective against beetles, weevils, mites and moths that have infested stored products.

We can also offer fumigation services to shipping consignments, cargo, warehouses, milling and agriculture.

Bird Pest Control

Controlling bird migratory habits on your property and preventing contamination is a difficult business. Only an expert understands how to get rid of the birds which are creating infestations without harming them or disrupting other birds. Our qualified bird technicians will deploy humane bird control systems to make your bird-mess clean ups a thing of the past.

Pest Disinfection Service

Insects, rats and birds can carry E.coli and salmonella which can be passed on to your family, staff and pets. Airborne allergens can cause serious allergic reactions and harmful bacteria can be spread by bad hand hygiene.

Our non-toxic disinfection service will target these and other harmful diseases and it is completely safe for you and your pets.

Why choose us?

Pro Pest Control Melbourne has had many years of experience in providing pest control services to the Melbourne suburbs and across Victoria State. We only employ the most experienced, highly trained technicians. All our staff are properly accredited with the Department of Health; and every technician holds a licence to carry out each of their specialised services.

Our **Mission** is to bring professionalism, integrity and the highest possible pest control standards to each and every job.

Our **Vision** is to become the name on everyone's lips in Melbourne when it comes to pest control.

Not only do we deliver an unbeatable service, but out prices are highly competitive. We doubt you will find a cheaper quote in Victoria State. So give us a call today and we will be pleased to discuss a pest control service that will fit your particular needs.

http://www.southyorkshirerepeatergroup.co.uk/learn/

AMATEUR RADIO

Amateur radio can trace its origins back to the late nineteenth century, but the hobby as we know it today was established in the 1920s by amateur communication engineers and 'experimenters' of the time

Also referred to as "ham radio", Amateur radio is a unique and fascinating pastime that in addition to being an enjoyable hobby provides a valuable public service and captivates the interest of millions of people around the world.

Amateur radio operators use various types of radio communications equipment to communicate with radio amateurs throughout the world. These days, they even have their own communications satellites, can talk to international space stations and are often at the cutting edge of technology.

Radio enthusiasts are drawn from either sex, all nationalities, ages, and income levels, and as well as enjoying the fascination of being able to talk to fellow "hams" throughout the world, they often are able to support their local and international communities with emergency and disaster communications.

Many operators are highly skilled in electronics and communications, and use this medium to discuss and increase their technical knowledge in these fields.

The term amateur does not reflect upon the skills of those practicing, but rather denotes the fact that the amateur communications are not permitted to be used for commercial purposes.

The hobby encompasses all methods of radio communication, ranging from Morse code, to voice communication on hand held radio, to computerised messages transmitted via satellite.

Means of communication and activities

Radio amateurs use a variety of transmission methods to communicate.

The most common method is voice communication. Some may communicate in high quality audio by using frequency modulation (FM), and others, when signals and marginal bandwidth is restricted, will use the more reliable method of single sideband (SSB).

Radiotelegraphy, using Morse code, was the original means of communication for radio amateurs, and is still popular, particularly on the shortwave bands; as amateurs who speak different languages are able to communicate using internationally agreed code groups. For many years, proficiency in Morse code was a condition for the issuing of all amateur radio licences, but after a change in international regulations in 2003, many countries have dropped this requirement.

The advent of personal computers has led to an increase in digital modes of communication for amateur radio enthusiasts. Radio teletype, which previously required complex mechanical teleprinters (telex), have now become popular, and enthusiasts have developed "packet radio", a form of digital data transmission used to link computers and construct wireless computer networks. Other Hi tech means of communication include "Echolink" using Voice over Internet Protocol, (VOIP), and more obscure technologies such as WSJT for weak signal modes, including "meteor scatter" and "moon bounce" communications.

Amateur radio operators are able to make individual contacts with other enthusiasts at home, as well as being able to set up group discussions on-air. Many join in regularly scheduled on-air meetings, where typically, some specialised subjects covering the interests of the participants are discussed, or operators are able to learn procedures in the event of an emergency.

Benefits, rights and frequency allocations.

Amateur radio enthusiasts are allowed to build or modify their transmitting equipment, and are not required to obtain any industry or governmental approvals before using it.

Radio operators are not allocated fixed frequencies or channels as such but once licensed, they can use any frequency within their allotted bands, and can transmit using medium to high-powered equipment.

Frequencies are allocated to amateurs throughout the RF spectrum, thus providing them with a wide choice, depending upon their target city, region or country. Shortwave bands (HF), will allow the amateur to transmit worldwide, and the Very High Frequency and Ultra High Frequency (VHF and UHF) bands are suitable for regional communication. Broad microwave bands have sufficient bandwidth for television and high speed data networks.

Power levels granted to amateurs are sufficient for global communication. However the levels vary from country to country, and when travelling overseas, amateur operators are required to comply with the local limits. The upper limits can vary from around 2.25 kilowatts in Canada, to 1.5 kilowatts in the United States to 400 watts in countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom.

The allocation of communications frequencies worldwide is governed by the International telecommunications Union (ITU), and each country participates via their national communications regulatory authority. Each country has some leeway in restricting access to certain frequencies, and also may allocate additional frequencies provided they do not interfere with radio services in other countries. The International Amateur Radio Union (IARU) members ensure the most effective use of the allocated frequencies.

Licensing and call signs

All amateur radio operators, wherever in the world they are based, are required to hold a special licence and to obtain this; they must pass an examination, showing that they have a good basic knowledge and understanding of the main concepts involved in this highly technical activity. In particular, the relevant administrative authority in each country must ensure that applicants can demonstrate reasonable technical knowledge as well as operating competence and a working knowledge of the legal and regulatory requirements, to ensure their non-interference with other amateurs and commercial radio services.

Most countries provide for a graded series of examinations for aspiring amateur radio operators, which are designed to become progressively more complex and challenging. Success at each level will reward the applicant with an enhanced license. The operator is then granted access to better frequency allocations, and allowed to use increased power output, and may be permitted to carry out experimentation and, in some countries, be allocated distinctive "call signs".

When issuing a licence, the relevant national authority will also provide the operator with a unique callsign. This callsign is used on air to identify the operator, and to show that he or she has a legal right to undertake radio communication. The user must use the callsign during all communications. Some users may decide to use a "vanity" callsign, which in some jurisdictions, (such as the United States), may be obtained by payment of a fee, but in others, (such as The UK), a vanity callsign is free of charge.

Newcomers and getting started in the UK

The first steps towards becoming a radio "ham" for many will be for them to find and join a local club. These clubs will provide information about licensing requirements, operating practises and help the aspirants to improve their technical knowledge.

The Radio Society of Great Britain, which has branches throughout the United Kingdom, provides training courses to pass the license examinations and also provides venues for examination centres.

Joining a local branch of the Radio Society and enrolling on a training course is a necessary first step, but in addition, newcomers can also consider studying independently by purchasing books and other relevant materials. Through their local club, they may often find a mentor, or friend who can help guide them down the path to becoming licensed.

The UK has three types of licence that can be obtained: the Foundation, the Intermediate and the Full. Each licence requires an increasing degree of competence and technical knowledge, and once the relevant examination has been successfully completed, a correspondingly higher level of privileges is granted.

The basic entry for all newcomers is Foundation licence. This is a new licence that was introduced in 2002, and is designed to get the applicant aware of the various aspects of amateur radio as soon as possible. The course is mainly practical, but

there is a minimum amount of technical competence required, such as how to use the correct fuses in the radio equipment, and how to build a suitable antenna.

DRUMS AND DRUMMING

Introduction

The drum is generally used as a musical instrument and is part of the percussion group, and is technically known as a "membranophone".

A drum consists of at least one membrane, which is known as a drum skin or drumhead that is stretched over a shell and is either struck with implements such as drumsticks or parts of the player's hands or body.

Drums are probably the oldest and most commonly used musical instrument in the world, and their basic design has not changed for thousands of years. The earliest drums are thought to be from 6000 BC.

As well as employing drums as musical instruments, they have also been used through the ages as a means of communication, by using drum beats as signals. In Africa, drums have been used for communication between tribes over long distances, and in Sri Lanka, drums have been used as a means of communication between the state and the community for over 2500 years.

Drums have also been used by the military, and were used by Japanese troops to motivate the soldiers and to set a marching pace and signal orders. Similarly, The Swiss mercenary foot soldiers used an early form of "snare" drum, which was carried over the player's right shoulder, and from which the modern word "drum" was first coined.

Traditional drums emit an "un-tuned" sound, but some modern drums can be tuned to a pre-determined pitch.

Drum construction

Drum shells can be made of a wide variety of materials, the most common being metal and wood, but traditionally would be made from trees, such as the African slit drum which is made from a hollowed out tree trunk.

Typically, the drum shell would have a circular opening at one end over which a drum skin is stretched, but the shape of the rest of the shell can vary widely. In most modern western drums, the shell is either cylindrical or bowl shaped (in the case of the timpani). Other common shapes are truncated cones (Bongos), goblet shaped, and joined truncated cones.

Drums with cylindrical shells may be open at one end or may have two drumheads - one at either end of the cylinder. In both cases, the shell forms a resonating chamber which produces the drum's unique sound, and drums with both ends covered usually have a small hole half way between the heads which facilitates the sound. Some two-headed drums will also have strands of wires, called snares, held across either or both heads, and are known as snare drums.

Modern drums, which are used in bands and orchestras, have a hoop over which the drumhead is stretched. The hoop is then affixed to the shell with a "counter hoop" which is held is place by a series of tension rods, usually numbering 6 to 10, which are positioned around the circumference of the shell. The tension of the drum head and its resultant sound is then adjusted by tightening or loosening the tension rods around the drumhead.

The sound of the drum

The drum sound depends on a number of factors.

Firstly, the sound will vary according to the type of material used to construct the shell, together with its size, shape and thickness. As the sound is caused by vibrations resonating in the drum shell, a larger volume and a wider circumference will result in a lower pitch, and also different types of wood, (such as birch, maple and mahogany), will affect the frequency of vibration, and thus the pitch.

Drumheads also have a marked effect on the sound. Thicker drumheads produce a lower pitch and can be very loud, whereas thinner heads will produce a higher,

softer sound. Drumheads may be covered with a white, plastic coating to muffle some of the overtones, producing crisper, cleaner sounds, and yet other drumheads will have central dots or perimeter "sound rings" to reduce the overtones still further.

Tension rods are also critical in determine the sound of the drum. As the tension rods are tightened, the amplitude of the sound is reduced, causing the pitch to be higher, and the volume lower.

By use of these variables, drums can be manufactured to produce the sounds desired by different drummers. For example a jazz drummer may want sounds that are soft and crisp, and a rock and roll drummer may prefer sounds that are loud and deep.

Uses and types of drum

Drums are used in religious ceremonies and often have a symbolic function. They are also used for communication, by the military, and for their most common purpose as musical instruments.

A wide variety of people use drums in music therapy as they are easy to use, and little or no musical talent is required to produce basic sounds.

A huge range of drums are in use as musical instruments. Some of the most well-known drums are described below.

The **bass drum** is a large drum that produces a very low pitch and is either a concert bass drum, a pitched bass drum, used in marching bands or drum corps, or a "kick drum" in a modern 'drum kit'

The **bongo drums** are made up of two small drums of high pitch attached to each other and are held between the knees and are played by striking the drumheads with fingers and palms. They are generally used for Latin American and Spanish music.

The **conga drums** (usually two together) are tall narrow single headed drums, also played with hands and palms, and are used in Afro Caribbean, Latin and other popular music.

The **snare drum** is a two headed drum with strands of wire or snares stretched across the bottom head, and are played by hitting the top head with drumsticks. They are traditionally used in military marching bands, but are also part of the modern drum set used in popular western music.

The **tom-tom** is a cylindrical drum, these days measuring around 12 inches diameter by 10 inches depth, and has no snare. It is played with drumsticks and is used in the modern drums sets in both a hanging and floor configuration.

Other well known, modern drums include the **tambourine**, the **steel drum**, the **tenor drum** and the **timpani**.

The Modern drum set

In the late nineteenth century, drummers in New Orleans and elsewhere in America were starting to adapt drums of traditional military style marching bands for use on stage, so that several drums could be played by one player. The style of playing was also developing, which was in effect, a "collective improvisation" that came to be known as jazz.

By the early 20th century, the modern drum set was evolving, and in 1909 William F Ludwig, an instrument maker, produced one of the first practical drum pedals. This allowed the bass to be played with the foot while freeing the player's hands to play the snare drum and other instruments.

By 1920, New Orleans drummers had drum sets consisting of a bass drum with attached cymbal, snare drum, tom-tom, woodblock, cowbells and small Chinese cymbals, and the 1930's saw a further development to include additional tom-toms and larger cymbals, and the evolution continued into the 1940's, with larger tom-toms, "floor" toms, and sturdier, drum-mounted cymbal stands.

In the 1950's new plastic drumheads were developed replacing the weather sensitive calf skins that had been used previously.

Yet later, a second bass drum was added, and as the rock and roll era dawned, the drummers moved towards larger, deeper and heavier drums to compete with, and support the very loud, amplified guitar sounds.

FOOTBALL

Introduction

Football, officially known as Association Football, is the most popular sport in the world. Football is also known as soccer, particularly in North America.

Football is team sport, played by two teams of eleven players on a rectangular field of grass, or artificial turf, measuring between 100-130 yards long by 50-100 yards wide, with a 'goal' at each end. The goal consists of two perpendicular poles, 8 yards apart, (the "uprights"), with a horizontal bar across the top, 8 feet high, (the "crossbar). The aim of the game is to move or kick a round ball using the feet or legs into the opposing team's goal, which will be protected by the team's goalkeeper, who is the only player allowed to use his hands or arms.

The team that scores the most 'goals' at the end of the match of ninety minutes duration, (plus any time added on for stoppages), is the winner. If the scores are equal at the end of the game, it is declared a draw, or in certain competitions may go into 'extra time' and/or a "penalty shootout."

The game of football, as known throughout the world today, was first played in England, and in 1863, after the formation of The Football Association; the first Laws of the Game were codified.

Worldwide football is now governed by the "Federation Internationale de Football Association, (International Federation of Association Football), which is known by the acronym "FIFA".

Nature of the game

The game is played in accordance with the Laws of the Game.

With the exception of goalkeeper, the players are not allowed to handle the ball, (although in certain circumstances they can use their hands to throw in the ball when it is kicked out of play), and although they primarily use their feet to manoeuvre the ball, they may also use any part of their body, excluding hands and arms.

Teams are broadly divided into three types of players: strikers or forwards, whose main function is to score goals; midfielders, who try to keep possession of the ball or dispossess the opposition of the ball in order to pass the ball to the strikers; and defenders, whose main role is to prevent the opposition from scoring. The positioning and the number of players playing in the three different types of position can vary according to the strategy of the team, and all players can move to any position on the field of play, as the situation demands.

In a typical game, players will attempt to score goals by individual players keeping the ball under control and passing it from team mate to team mate, until one of them, (usually a striker), is in a position to take a shot at the goal, which is defended by the opposing goal keeper. Opposing players will attempt to intercept the ball by tackling the player in possession, but physical contact is restricted, and the game is fast and free flowing, and only stops when the ball goes out of play or when there is a 'foul' or a player is injured.

History and development of football

Games involving teams and the kicking of a ball have been played throughout history, and there is evidence that the earliest forms of the game were played in the 2nd and 3rd centuries BC in China, and it is thought that the ancient Romans also played a form of the game, as did people in medieval Europe.

The game as we know it today developed in the mid nineteenth century, when it became a popular pastime in the public schools of England. A meeting in 1848, attended by a number of public schools at Cambridge University drew up the "Cambridge Rules", which although not unanimously adopted, were influential in developing the first universal codes in agreed in 1863.

Today, the laws are managed and controlled by the International Football Association Board, which was formed in England in 1886, and is now composed of 4 representatives from FIFA, and one each from the four British association boards.

The world's oldest competition is the FA Cup which has been contested by English teams since 1872, and the world's first football league was formed in England in

1888. The first international football match took place between England and Scotland in 1872.

FIFA, the international football organisation was formed in Paris in 1904.

It is estimated that more than 250 million people throughout the world play football today, and the game is played at a professional level in most countries. Every week millions of people attend football stadiums to support their teams, and billions watch the games live on television.

Laws of the game

The official Laws of the Game contain seventeen laws and are drawn up for all levels of football, with minor modifications for groups such as juniors or female teams.

The maximum number of players required for a team (excluding substitutes), is eleven, including the goalkeeper, who is the only player permitted to play the ball with his hands or arms, within the 'penalty' area in front of his own goal. Although teams allot their players different positions on the football pitch, these positions are not defined within the rules. Generally speaking, three substitutes are allowed in a game, but a player sent off for committing serious misconduct may not be substituted.

The clothing, or "kit" worn by players, consists of a shirt, shorts, socks, footwear, and shin guards. The goal keeper must wear clothing that easily distinguishes him from other players.

The game is overseen by a referee, whose decisions on enforcing the Laws of the Game are final, and he is assisted by two assistant referees.

The game consists of two periods of forty five minute duration, ("halves"), and the clock is not stopped when the ball goes out of play, but time is added on for undue delays due to injuries or other incidents. There is a rest period of 15 minutes between the two halves of the game.

Free kicks and 'penalties' are awarded for infractions, such as kicking an opposing player.

Major competitions

The foremost international competition is the World cup, which is organised by FIFA and is held every four years. More than 190 national teams compete in qualifying competitions for a place in the finals, involving 32 teams over a 4 week period.

There is also a tournament held at the Olympic Summer Games, but after the World Cup, the most important international competitions are the continental cups, such as: the European Cup, the Asian Cup; The African cup of Nations and The Copa America, all of which are held over a four year cycle.

The next level of international completions involves the club champions and leading clubs of each country who compete in continental competitions, such as the EUFA Champions league in Europe.

There are domestic competitions in each country, where the governing bodies organise various league systems, which would comprise several divisions, and teams gain points throughout the season, depending on the number of wins or draws, and at the end of the season the top teams are the champions, and typically the top teams from lower divisions are promoted, and bottom teams are relegated.

In most countries, the league system is supplemented by one or more cup competitions, which follow a 'knock out' format, whereby a 'draw' is made, pitting the teams against each other, and the winners go into the next round, and so on until there are only two left who then contest the cup final.

IT CONSULTING

Introduction

Information Technology (IT) Consulting is the business sector which advises commercial undertakings on the application of information technology to run their businesses in the most efficient way and to satisfy their business requirements.

As well as providing professional advice, IT consultancies will also provide skilled resources for the design, installation, and management of IT systems on behalf of their client businesses.

IT Consultants will typically recommend IT solutions that will enable companies to improve customer satisfaction, enhance productivity, provide greater security from "worms", viruses and hardware thieves, as well as ensuring that the systems meet all legislative and regulatory requirements.

IT consultants would normally have degrees in computer science, electronics, technology or management information systems, and those who are employed as business analysts may have degrees in accounting, economics, industrial engineering, finance, or a generalised degree in Business administration (MBA).

The IT consulting industry can be divided into three segments.

The first is the **Professional Service firms** which maintain a large workforce of highly trained IT professional, and are characterised by their prestigious, (often international) profiles, and can command lofty fees.

The second segment is composed of the **Staffing firms** which primarily place specialised IT staff in businesses on a temporary basis.

The third segment is composed of the **Independent consultants** who are self employed and either act as contractors to staffing firms or as subcontractors in their own right, directly to client businesses.

Professional Service Firms

Professional service firms are generally large entities, sometimes larger than their client companies, who maintain a workforce of skilled IT professionals who provide IT consulting services on a contract basis. The skills involved would include project managers, business analysts, programmers, programme developers, network professionals, security professionals, website designers and so on.

Professional service firms would typically undertake IT projects, usually on a fixed cost or 'deliverable' basis. Such projects may be small or of short duration, such as designing or upgrading a piece of company software, or may be major projects such as designing and implementing a company-wide new IT system. Other projects may involve the advice and installation of security measures; the modification and expansion of a company's existing main systems; the design and launching of a Company's website; a review of the Company's systems to identify inefficiencies; designing, modifying or expanding a company's internal networks; the implementation of wireless technology, and so on.

Professional service firms may sometimes provide only limited resources to a project, such as a project manager and a few key professionals, and then utilise the client company's IT staff to carry out the day to day project work, under the management and guidance of the professional service firm. Alternatively, the firm may provide a large complement of professionals to undertake and deliver a project, completely independent of the client company's own IT workforce.

The selection of a Professional service firm is usually based on skill, knowledge, reputation, ethics and creativity, and the price quoted for the services is often of secondary consideration.

Staffing firms

Staffing firms place skilled and experienced IT staff in a client business on a temporary or contract basis. Such staff is paid on a daily or hourly rate basis by the staffing firm which employs them, and the staffing firm will similarly onward bill the client business on an hourly or daily rate, plus their "mark up", to cover their administrative expenses and profit margins.

Such staff can include the whole range of IT professionals – from senior IT management (IT managers, project managers), to programmers, to analysts, to computer technical specialists, to VDU input staff or key operators, and staff may

be contracted to work for short periods of only a week or so, or for longer periods which can last for months or even years.

It is not unusual for large IT departments in major companies to be entirely or partially staffed by people from staffing firms on a long term or an indefinite contract basis. This gives the company the flexibility to expand or contract their IT departments, as required by the business or projects currently in hand, without having to undertake the long and expensive process of permanent recruitment, with it's attendant legal obligations and also facilitates the reduction of staff, without the need to become involved in laying off permanent employees and associated redundancy issues.

Many IT professionals prefer to work indefinitely for staffing firms, as it provides them with flexibility to take long holidays on completion of assignments, and effectively to work their own hours. Although they will not receive many of the benefits that a permanent employee would enjoy, they are usually compensated by receiving a higher daily rate than a permanent staff member.

Independent Consultants and guest workers

Independent consultants are primarily individuals who contract themselves in their own right to work as consultants and IT professionals for businesses looking to use contract staff. They may also contract themselves to "staffing companies". Often, these individual consultants will have formed their own companies, partnerships or "sole trader" business entities which effectively become their employers.

As with staffing companies, client businesses are billed on a time worked basis, usually on an agreed hourly or daily rate. Individuals will bill on a "name" basis and those with companies or business entities, will bill through their companies.

Such consultants will have acquired skills from many different areas of the IT skill spectrum: from IT management to basic computer operation, and will be required to possess the necessary ability and experience to undertake the contracted tasks. For most individuals, professional qualifications as well as experience will be a prerequisite. As well as holding relevant degrees in computer and/or related business subjects, such consultants would also be required to hold post graduate

qualifications in specialised IT areas, which are obtained from such organisations in The UK as the Association of Computer professionals (ACP).

Guest Workers are skilled IT workers recruited from countries where the labour costs are much cheaper (such as India, Pakistan and The Philippines) and are brought into work for client companies in the west (principally The USA, UK, France, Germany, Canada and Australia) on a contract basis to undertake a particular IT projects. These workers may be legally or illegally employed. Usually, on completion of projects, such workers would return to their own country.

Major IT Consulting Firms

There are a number of global and/or continent- wide IT consulting firms, each of which employ tens of thousand of staff and are a major force in the world wide IT industry. Many are quoted on the relevant stock exchanges in the countries that they operate, and are not infrequently larger than the companies to which they contract their IT consultancy work.

In Europe, The leading UK consulting firms are **Logica CMG**, based in London with over 40,000 consultants and in France there is **Capgemini**, based in Paris, with in excess of 75,0000 consultants and in Holland **Atos Origin**, with over 45,000 consultants and in Germany, **Siemens IT Solutions and Services**, based in Munich, with over 40,000 consultants.

In Asia, India heads the list of countries with major IT consultancies with **Tata Consultancy** Services, based in Mumbai, with over 100,000 consultants, **Infosys**, based in Bangalore, with over 75,000 consultants and **Wipro Technologies**, based in Bangalore, with over 68,000 consultants.

The USA has over 20 major IT consulting firms, the largest of which are: **IBM Global Business Services**, based in New York, with 320,000 consultants, **Accenture**, based in Bermuda, with 146,000 consultants; **Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu**, based in New York, with 135,000 consultants: and **Electronic Data Systems**, based in Texas with 132,000 consultants.

http://itservicess 002. wordpress.com/2012/09/18/your-essential-guide-to-it-consulting-online/

MOTOR CYCLE CLUBS

A motorcycle club is a club of organised and dedicated motorcyclists who get together for friendship, a common interest in motorcycles, to seek strength in numbers and to gain peer acceptance from fellow bikers.

Motorcycle clubs are divided into two types and in North America are either designated as an "MC" (motorcycle club) or a "Motorcycle riding club, and in the UK as either an MC, or an "MCC".

MC's are "one percenters" and all the other clubs are "ninety-nine percenters". The term one percenter is said to originate from a statement made in 1947 by the American

Motorcyclist Association, who stated that only one percent of motorcyclists were 'outlaws' or trouble makers.

Motorcycle clubs (MC's) will have a formal structure, with elected officers, a probationary period for new members, and its rules and regulations regarding behaviour and membership requirements are usually kept private. Most clubs require new applicants to be approved by a majority of members, and upon admittance must swear an oath of allegiance.

Badges or insignia are worn by members of clubs, and they usually adopt a similar mode of dress which is akin to a form of uniform.

The oldest motorcycle clubs date back to the early 1900's with the Yonkers MC being founded in 1903 and the San Francisco MC in 1904. One of the oldest clubs in the UK is The Sunbeam motorcycle club which was founded in 1924.

Some The most famous MC's in the USA include "Hells Angels", "Bandidos", "Mongols", "Outlaws" "Pagans" and "Boozefighters". Popular clubs in the UK include the Triumph owners club, The Sunbeam Motorcycle Club, the Ariel Owners Club, and the Black Rebel Motorcycle Club.

One percenters.

During the 1940's and 1950's in the United States, the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) arranged rallies and gathering in which prizes were awarded

for the smartest club uniform, prettiest motorcycle and so forth, and many clubs started a backlash against this clean cut image, and adopted the "one percent" epithet to separate themselves from the mainstream bike culture of the time. These clubs created a diamond shaped 1% patch to wear on their vests, and subsequently, the one piece patch was cut into 3 separate pieces, as a form of protest, and today is worn as three- piece colours, showing the wearer to be a full member of a hardcore MC - "one percenter". Members are required to closely guard the colours and must never allow them to fall into the hands of an outsider, which would be an act of disgrace.

Members of "one percenters" maintain that the term simply denotes their total dedication to "biking" and the biking brotherhood as a way of life, rather than just a weekend activity, and assert that law enforcement agencies have misrepresented the term to paint them as 'law breakers' and criminals.

Many MC's, including "Hells Angels", have a strict code of conduct which allows a level of violence within their own group, but requires members to keep themselves to themselves and for the most part, they do not make trouble or beat up on the general public. They point out that in any large organisation or federation; there will be a small minority of members who may carry out criminal activities, and that they are not a criminal organisation, no more than any police department, who may have a few "bad cops".

They also remind us that they sponsor and participate in many charitable events.

Ninety-Nine Percenters

While the MC's or "one percenters" get most of the media headlines, often for their misdeeds, the vast majority of motorcycle clubs fall into the "ninety-nine percenters" category, and in 2006 the American Motorcyclist Association recorded just under 300,000 active members.

Ninety-nine percenters in the United States include police and fire-fighter motorcycle rider clubs, and also many military and veteran groups. Additionally there are motorcycle riding clubs sponsored by manufactures such as the Harley Owners Group, the Honda Riders Club of America, and the BMW motorcycle owners of America.

During the 1960's and 1970's in Europe and the UK, a number of 'Biker groups' or gangs were formed, who modelled themselves on what they believed MCs, such as the Hells Angels, stood for. Many of these insisted that they be known as MC's or "one percenters" and most other clubs in Europe decided to adopt the term MCC, to avoid trouble.

"Ninety- nine percenter" motorcycle clubs would encompass all clubs that come under the auspices of AMA or the CMA (Canadian Motorcycle association) in North America, and all clubs who are who are affiliated to FIM, (Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme), in Europe.

Membership of an MC

The typical internal organization of a motorcycle club, such as Hells Angels would consist of a club president, a vice president, a treasurer, secretary, road captain and sergeant at arms. The first branch to be established for a particular MC would be known as the "Mother Chapter", and as other localized groups are formed they would be known simply as Chapters. Each chapter would have its own elected officials, but the President of the Mother Chapter would also be president of the entire MC, and would have overall responsibility for setting the club's policies.

If a biker wishes to become a member of an MC, in the first instance he will begin his association as a guest, or a "hang-around" and he will be invited to attend certain club events and meet other members at established meeting places. If the aspirant is accepted after his initial period as a guest, he will be raised to the status of prospective member, or "prospect", for a period of time. He will then be allowed to participate in certain club activities, but will not have any voting rights while his evaluation for full membership continues. During the prospecting period, some initiation or "hazing" may take place, including the performance of menial tasks, and may even involve some minor law breaking in certain "outlaw" clubs.

Upon successful admission to full member status, the member is awarded the full logo patch, and is referred to as a "full patch member".

A majority of MC clubs do not permit full membership to women, and clubs such as Hells Angels are considered to be racist as well as sexist as they do not permit African-Americans, Native Americans or Jews to become members.

Confederations and Relationships between MC's

Many MC's in North America have established state wide confederations which are composed of MC's that have chapters in that state. Such confederations hold periodic meetings on neutral ground, where normally the presidents and vice presidents of each club or chapter will meet to discuss issues of common interest. Often territorial disputes or other inter club disagreements are resolved.

It is common that the largest "one percent" club in a state will control the federation, and will impose their will on the smaller clubs. Many of the smaller clubs will be forced to adopt a support role, and if they resist, could even be forced to disband or risk a war. These smaller clubs are often shamed into handing over their colours and joining the AMA to signify that they are not "one percenters". Many such clubs are family clubs and would be obliged to comply.

There have been instances of large MC's fighting over territory and other contentious issues with one another, and such events have been known to lead to extreme violence, and even deaths. Invariably these fights have involved the Hells Angels and other major MC's such as the "Mongols" and the "Pagans".

ONLINE DATING

Overview

Online dating, also known as 'Net dating' or 'Internet dating' is an arrangement whereby people use the internet to meet with others of a like mind for the purpose of developing a romantic or sexual relationship.

Companies and other commercial enterprises set up dating websites in which the general public may take out membership for fee, and can then log on via their personal computers, to seek out romantic partnerships.

Such websites would typically allow people to provide personal information, such as age, gender, hobbies and interests, and home location, and will usually allow them to upload photographs of themselves. As well as providing personal information, members would also submit their preferred criteria (such as age, range, race etc) for their 'ideal' partner' so that the operators of the website are able to provide members with a targeted selection of prospective partners

Some dating sites are fairly broad-based, with members from all walks of life and ages able to join to find potential partners, and others are more specialised, dealing with special interest groups, or for those seeking foreign partners, or for people seeking gay relationship, or even for those just looking for short term sexual partners.

Most sites will allow members to introduce each other by email in the first instance, and then they will recommend that the first real date be held in a safe, public place. Other sites will provide facilities for members to become more acquainted in internet "chat rooms", before going to the next step of a live date. Meeting in chat-rooms is known as "virtual dating."

Trends

The online dating industry is estimated to be worth more than 300 million pounds, and is expanding rapidly every year. Many social commentators believe that in 20 years' time, it will be almost unheard of for someone to seek a partner without using online dating methods to find their ideal person as it becomes an ever more efficient market place. There is little doubt that online dating will replace more random methods of finding love such as meeting people in pubs and night clubs when often the senses are dulled by alcohol consumption.

It is estimated that there are 12 million unattached people in the United Kingdom, and recent surveys have indicated that no less than two thirds of these have looked at internet dating agencies. In the United States, it is thought that about 10% of internet using adults, or around 16 million people, have visited some sort of dating web site, or a site where they can meet people online. Over 30 percent of all American adults know someone who has used a dating web site.

Worldwide, there are tens of thousands of online dating web sites, and there are even hundreds of "review" websites springing up, which assist the public in find the site that is most appropriate to their particular needs.

It is now becoming increasingly common to find online dating websites that provide facilities for webcam chat rooms so that members may see each other and are able to fine tune their requirements and ensure that they like "the look' of the person before agreeing to a proper date.

Virtual Dating

There are a number of advantages of "virtual dating" over the more traditional ways of meeting people "in the flesh". Firstly, it is cheaper to entertain a person in a chat room than to take them to a restaurant. Then there is the convenience of being able to 'meet' people without having to leave home, school, office, or from any location where they have access to the internet. It also reduces or eliminates the stress involved with a real date, (particularly the first one), and especially for women, it removes concerns about what clothes to wear.

On the negative side, virtual dating and cyber relationships can be open to abuse. A person may adopt more than one identity which he or she may use in a chat room to deceive people they are dating. People can hide behind their computer screens and the person may not be anything like the recipient thinks he or she is

communicating with. It is only by having some sort of genuine contact that people are obliged to reveal their true selves.

Through the use of avatars, people seeking dates can react in a graphically enabled virtual date that resembles a real life dating environment. This enables people to connect in virtual venues that may resemble a romantic virtual café or an exotic island resort. It has been found that people who initially interact in such a setting have a better chance of successfully developing the relationship when they subsequently meet in real life.

Problems with online dating services

Many online dating sites deceive or mislead the public in way or another.

Some may promise thousands of suitable profiles, but will require customers to sign up and pay a subscription before they are able to view any, and then the customers find that the selection falls far short of what they expected. Other sites provide 'bait' (attractive, fake profiles) to attract new members. Other sites are simply 'fronts' to lure members into other services such as prostitution or online porn.

Another 'deception' is the tendency for some sites to sign up new members for low-priced trial periods, during which these new members find they are unable to make contact with other members until they upgrade to a full membership.

There have also been problems in websites continuing to charge ex-members after their trial or regular subscription has been cancelled.

Then there are the potential problems with other members. There is an absence of trust, as some members may not post a true profile, and tell lies about their age, weight, height, whether or not they are married, and by posting old, misleading photographs.

Deception by members can even extend to criminal behaviour by online predators, who find online dating sites very convenient to target new, innocent victims. Dates with such people can lead to stalking, fraud and sexual assaults.

There are also sites that collect people's personal information and then sell the information on for use by email spam companies.

Online dating and Pop Culture

Online dating has spawned a host of books, plays and films in recent years.

Probably one of the most famous films on this subject is the 1998 film: "You've Got Mail", starring Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan. The owner of a large bookstore chain starts putting the owner of a small local bookstore out of business. Meanwhile they have been corresponding over the internet without knowing who either of them are. They can't stand each other in person but over the internet they are very attracted. He finds out who she is but she doesn't know. He starts to like her more but she still hates him. Thus we witness the juxtaposition of online dating and real life dating. This movie, which was a huge box office hit, probably did as much as anything to popularise the concept of online dating.

More recent movies on this subject include: the 2003 film "Napoleon Dynamite" in which one of the subplots involves a main character's online relationship; the 2004 film "Euro Trip" in which a central character has a relationship by email with a girl from Berlin; the 2005 film "Must love Dogs" about two people seeking love through online dating; the 2006 film "Another Gay Movie" where a student finds his high school teacher online; and the 2007 film "Because I Said So", in which a mother makes up an online dating profile for her daughter.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography is the recording of pictures with the use of an appliance known as a camera which captures light, through device called a photographic lens, onto a light sensitive means, such a film or an electronic sensor. Light patterns are reflected or emitted from the time exposed subjects and rendered onto a sensitive chemical or electronic medium.

The invention of photography is the result of a number of independent technical discoveries, including the pinhole camera in the 10th century, silver nitrate in the 13th century, and silver chloride in the 16th century. William Homberg then discovered how light darkened certain chemicals in the 17th Century.

The actual photographic process dates back to the 1820s, when the first permanent photographic image, which took eight hours to expose, was produced in 1826 by the French inventor, Nicephore Niepce.

Other significant developments were pioneered William Fox Talbot who had created negative images by 1840 and John Herschel who was the first to use the terms "photography", "positive" and "negative". He also discovered the means to "fix" pictures and make them permanent and made the first glass negative in 1839. By 1852 Frederick Scott Archer had invented the "wet plate" process, which was used until the late 1880s when the dry plate was introduced.

In 1884 George Eastman invented film technology which replaced photographic plates, and became the origin of the film cameras still in use today.

Cameras and camera controls

The camera is the device which is used to form the image, and either a film or a silicon electronic image sensor is the medium used to 'sense' the picture, which is either recorded on the film or in a digital electronic memory.

Photographers can operate their cameras and adjust their camera lenses so that the right amount of light is exposed to form the image on film, or on a "raw file" (in the case of digital cameras). In film cameras, the film is chemically processed into a useable image, and in modern digital cameras, there is an electronic image

sensor, based on light sensitive electronics, and the resulting image is stored electronically and can be reproduced on paper.

The main controls of a modern camera will include: the **lens aperture**, which controls the amount of light entering the lens, which will effect the "depth of field" or the range in which objects are in sharp focus; the **shutter speed** which controls the amount of time that the image is exposed to the light and will effect the amount of light and "image blurring" from the subject's motion; **white balance** (on digital cameras) which ensures that white light is recorded as such and that colours appear natural; **metering** which measures the exposure of subjects at a midtone to indicate the exposure levels of highlights and shadows; **ISO speed** which is used to set the film speed on film cameras and on digital cameras as an indication of the camera's "gain from light" to numerical output, (used in conjunction with shutter speed and aperture); and **Auto-focus** which selects a point on the subject image upon which the camera will focus automatically.

Black and white and colour photography

Originally all photography was black and white, and the "monochrome look", with the use of such effects a simulated optical filtering to enhance or diminish the rendering of different light wavelengths, has been a popular art form for decades. Photographers (both amateur and professional) continued to use black and white film long after colour photography was developed and it is only since the 1980s that colour photography has gained widespread acceptance amongst serious photographers.

Even today, many photographers continue to produce monochrome photographs, and some colour digital images are reprocessed to create black and white photographs, and there are now digital cameras that can be set to produce monochrome images.

The first colour photography plates reached the market in 1907, which was followed by the German company Agfa which produced "Agfacolour" in 1932, and in 1935 the first modern colour film was introduced by Kodak, called Kodachrome, which was based on three colour emulsions. Most modern colour film is based on Agfacolour technology, and instant colour film was introduced by Polaroid in 1963.

The reproduction of colour film images may be made in the form of a positive transparency which may be viewed in a slide projector, or as colour negatives which are then used to create positive enlargements on paper. Slide shows, using colour transparencies were very popular amongst amateur photographers for many years, but colour 'prints' have been the most commonly used in recent years, following the introduction of automatic colour photo printing equipment.

Digital photography

Digital cameras use an electronic image sensor which records images as a series of electronic data, rather than chemical changes which is the case with film.

Until relatively recently, photographers had to work in remote locations without any convenient access to film processing facilities and photo journalists were obliged to carry portable laboratories with them so that they could speedily process images.

Then in 1981 Sony produced the first camera which used a imaging device which removed the need for a film. The images had to be displayed on a television screen, and in 1990 Kodak launched the first commercial, fully digital camera, the DCS 100, which due to it's high cost was initially only used by photo journalists and other professional photographers.

A key difference between traditional or "analogue" photography and digital photography is that the chemical process cannot be manipulated as it involves film, and photographic paper, whereas digital images can be electronically altered. The extent to which a digital image can be altered or edited, has opened up a whole new range of applications and uses for this form of photography, and the old adage that "the camera never lies" is no longer an accepted truism.

Digital photography is fast replacing film photography in both amateur and professional markets, and inexpensive 'compact" or "point and shoot" cameras, with additional features such as video and audio recording have become extremely popular in the mass market. Digital cameras are now hugely outselling film cameras, and traditional camera manufactures, such as Kodak, no longer produce film cameras, and others, such as Nikon and Canon have announced a reduction in their film camera range.

Photography applications

As well as mass market photography, there are a number of professional applications.

General commercial photography encompasses: advertising photography in which photographs are used to illustrate a service or product; fashion photography which involves the photographing of models and clothes in fashion and other magazines; glamour photography which involves the photographing of models, sometimes naked, for publication in men's magazines; photojournalism in which photographs are used in newspapers as part of a news story; portrait and wedding photography where the photographs are sold to the people photographed; and still life photography (inanimate objects) and wildlife photography (animals) which can be published in books or magazines or sold to customers.

Fine Art Photography is essentially photographs that are considered to be fine art forms that are taken to fulfil artistic visions and are sold directly to customers. Early fine art photographers imitated painting styles, using soft focuses for a "romantic" look, known as "pictorialism", but in more recent times, "straight" photography has become popular whereby the photograph is sharply focussed and not an imitation of something else.

Technical photography is concerned in such areas as: the recording of crime scenes and the scenes of motor, rail or air accidents; the recording of astronomical events such as eclipses; and photo microscopy, where specialised cameras can record microscopic creatures and matter.

SCOTTISH ARTS

Scottish arts play an important role in giving Scots their distinctive identity and are mostly musically based, around a variety of traditional styles.

The skirl of the Scottish bagpipes, that unique sound which characterises the very essence of Scottish arts, must have been heard by most people, at some time in their lives. Indeed there are many other Scottish performing arts that are equally distinctive and have gained fame wherever and whenever their skills have been put on display. The migration of Scots to almost every corner of the earth has meant that these traditional arts are practiced and have become well-liked in countless cities and countries, as well as continuing to thrive and grow ever more popular in the Scottish homeland.

As stated, the most distinctive and famous of these arts is the sound of the Scottish pipes and drums, whether in a formal marching or military band setting, or in a more informal setting of small groups. These smaller groups, consisting of maybe two to four pipers and one or two drummers, will typically provide the background music for another Scottish art - equally well-known - the art of Scottish highland dancing, which is performed by soloists, or by small numbers, dancing in formation.

Other celebrated genres of Scottish music include Scottish country dance music, Scottish fiddle music and Gaelic music and song. As with the more formal pipe and drum music, these other types of music are invariably accompanied by highly developed, traditional modes of dancing – all arts in their own right.

Pipes and Drums

The Scottish Pipe and drum bands have military origins, and as far back as the seventeenth Century there are regimental records that recount the existence of pipers and drummers, usually in small numbers working as private musicians attached to officers of the regiment. In the early nineteenth century, military pipe bands started to become established, and since then the pipe and drum phenomena has developed into the full scale, military style, marching bands, both within and outside the military framework, that we know today.

Nowadays, not only do dozens of Scottish pipe and drum bands exist throughout Scotland, but hundreds also exist throughout the world, where descendants of Scots have settled and have formed together with the indigenous population to maintain their Scottish arts and traditions.

The standard composition of a pipe and drum band consists of between six to twenty five pipers, a section of between three to ten snare drummers, several tenor drummers and one bass drummer. The entire drum section is known as the drum corps. The band is be led by a single person, carrying a mace, who is known as the drum major.

The Pipe and drum band music consists of Scottish traditional folk tunes and dances or highland traditional music that is adapted for the bagpipes, and the tempos include the standard marches, as well as slow Scottish airs and the faster reels and strathspeys.

The melodies and melodic harmonies are provided solely by the pipers with their distinctive chanters and the drones provide a single, harmonic background sound. The rhythmic accompaniment, together with the marching or dancing beat, is provided by the drum core.

Highland dancing

Highland dancing can trace its origins back to sixteenth century, particularly in reference to the "Sword Dance", and evolved into its current form during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, where it has become an athletic, solo style of dancing, performed to the accompaniment of bagpipes, and often in a competitive setting.

Although the name of the dancing suggests that the dancing styles originated in the Scottish Highlands, they have also been subject to outside influences from the urban areas, as well as being adapted to the tastes of the patrons and judges in dance competitions.

In its present form, Highland dancing has developed into a highly competitive and technical dance form. It requires practitioners to train for many years before they reach the standard necessary to perform in public, and compete in dancing at events such as the Highland Games.

The dance is essentially a 'step dance' inasmuch as the main element is concerned with footwork, with the dancers dancing on the balls of their feet. However, the dance also involves coordinated upper body, arm and hand movements, which provides the dance style with its unique, Scottish flavour. Dances are performed by soloists, or by a small group who are dancing in unison, and all the dancers wear the Scottish kilt. The fast stepping reels provide the music for such dances as the "Highland fling", and the slower stepping marches are used for solo the dance over swords and scabbards, known as "The Sword Dance".

In competitive events, dancers are judged individually, even though they may be dancing in groups.

Scottish country dancing

Scottish country dancing has it's origins in eighteenth century England, when it was known simply as country dancing, and it's popularity spread from the big cities of England to the lowlands of Scotland, and by the nineteenth century was well established throughout Scotland.

As country dancing became replaced in England by modern dances such as the waltz and the quadrille, country dancing continued to gain popularity in Scotland and new dances were choreographed to Scottish tunes. By the early twentieth Century, the Scottish Country Dance Society was formed, to preserve country dances, as 'danced in Scotland', and over time many new dances were added to the catalogue of what eventually became renamed as Scottish country dancing. Today there are over 11,000 dances, of which less than 1,000 are from the traditional canon.

Scottish country dancing is essentially social dancing, and can be subdivided into reels and jigs, (quick time), and strathspeys, which are in a slower, more formal tempo.

All dances are done with partners, and most dances are organized in formations known as 'sets', which would typically consist of three or four couples.

Whilst proper footwork technique is quite skilled, and requires much practice, dancers with little or no technique are not excluded, as the dances are essentially for fun. It is more important for participants to stand away from the paths of other dancers and to be in the correct location at the right phase of the dance, so the various formations involving several couples can properly executed.

Other Traditional Scottish Music

Next to the Pipe and drum bands, probably the most popular and well known of traditional Scottish music is the Scottish country dance bands, which typically consist of two accordions, a fiddle, a piano, a bass and drums. There are hundreds of these bands throughout Scotland, (and undoubtedly thousands more throughout the world), who provide the music for Scottish country dancing, and also appear in their own right in clubs music halls and theatres. The bands generally play to a strict tempo, which, of course, is essential when providing the background for dancing.

Scottish fiddle music is performed at concerts and other events throughout Scotland. The Scottish fiddle dates back to the sixteenth Century and is played in a number of regional styles; namely Shetland, Orkney, West Coast, East coast and Borders, each with their own distinctive techniques.

Scottish Gaelic music has its roots in the Western Isles, (Outer Hebrides), and ranges from unaccompanied singing, to music played by pipes, fiddles, dance bands and even full instrumental music. The music has been appropriated into English songs for centuries, (such as "Mari's Wedding"), and in form, can be sweet, melodic twenty note songs to complex and sonorous twenty minute pipe tunes; from laments to love songs, to merry dance tunes.

TATTOOS AND BODY PIERCING

Introduction

Tattoos, or dermal pigmentation, are marks made by inserting pigments into the skin as a form of decorative body modification, and have been a practice throughout Europe and Asia for thousands of years, in fact since Neolithic times. Evidence of tattoos on humans has been found in the Alps some the six thousand years ago, and in Japan some ten thousand years ago.

Historically, Tattooing has been carried out worldwide; from the Maoris of New Zealand, to tribal groups in the Philippines, Borneo, Africa, Central and South America, as well as in Europe, Japan and China. They have served as marks of status and rank, symbols of bravery, fertility, and religious devotion, talismans for protection, and to identify outcasts, slaves, convicts, or particular ethnic groups.

In modern times, tattoos have become popular throughout the world, but in particular in North America, Japan and Europe, and more recently have become part of the 'pop' culture, as new artists with fine arts training have become involved in the industry, using advanced techniques and more sophisticated pigmentation.

Body piercing can also trace its origins back to ancient times, with piercing being discovered in mummified bodies found in glaciers, and references can be found in the old testament of the bible to 'nose rings' and 'ear rings'.

The modern body piercing culture seems to have started in North America in the mid twentieth century amongst the gay 'leather' S & M subcultures where experiments were made with nipple piercing, and later with genital piercing, and it was at this time that the basic techniques of modern day piercing was developed. By the mid 1980's, body piercing studios had opened throughout The USA and Europe, and by the late 1990's, piercing had become part of the mainstream 'pop' culture.

Tattooing is the injection of pigment into the skin, which eventually becomes 'trapped' in a layer just under the surface, and provides the visual effect of the tattoo.

The modern method of injecting the pigment is to use an electric tattoo machine, which injects inks into the skin from a series of needles which are positioned on a bar which is attached to an oscillating unit. The machine oscillates between 80 to 150 times a second, and continually punches the needles in and out of the skin. The needles are only used once, and come individually packaged.

Cleanliness must be observed at all stages of the tattooing process, and tattoo artists must wash their hands, as well as washing the area to be tattooed, and must wear hygienic gloves at all times. During the tattooing process the area must be kept clean, and continually wiped with a wet cloth.

The cost of a modern tattoo will depend on the complexity and skill of the tattoo artist and the location / country where the tattoo business is established. A small tattoo of simple design may take about fifteen minute to complete, whereas an elaborate, intricate work of art, may take a number of sessions of several hours each.

A wide range of modern dyes and pigments are utilised for tattooing and are extracted from inorganic materials such as titanium oxide, iron oxide or carbon black, and also dyes are made from ash, and "ABS plastic" which provides very vivid colours

Modern procedures & techniques – Body Piercing

Permanent body piercing is carried out by making an opening in the body using a sharp object into the place where the piercing is to be done. The instruments usually employed are either a hollow medical needle or a scalpel which is used to remove skin tissue.

In the United States, the "Standard needle method" is adopted whereby an opening is made using a hollow medical needle. While the needle is still in the body, the jewellery to be worn is pushed into the opening, on the back of the needle. The needle does not remove any flesh, but just creates a "C" shaped slit, which holds the jewellery.

In Europe, the "Indwelling cannula method" is generally used. This is a similar process to the standard method, except that the needle contains a hollow plastic tube ('cannula'), and the jewellery is inserted on the back of the cannula, and then pulled through the piercing into position.

Some people carry out their own piercing at home by inserting a needle or safety pin into the desired area.

For ear piercing, a "dermal punch' is often used, which removes a circular area of skin and cartilage in the upper ear lobe. The removal of the cartilage ensures pressure is removed on the area pierced to aid proper healing. Piercing guns are also used in retail jewellery shops for ear piercing, but are not considered satisfactory by many in the piercing trade due to the longer healing times involved and frequent complications and discomfort.

Aftercare.

Proper hygiene precautions are essential during tattooing and body piercing procedures, and operators must ensure that hands are washed before each client to ensure no cross contamination occurs and surgical gloves must always be worn.

After tattoos have been completed, some artists recommend that new tattoos should be kept wrapped for twenty-four hours, whereas others advise that the temporary bandages may be removed after about two hours. There is also a widespread view that at tattoos should not come into contact with water for about two weeks, to ensure the ink doesn't wash out or fade, as most inks are water based. However there are others who recommend that new tattoos be washed frequently in very hot water

There is a general consensus that the scab that forms on a new tattoo should not be removed, and also that the tattoo should not be exposed to the sun for long periods of time, as both of these actions can cause the tattoo image to fade.

A new body piercing will remain sore and tender for many days, and will take several weeks to heal completely. During the primary healing period the initial jewellery that has been inserted should not be removed, and the healing time must not be rushed. Care should be taken to ensure that the pierced area is not handled roughly, or exposed to unwashed hands or mouth contact until the healing process is completed.

Health Risks

Health risks for Tattooing and body piercing include infection and allergic reactions.

As tattoo and body piercing instruments come into regular contact with blood and bodily fluids, there is always a risk that diseases may be transmitted if the instruments are not properly sterilized after each operation. Transmittable diseases could include surface skin infections such as herpes, tetanus, fungal infections and even some forms of hepatitis and HIV.

Tetanus risks can be prevented by having up to date booster shots, prior to being pierced or tattooed. It is also recommend that no alcohol should be consumed immediately before or after an operation to ensure the body is in the strongest possible state to deal with the physical stress and any loss of blood, (which would be thinned by alcohol consumption).

Some people, with sensitive skins, or are allergic to certain metals, may suffer from an allergic reaction to tattoos or piercing, and if in doubt, should ask the artist to perform a "test patch' to check their reaction. Allergic symptoms would include swelling, itching and oozing of clear fluid from the affected area.

There is also a risk of internal damage if an internally threaded piece of jewellery (a metal ball) which has been secured to the tongue by a nut and bolt, becomes loose and is swallowed.

LIGHTING DESIGN

The need for lighting design arises in many aspects of our daily lives, ranging from the lighting in houses and buildings, to outdoor lighting in places like gardens, public parks, and landscape, to the more exciting medium of theatres, nightclubs and other places of entertainment.

Lighting designers would typically specialise in one particular field.

A home or building lighting designer would work with architects and builders to create a blend of lighting designs to satisfy differing needs. Direct lighting would be required for 'working areas' (task lighting); ambient lighting to create the required atmosphere; accent lighting to illuminate particular areas or ornamental features and decorative lighting to add an extra level of fun and stimulation

Outdoor lighting designs commonly encompass low voltage systems as they are easy to install and are safe if the cables, which are often buried in the ground, are cut accidentally. Outdoor designs need to consider the needs for soft but safe lighting for walkways, to more dramatic 'accent' lighting for certain focal points, to 'dreamy', shadowy lighting effects for the romantic areas, and may also need to cater for areas than can burst alive with bright, colourful lighting for parties and musical events.

A theatre lighting designer would work with the director, set designer, stage manager and maybe others such as the costume designer, and would use the theatre lighting board to produce the desired lighting effects to enhance a stage production. Computer generated design packages will be used to "plot" the lighting sequences, and they can be updated and changed as required.

THAILAND - 18 NORTHERN PROVINCES

Sakon Nakhon

Sakon Nakhon is one of 20 provinces that make up Thailand's north-eastern, (Isan), region. It is approximately 650 kilometres from Bangkok by road, covers an area of some 9,605 square kilometres and has a population of over 1.1 million.

Sakon Nakhon is situated in the north east corner of Isan, close to the Laos. To the north of the province lies the border province of Bueng Kan, with Nakhon Phanom province bordering on the east, Mukdahan and Kalasin provinces bordering to the south, and Udon Thani and Nong Khai provinces bordering its west and north west boundaries.

The province is situated on the massive Khorat Plateau. The Phu Phan Mountain range, which divides Isan into two basins, (the northern Sakon Nakhon Basin, and the southern Khorat Basin), delineates its southern borders. Near to the city of Sakon Nakhon is the Nong Han Lake, the largest natural lake in northeast Thailand.

Sakon Nakhon has a tropical savannah climate with dry winters which are very warm. Average daily temperatures range from 35° c (April) to 28° (December) and lows ranging from 25° (June) to 16° (December). The average annual rainfall is 1645 millimetres and the wettest months are May to September, with August being the wettest month, (358 millimetres).

Sakon Nakhon, ('city of cities'), has a history that dates back 3,000 years and the present city was originally built in the 11th century by the Khmers who then ruled the region. Following the fall of Angkor, the town came under control of the Laotian, Lang Xan kingdom, and when the region eventually became part of Thailand, King Rama 3rd gave the town its current name in the early 19th century. Languages spoken are Central Thai and Isan (Lao).

Sakon Nakhon city has a population of 76,000 and there are a wide variety of hotels and guesthouses where visitors may stay. There is a large superstore-shopping complex in the town centre, which includes a number of national franchises and department stores. There are also a plenty of restaurants, cafes and food courts that sell a wide range of Thai and western food as well as pubs and bars catering to those seeking nightlife.

In Sakon Nakhon town, there is the famous ancient Khmer temple, 'Phra That Choeng Chum' that was built to cover the footprints of four Buddhas. Other places to visit include the Sakon Nakhon Cultural Centre, the 'Archan Man Purithattha Thera Museum' and the ancient 'Phu Phan Rajanivet Palace'.

Further afield are the Phu Pha Lek National Park which encloses parts of the Phu Phan Mountain Range; The Nong Han lake, (a popular local resort); an aquarium; Phra That Phu Pek - an ancient Khmer Ruin built from sandstone; Thang Pi Pan – a stone arch; and many spectacular waterfalls, ancient temples and religious relics which are scattered throughout the province.

Fish and rice are two of the major products of the region and local handicrafts include earthenware, cotton clothes, silk products, and hand-woven 'Khit' clothes with natural bark dye.

Traditional festivals include the wax castle procession and the illuminated boat festival.

The usual forms of local transport are available for visitors to Sakon Nakhon town, namely: songtaews, motorbike taxis, and tuk tuks for local and regional travel.

Sakon Nakhon can be reached from Bangkok by road, (car, bus, 9-11 hours), and by air (70minutes).

Nong Khai

Nong Khai is northernmost of the north-eastern (Isan) provinces, and is one of 20 provinces that make up Thailand's north-eastern region. It is approximately 625kilometres from Bangkok by road, covers an area of some 3,027 square kilometres and has a population of over five hundred thousand.

To the north of Nong Khai lies the Mekong River and its neighbouring Thai provinces are: Bueng Kan (on its eastern border) and Sakon Nakhon, Udon Thani, Nong Bua Lamphu and Loei, (on its south eastern, southern, south western and western borders respectively).

Nong Khai is in the southern valley of the Mekong River, which forms the boundary between Thailand and Laos. The Laotian capital of Vientiane is only 25 kilometres upriver on the opposite bank of the Mekong. At 320 kilometres, the province contains the longest stretch of the Mekong River.

Nong Khai has a tropical climate. Average daily temperatures range from 36° c (April) to 29° (January) and lows ranging from 25° (June) to 17° (January). The average annual rainfall is 1608 millimetres and the wettest months are May to September, with August being the wettest month, (323 millimetres).

Over the centuries, control of the province has changed hands many times, between the Thai Kingdom of Ayutthaya and the Laotian Kingdom of Lan Xang, particularly during the Haw wars. During the 19th Century, King Rama 3rd established the town of Nong Khai on the south bank of the Mekong River and was named after a large lake that lies to the west of the provincial capital. Languages spoken are Central Thai and Isan (Lao).

The province's economy is largely agricultural as well as being well-known for its freshwater fish products. A type of Thai silk known as 'Mud Mee', popular with the royal family, is produced, as well as local food products, such as Isan-style sausages, 'naem' (fermented pork), and Vietnamese food such as 'naem nueang'. Additionally, there are hand-woven cotton products, basketry, silver ornaments and 'huat' which is used to make sticky rice.

Nong Khai is a major tourist destination and is the only Isan town with a genuine 'backpacker' scene. Tourists flock to the province as a stepping off point to Laos or a gateway to the rest of Isan. They often become seduced by the sleepy, bordertown way of life and the traditional culture of the local Isan folk and remain longer than they had originally intended.

The town has a population of 46,000 and the main thoroughfares are occupied by banks, hardware stores and gold shops, with a busy indo-Chinese market along the riverside. There are numerous hotels and budget guest houses scattered along and near the riverside, and the town abounds with Thai, Chinese, Vietnamese and western restaurants, café's and coffee houses. There are also a few western style bars and pubs.

Sights to see in and near the town include the Prap Ho Monument which contains the cremated remains of those who died during the suppression of the Ho in the 19th century; the temple of Wat Po Chai containing a scared Buddha image; the Sadet Market along the riverbank and the famous Sala Kaeo Ku. This Sala takes

the form of an open museum of enormous religious statues, some over 20 metres tall. Buddha images, many-armed goddesses, a seven-headed Naga snake and all sorts of human-animal hybrids dominate the scenery.

Further afield are the famous Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge, linking Thailand with Laos; a tobacco-making village; a freshwater fishery village; a 'krayo' Pastry-making village as well as waterfalls, and ancient temples and relics.

In Nong Khai town there are the usual forms of local transport available for visitors, namely: songtaews, motorbike taxis, and tuk tuks for local and regional transportation.

Non Khai can be reached from Bangkok by road, (car, bus, 9 –11 hours), and by air to Udon Thani (1 hour), and thence by taxi or bus to Nong Khai, (about 50 minutes).

Nakhon Sawan

Nakhon Sawan is in the lower northern region of Thailand, and is one of 17 provinces that make up Thailand's Northern region. It is approximately 238 kilometres from Bangkok by road, covers an area of some 9,600 square kilometres and has a population of 1.1 million, (2011).

Often regarded as the gateway to the north, Nakhon Sawan is bordered in the northwest, north and northeast by Kamphaeng Phet, Phichit and Phetchabun provinces respectively, and in the south east, south and south west by Lopburi, Chainat and Uthai Thani provinces respectively.

Two major rivers, the Ping and the Nan, along with two smaller rivers, the Wang and Yom, all converge in Nakhon Sawan to form the mighty Chao Phraya river, the most important waterway in Thailand. The province is mainly composed of river plains and wet lands, although the capital city is on a hill some 110 meters above the plain.

Nakhon Sawan has a tropical savannah climate and as much of the province is located in a valley, it has some of the highest overnight lows in the country, and has dry and warm winters. Average daily temperatures range from 38° c (April) to 31° (December) and lows ranging from 25° (May) to 19° (January). The average

annual rainfall is 1,150 millimetres and the wettest months are May to October, with September being the wettest month, (237 millimetres).

Nakhon Sawan, ('Heavenly City'), has been a city since the Dvaravati era, (6th – 13th centuries), was an important trading centre during the Ayutthaya era (12th – 16th centuries), and also became a key meeting point for Burmese troops preparing to attack Ayutthaya. During the 19th century, under King Mongkut, the province became a major rice and teak trading centre, but its importance waned in the early 20th century following the opening of the northern railway line.

Nakhon Sawan city has a population of 115,000 (2012), and lies on the western side of the Chao Phraya River, with a railway station on the eastern shore. It is on the major 'route 1' which runs from Bangkok all the way to the Burmese border at Mae Sai.

The main tourist sights are Bung Boraphet - the largest freshwater swamp in Thailand which also contains an aquarium - and Wat Woranat Banphot at the top of Khao Kop, a high peak overlooking the city which has a replica of Lord Buddha's Footprint and a pagoda encasing a relic of the Lord Buddha.

There are a number of ancient temples and shrines within the province worth visiting, and other places to go to include the Tham Bo Ya caves and the provincial cultural building/museum. A 'must see is' is Pak Nam Pho, the point where the Ping and Nan rivers converge to form the mouth of the Chao Phraya River and where a famous huge Pho tree is located.

There are a number of hotels and guest houses scattered around the quite a large provincial capital, and there are plenty of places to eat, in and around the town centre, which also contains a large' Big C' supermarket complex, as well as numerous street food stalls.

There are songtaews that follow established routes around the provincial capital and local busses and songtaews for trips between towns within the province. Songtaews, motorbike taxis, and samlors (three wheeled pedal powered cabs) are usually available for private charter as well.

Nakhon Sawan can be reached from Bangkok by road, (car, bus, mini-bus 3-4 hours), and by train to Nakhon Sawan, (3 hours).

Uthai Thani

Uthai Thani is in in the lower northern region of Thailand, and is one of 17 provinces that make up Thailand's Northern region. It is approximately 220 kilometres from Bangkok by road, covers an area of some 6,730 square kilometres and has a population of three hundred and thirty thousand. (2011).

Uthai Thani is the southern-most province in the 'Northern Region' of Thailand and is bordered in the north by Nakhon Sawan province, in the south east and south by Chainat and Kanchanaburi provinces, and in the west by Tak province.

The upper plains of the Chao Phraya River run through the province, and the Sakae Krang River, a tributary of the Chao Phraya is the main river of the province. To the west, there is an abundance of pristine forests, lakes and streams and jungle-covered mountains. Much of this region is now a World Heritage site and houses a number of rare and endangered wild animals, including tigers and elephants.

Uthai Thani has a tropical climate. Average daily temperatures range from 38° c (April) to 31° (December) and lows ranging from 25° (May) to 19° (January). The average annual rainfall is 1157 millimetres and the wettest months are May to October, with September being the wettest month, (268 millimetres).

The province has a long history dating back to the Sukhothai era, (11th -13th centuries). During the Ayutthaya period, (12th -16th century), it served as a fort protecting the boundary of the kingdom, and it is notable as being the home town of the father of King Rama1 - the first King of the current reigning house of Chakri. It was created a province in the 19th century by King Chulalongkorn.

It is a province of ethnic diversity, and is particularly famous for the life raft residents who live in floating villages on the Sakae Krang River, a waterway that has been a lifeline for the people of Uthai Thani since ancient times. Local produce includes a crispy cooked delicacy called Khao Kung Krop (rice and shrimps), fresh water fish and pomelos.

Uthai Thani town is situated on the banks of the Sakae Krang River, and has a population of around 17,000. Wat Tha Sung, an unusual temple from the Ayutthaya period, can be found within the town boundaries, and there also is a cultural museum, which contains prehistoric artefacts.

There is much to visit in this province, including a floating village, a number of ancient ruins, shrines and temples, some colourful cave paintings, an ancient city, hot springs, an ethnic Thai-Lao weaving village and a buffalo market.

Although off the trail for most tourists, this remote province features striking natural beauty and visitors are able to trek through three different mountain ranges as well as the Huai Kha Khaeng Wildlife Reserve, a Natural World Heritage Site, in search of wild life.

There are a number of hotels, resorts and spas in and around Uthai Thani Town, as well as guest houses. 'Homestays' with villagers are also possible. Songtaews, motorbike taxis, samlors, and tuk-tuks are available for local transport in the town, but it is advisable for visitors to bring their own transport if they wish to explore the more remote areas of the province.

Uthai Thani can be reached from Bangkok by road, (car or bus, 3 - 4 hours), and by train to Nakhon Sawan, (4 hours) and thence by taxi or local bus.

Phetchabun

Phetchabun is in in the lower northern region of Thailand, and is one of 17 provinces that make up Thailand's northern region. It is approximately 354 kilometres from Bangkok by road, covers an area of some 12,700 square kilometres and has a population of just under 1 million, (2011).

Phetchabun is located in the area between the northern and the central regions of Thailand. The North-eastern provinces of Loei and Chaiyaphum border its north and northeast boundaries, with the central province of Lopburi, bordering to the south. The northern provinces of Phichit and Phitsanulock are on its north and northwest borders.

Phetchabun town lies in the broad fertile river valley of the Pa Sak River, and the Phetchabun mountain range lies to the east and west of the province. The rich agricultural land in the centre of province produces maize, tamarind and other fruits. The name Petchabun means 'land of crops and food'.

Petchabun has a 'tropical savannah climate' and its winters are dry and very hot. In the town, daily highs range from 37° c (April) to 31° (December) and lows ranging from 24° (May) to 16° (January). The mountainous areas are much cooler and

temperatures may occasionally fall as low as zero Celsius during the colder months. The average rainfall is 1,133 millimetres and the wettest months are May to October. September is the wettest month.

The capital town, which has a history dating back 1,400 years, was a notable city in both the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya periods, and today it has a population of around 24,000. Although Phetchabun is off the beaten track for most tourists, there are a number of hotels and guesthouses scattered around the town. Local transport consists of motorbike taxis and tuk-tuks, which can be hired from the hotels, market and bus station.

Out of town there are a few resorts and spas, which are set against spectacular scenic backdrops.

Petchabun has numerous places of interest to visit including many notable national parks, beautiful waterfalls and great lakes.

Khao Kho National Park is probably the most famous and has been referred to as "Little Switzerland" because of the beautiful scenery and cool climate. Its spectacular scenery attracts many visitors to the mountain-top, where an army base, which is in the heart of an area where the military used to fight against communist insurgents, has been turned into a museum. There is also a Chedi, containing holy relic, an open zoo, and Wat Pha Sorn Kaew, a spectacular Buddhist temple adorned with over 5 million colourful mosaic tiles and pottery items, all of which are set in breath-taking mountain locations.

Other places to visit include Nam Nao National Park, an immense area of virgin forest; Phu Hin Rong Kla National Park; Than Thip Waterfall; and The Huai Pa Dang Reservoir. There are also a number of ancient temples and shrines scattered around the province.

For those wishing to explore the national parks and mountains, it is advisable to bring their own vehicles, although there are local mini-buses available for hire with drivers and tour guides.

Phetchabun can be reached from Bangkok by road, (car or bus, 5 - 6 hours), and by air, (54 minutes from Don Muang airport to Phitsanulock or Loei, and thence by taxi or bus.) There is no train service.

Phichit

Phichit is in Thailand's lower north and is one of 17 provinces that make up Thailand's Northern region. It is approximately 343 kilometres from Bangkok by road, covers an area of some 4,531 square kilometres and has a population of five hundred and fifty thousand.

Phichit is bordered by Phitsanulock in the North, in the east by Petchabun province, in the south by Nakhon Sawan province and in the west by Kamphaeng Phet province.

The province consists mainly of fertile agricultural river plains as the rivers Nan and Yom flow through the province before converging to become the Chao Phraya River, which runs all the way to Bangkok and beyond.

Its northern location means that it has a cooler, more temperate climate than Bangkok and Thailand's central and southerly provinces. Daily highs range from 37° c (April) to 31° (December) and lows ranging from 25° (May) to 18° (December). The average rainfall is 988 millimetres and the wettest months are May to October.

Rice, lotus plants and a number of fruits are the province's main produce.

The town of Phichit, which means 'Beautiful City', was originally established in 1058, when it was called Sra Luang, 'City of the Royal Pond', as is reflected in Phichit's provincial seal, and was a key town during the Sukhothai and later, the Ayutthaya kingdoms.

Phichit is also known as the 'land of the crocodiles' as many of these reptiles used to flourish in the Nan and Yom rivers, but these days, crocodiles can only be found in fresh water crocodile farms that abound in the province.

Phichit town has a population of around 24,000 and nearby attractions include: the provincial museum; Wat Tha Luang which houses Luang Pho Phet a Chiang Saenstyle Buddhist statue which was cast in bronze in 1845; and a Bung Si Fi, a large public park with a huge crocodile statue in the front.

Further afield are a crocodile pit; Mueang Kao Pichit park which features an ancient town dating back to more than 900 years, and Wat Nakhon Chum and Wat Khao Rup Chang, which contain ancient Buddha images and relics.

Local fruits to buy include 'Som-O' (pomelo) and Makham Kaeo the popular tamarind fruit which is used to make a famous 'khanom', (Thai sweet/candy). There are also locally produced, colourful, hand-woven fabrics.

Although Phichit not a major centre for tourism, it has a number of hotels and guesthouses for travellers wishing to stop overnight, and there are the usual array of songtaews, motorbike taxis, samlors, and tuk-tuks for getting around the town and buses for trips around the province.

Phichit can be reached from Bangkok by road, (car or bus, 5 - 6 1/2hours), by train, (6 hours), and by air (54 minutes from Don Muang airport to Phitsinulock or Loei and thence a hour+ journey by bus).

Phitsanulok

Phitsanulok is in Thailand's lower north and is one of 17 provinces that make up Thailand's Northern region. It is approximately 374 kilometres from Bangkok by road and is about half way to Chiang Mai. The province covers an area of some 10,800 square kilometres and has a population of eight hundred and fifty thousand..

Phitsanulok is bordered by Sukhothai and Uttaradit provinces in the north; by Loei and Phetchabun provinces in the east, and Phichit and Kamphaeng Phet to the south. In its northeast corner, the province has a small border with Laos.

Phitsanulok city is located between the Nan and Khwae Noi Rivers, and the province features large areas of flatlands with mountains in the north, and plains and forest to the east. The river basin of The Nan River is the lifeline of the province and runs through the heart of the old city.

Its northern location means that it has a cooler, more temperate climate than Bangkok and Thailand's central and southerly provinces. Daily highs range from 37° c (April) to 30° (December) and lows ranging from 25° (August) to 19° (December). The average yearly rainfall is 1,317 millimetres, with its wettest months being May to October.

Phitsanulock, (which means "Vishnu's Heaven"), was originally called Song Kwae, ('Two Rivers',) and has a history dating back to the Stone Age with evidence of settlements between 2,000 to 4,000 years ago. In more recent times, due to its location, Phitsanulock was a key town and prospered under both the Kingdoms of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya, (11th - 16th centuries) and in particular, it played a strategic role in the Ayutthaya era when it became the Kingdom's royal capital for 25 years.

The province is a good starting point to explore the Sukhothai Kingdom, and with one third of the province covered by mountains, it is an ideal base for travellers who wish to explore the lower north and western northeast Thailand. There is much to explore in the nearby mountains and waterfalls.

The medium sized city of Phitsanulock, (population 80,000), has retained its natural charm, thanks to the scarcity of tourists, and there are a number of temples, shrines and a folklore museum worthy of a visit. Further afield, the province contains four national parks.

Several markets offer local repast, and there a number of budget and mid-range hotels to cater for most visitors' pockets.

Phitsanulock can be reached from Bangkok by road, (car or bus, 5 - 6 hours), by train, (5 hours), and by air, (45 minutes from Don Muang airport).

There are local bus services plus a wide variety of Tuk-Tuks and taxis. Motorcycles are also available for hire.

Kamphaeng Phet

Kamphaeng Phet is in Thailand's lower north and is one of 17 provinces that make up Thailand's Northern region. It is approximately 360 kilometres from Bangkok by road, covers an area of some 8,608 square kilometres and has a population of over seven hundred thousand.

Kamphaeng Phet is bordered in the north by Sukhothai province, in the west by Phitsanulok and Phichit provinces, in the south by Nakhon Sawan province and in the west by Tak province.

The province is located on the banks of the River Ping, (the main tributary of the Chao Phraya river), with the eastern part of the province situated on river flatlands, while in the west there are high mountains and lush fertile forests.

Its northern location means that it has a cooler, more temperate climate than Bangkok and Thailand's central and southerly provinces. Daily highs range from 37° c (April) to 31° (December) and lows ranging from 25° (June) to 18° (January). The average yearly rainfall is 1,305 millimetres, with its wettest months being May to October.

Kamphaeng Phet, meaning 'Walls as Strong as Diamonds', was a royal city in the Sukhothai Kingdom in the 14th century and formed an important part of the kingdom's frontier defences. It remained so through the Ayutthaya and early Rattanakosin (18th century) periods.

Kamphaeng Phet city is roughly split between a newer, typically provincial Thai city and the old city with its original walls and which includes a historical national park. As well as the park, the town also houses the Kamphaeng Phet National Museum and the Kamphaeng Phet Provincial Museum along with a number of other notable structures.

Near the provincial capital on the west bank of the river is the ancient town of Nakhon Chum, with its 2-3 meter earthen walls and ancient sites. Also nearby is Wat Phra Borom That, featuring a Burmese-style Chedi. Another nearby ancient town is Trai Trueng, and there are also the hot springs of Phra Ruang.

Further afield are several national parks, including: Khlong Lan National Park - an area of over 300 square kilometres over mountain ranges to the west; Mae Wong National Park; and Khlong Wang Chao National Park with its teak forests, waterfalls and a nearby hill tribe village.

'Kluuai Khai' ("egg banana") is the famous product from this province and its other produce includes fresh bananas and sticky pastes.

There are a number of hotels and guest houses, (some riverside), which provide low cost accommodation, and there is an abundance of coffee shops, restaurants and street food stalls. Close to the Ping River is a large night market which is also an eating place.

Kamphaeng Phet can be reached from Bangkok by road, (car or bus, 5-7 hours), and by air, (1 hour), to Phitsanulok or Sukhothai, or by train or plane to Ubon Ratchathani and thence by local bus or taxi to Kamphaeng Phet.

Buses, Songtaews (converted passenger pick-ups), motorbike taxis and samlors are available to get around locally and between nearby provinces. Bicycles may be hired for travelling around the city.

Uttaradit

Uttaradit is in lower northern Thailand and is one of 17 provinces that make up Thailand's Northern region. It is approximately 490 kilometres from Bangkok by road, covers an area of some 7,800 square kilometres and has a population of nearly five hundred thousand.

Uttaradit is bordered in the north by Nan Province, in the west by Laos, in the south by Phitsanulok province and in the west by Sukhothai province.

It is located in the Nan River valley and Uttaradit city is 45 kilometres south of the Queen Sirikit Dam which dams the Nan and has created a lake of 250 square kilometres.

Its northern location means that it has a cooler, more temperate climate than Bangkok and Thailand's central and southerly provinces. Daily highs range from 38° c (April) to 31° (December) and lows range from 25° (June) to 18° (January). It has average yearly rainfall of 1,372 millimetres, with its wettest months being May to October.

Uttaradit was historically a trading centre on the Nan River and the region used to be covered with teak forests, which was once the province's major trading product. The largest teak tree in the world, originally 48.5 meters high and 9.87 meters in circumference can be found in Ton Sak Yai Park.

Uttaradit dates back to pre-historic times, and the site of the modern town, (previously called Bang Pho Tha It), was built on the right bank of the Nan River during the Dvaravati period, prior to the Lanna and Sukhothai eras. The town

flourished as a commercial port and King Rama 5 elevated its status into a province and was re-named Uttaradit, in 1915, which means 'Port of the North.'

A number of temples and shrines may be found within the city as well as the Uttaradit Provincial Cultural Hall which houses important historical relics.

The province's main attractions include: the Ton Sak Yai Forest Park in the Luang Prabang Range, containing the largest teak tree in the world, (which has been standing for 1,500 years); the Klong Ton National Park, consisting of natural forests and many hills; the Phu Soi Dao national park which is a cool mountainous area, (a former stronghold for communist insurgents), and which also contains a spectacular 5-level waterfall. Last but not least, there is the mighty Queeen Sirikit Dam.

Local products include beautifully decorated woven materials and preserved edibles made from local fruits.

There are a few hotels and guest houses in Uttaradit city, and a wide variety of restaurants, including a food court and chain restaurants, as well as a number of coffee shops, bars and even a disco.

Uttaradit can be reached from Bangkok by road, (car or bus, 7 - 9 hours), by train, (7 hours), and by air, (1 hour). Buses, songtaews (converted pick-ups), motorbike taxis and tuk-tuks are available to get around locally and to travel between nearby provinces.

Sukhothai

Sukhothai is in lower northern Thailand and is one of 17 provinces that make up Thailand's Northern region. It is approximately 430kilometres from Bangkok, by road, covers an area of some 6,600 square kilometres and has a population of over six hundred thousand.

Sukhothai is bordered in the north by Phrae province, in the east by Uttaradit and Phistanulok provinces, in the south by Kamphaeng Phet province and in the west, by Tak and Lampang provinces.

It is located in the Yom River valley at the lower perimeter of the northern region. The northern part of the province is dominated by the Phi Pan Nam Mountain

Range with its four famous peaks and in the south lies the Khao Luang Mountain Range.

Its northern location means that it has a cooler, more temperate climate than Bangkok and Thailand's central and southerly provinces. Daily highs range from 37° c (April) to 31° (November) and lows range from 25° (June) to 19° (December). It has average yearly rainfall of 1,317 millimetres with its wettest months being May to October.

Sukhothai, which means the 'Dawn of Happiness', was founded in the 13th Century by the founder of the Phra Ruang dynasty. Under the dynasty's third ruler, King Ramkhamhaeng, Sukhothai became Thailand's first independent kingdom, enjoying a 'golden age' of Thai civilisation, developing its religious art and architecture in classic Thai styles. King Ramkhamhaeng is also credited with inventing the Thai alphabet and providing the model for the country's administration, monarchy and religion.

Sukhothai Historical Park, 'meuang ang kào' (old city),is located twelve kilometres from town and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The ruins of royal palaces, superb Buddhist temples, the city gates, walls, moats, dams, ditches, ponds, canals, and the water dyke control system have been lovingly preserved and restored by Thailand's Fine Arts department and are a 'must see' for all visitors to this province.

One of the finest Loi Krathong celebrations in Thailand is held at the lake in the Historical Park where hundreds of candle-powered, floating lanterns are released into the sky

The Ramkhamhaeng National Park, is located in the southern part of the province and The Si Satchanalai National Park is in the North West corner.

Visitors can also visit villages which are engaged in the production of Sangkhalok Pottery as well as Hat Siao cloth. This famous hand-woven cloth is produced not far from Si Satchanalai Historical Park, where the ruins of another important historical city can be explored.

Sukhothai is a very popular tourist destination and the town contains a wide range of accommodation to suit all pockets, as well as a number of bars and restaurants. A popular early morning walk is around the fresh market, where snacks of local Thai delicacies, including the famous Sukhothai noodles, may be enjoyed.

Sukhothai can be reached from Bangkok by road, (car or bus, 5-7 hours), and can easily reached by local bus services from Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Phitsanulok, Tak or Kamphaeng Phet.

There are daily flights to Sukhothai airport from Bangkok and Chiang Mai by Bangkok Airways.

Phrae

Phrae is one of the 17 provinces that make up Thailand's Northern region. It is approximately 550 kilometres from Bangkok by road, covers an area of 6,500 square kilometres and has a population of nearly 500,000.

It is bordered in the north by Phayao province, by Nan and Uttaradit provinces in the east, by Sukhothai province in the south and Lampang province in the west.

Phrae is situated in a valley on the banks of the River Yom and is surrounded on all sides by mountains; with the Phi Nam mountain range bordering the province from North to South and the Phlueng mountain range in the east. This ancient province contains one of the largest reserves of teak forests in Thailand, and still retains a fortified city at its centre, while a new, larger city has grown up around it.

Its northern location means that it has a cooler, more temperate climate than Bangkok and Thailand's central and southerly provinces. Daily highs range from 37° c, (April), to 29°, (December), and lows ranging from 25°, (June), to 16°, (January). It has average yearly rainfall of 1,115 millimetres with the wettest months being May to September.

Phrae was founded nearly 800 years ago, after Chiang Mai was established as the capital of the Lanna Thai Kingdom. The provincial capital contains narrow alleyways which are lined with traditional, teak-built houses and mansions - many of them constructed by 19th century European teak traders - as well as a number of beautiful Buddhist temples.

The old town contains remnants of the original city wall and boasts a number of museums where local culture, which is rich in legend, can be studied. Some of the more notable ancient teak-houses, including one where the King and Queen once stayed, can also be visited. There is a large local market, near the River Yom and two night markets are located within the city itself.

Outside the city are two national parks, including the Wiang Kosai National Park, which contains two waterfalls, numerous ancient chedis, and the unique Phrae Mueang Phi, a wide area with no large trees due to the subsidence and erosion of the soil, and where the remaining elements have formed into the shapes of exotic-looking mushrooms.

There are a number of hill-tribe villages scattered around the province where local handicrafts may be purchased. Local products include 'Mo Hom', a well-known hand-crafted material and 'Pha Tin Chok' a distinctively designed material which is used to make dresses and handbags.

Phrae can be reached from Bangkok by road (car or bus, 6-8 hours), by train to Denchai, (9-10 hours), thence by local bus to Phrae city and there are also a few flights between Bangkok and Phrae in the high season. It is also easily accessed by local busses from either Chiang Mai or Chiang Rai.

Tak

Tak is one of the 17 provinces that make up Thailand's Northern region It is approximately 420 kilometres from Bangkok by road, covers an area of 16,400 square kilometres and has a population of 530,000, of which approximately 25% belong to one of Thailand's many hill tribes. (Yao, Karen, Akha, Lahu, Hmong, and Lisu).

It is bordered in the north/north east by Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang provinces, in the east by Sukhothai and Kamphaeng Phet provinces, in the south by Kanchanaburi province, and its western side has a long border with Myanmar (Burma).

Although Tak province is not on the main tourist trail, it is an area of outstanding natural beauty with its towering mountains and pristine forests in which there are many national parks.

Tak's northern location means that it has a cooler, more temperate climate than Bangkok and Thailand's central and southerly provinces. Daily highs range from 38° c (April) to 30° (December) and lows range from 26° (April) to 17° (January). The average yearly rainfall is 1,061 millimetres, with the wettest months being May to October.

The Tak kingdom was built more than 2,000 years ago, before the Sukhothai period, and its peak of influence was in the 1st Century. The city underwent several moves and became part of the Sukhothai Kingdom in the 7th Century. The city was relocated to its present site on the east side of the Ping River in the 18th century during the early Rattanakosin (Bangkok) period.

Once an important military region between Thailand and Burma, these days it is mainly an agricultural province which produces rice, corn, vegetables and fruit. The province a mines granite, produces jewellery and is a trading centre for handicrafts and products from Myanmar.

Tak's main tourist attraction is the Bhumibol Dam. It was opened in 1964 at Khao Kaew, and dams the River Ping, forming an enormous artificial lake, spanning an area of 300 square meters – the largest in Thailand.

Largely free from tourist influence, Tak has an abundance of unspoilt natural parks with environmental and cultural centres, jungle covered mountains, spectacular forests, waterfalls, caves and much more. As well as hill the tribe villages, there are also countless temples, shrines and other monuments worthy of a visit.

The province offers true Thai hospitality and an immersion into Thai culture rarely to be found elsewhere. The city has no discernible nightlife, but there are a few hotels and guesthouses and many roadside food vendors as well as more established restaurants.

Tak can be reached from Bangkok by road (car or bus, 5-7 hours). There are no direct flights to Tak but there are flights to Phitsanulok, from where a bus can be taken to Tak.

Chiang Mai

Chiang Mai is the largest of Thailand's 17 Northern provinces, and is the 2nd largest province in Thailand. It is approximately 700 kilometres from Bangkok, by road, covers an area of some 20,000 square kilometres and has a population of 1.7 million.

Chiang Mai is the North's most culturally significant province, and is bordered by Chiang Rai to the northeast, Lampang and Lamphun to the south, Tak to the southwest, Mae Hong Son to the west and Myanmar, (Burma), to the north.

Its northern location means that it has a cooler, more temperate climate than Bangkok and Thailand's central and southerly provinces. Daily highs range from 36° - 29°, (April - December), and lows range from 24°, (June), to 15°, (January). The average yearly rainfall is 1,131 millimetres, with the wettest months being May to October.

Chiang Mai town is Thailand's fifth largest city with a population in its greater metropolitan area of over 1 million. Sometimes known as 'The Rose of the North', the city is situated 316meters above sea level and is surrounded by mountains and lush green countryside. It is much quieter than Bangkok and has a diverse population which includes a significant number of expatriates.

Founded over 700 years ago, Chiang Mai used to be the capital of the Lanna Kingdom, and also became the spiritual centre of Buddhism for the whole of the northern region. The city was occupied the Burmese in 1556, before becoming part of Thailand (Siam) in 1775, when the Thai King, (Taksin), helped to drive out the Burmese.

Inside Chiang Mai city's historical centre is the 'walled city', where there are more than 30 temples dating back to the days of the Lanna Kingdom, with a combination of Burmese, Sri Lankan and Lanna styles. These ancient buildings stand amidst modern day Thai culture, with its modern convenience stores, famous open markets and boutique hotels.

The old city is awash with diverse dialects, delicious food, fascinating architecture – old and new – countess festivals, handicraft shops, 'northern style' massage, and displays of Thai classical dancing.

In the countryside, visitors can admire the panoramic views of mountains, waterfalls and rivers. Many visit the magnificent Doi Suthep Temple, with its gold plated Chedi at an elevation of 1,073 meters, and its 300 'naga-lined' steps on the slopes of Doi (Mount) Suthep.

Slightly further afield are a number of national parks, including Doi Inthanon, (the highest mountain in Thailand), as well as numerous hill tribe villages.

Chiang Mai is an extremely popular destination for both local and foreign tourists and over 5,000,000 tourists visit the area annually. It is featured on 'Trip Advisor's list' of their "25 Best Destinations in the World".

Activities include: visiting historic temples and other buildings in the old city; museums; gardens; zoos; aquariums; night safari; waterfalls and national parks; elephant trekking; white water-rafting; festivals and exhibitions; traditional massages; motorcycle touring; rainforest canopy walks; river cruising and sports.

There is an active nightlife in downtown Chiang Mai, which includes bars, restaurants and nightclubs, (with live music entertainment), and there are number of cinemas showing western films. Muay-Thai boxing matches are held on most nights at three different stadiums.

Chiang Mai can be reached by road (car or bus, 9-12 hours), by train, (12-15 hours), or by direct flight from Bangkok. Flights from Bangkok run hourly, (or better), and some airlines fly directly to Chiang Mai from regional hubs in countries such as Malaysia, Singapore and China.

Mae Hong Son

Mae Hong Son is one of 17 provinces that make up Thailand's Northern region. It is situated in the region's far eastern corner, with Myanmar (Burma) bordering its western frontier and Chiang Mai on its eastern border.

This isolated province is the most northerly from Bangkok, at a road distance of approx. 900 kilometres, covers an area of 12,700 square kilometres and has a sparse population of less than 250,000, of which 63% are members of hill tribes.

Set amongst lofty mountain ranges, Mae Hong Son has historically been one of the most inaccessible of Thailand's provinces. Visitors who succeed in making it there will be delighted to discover such mystical delights as the ancient, provincial capital, Mae Hon Son town, which nestles in a deep valley, surrounded by the misty mountains. The province's isolated, indigenous tribal villages, myriad Burmese and Lanna-style temples, spectacular waterfalls and scenic national parks are all well worth a visit.

Mae Hong Son's second city, Pai, also attracts many visitors, who come to see the spectacular beauty of the surrounding countryside and the numerous cultural festivals that are held there.

Activities for visitors include elephant and mountain trekking, visits to the national parks and waterfalls, hill-tribe holidays, rafting, and mountain biking.

Mae Hong Son's northern location means that it has a cooler, more temperate climate than Bangkok and Thailand's central and southerly provinces. The daily highs range from 39° c (April) to 29° (December) and lows range from 24° (June) to 14° (January). The average yearly rainfall is 1,292 millimetres with the wettest months being May to October.

Mae Hong son can be reached from Bangkok by car, (approx. 12 hours), or bus, (approx. 15 hours), or by rail or plane to Chiang Mai, and thence by car or bus which takes another 5-6 hours. From time to time, there have been scheduled direct flights to Mae Hon Son airport from Bangkok and Chiang Mai, but travellers are advised to check in advance to ensure these services are still operating.

Chiang Rai

Chiang Rai is one the 17 provinces that make up Thailand's Northern region and is Thailand's most northerly province. It is approximately 800 kilometres by road from Bangkok, covers an area of some 12,000 square kilometres and has a population of 1.2 million.

It is bordered in the north by Myanmar (Burma), Laos in the east, the Thai provinces of Phayao to the south, Lampang to the southwest and Chiang Mai to the west.

Chiang Rai is approx. 580 metres above sea level, and is the 'quiet neighbour' of Chiang Mai. It is a land of outstanding natural beauty, boasting magnificent mountain scenery, lush tropical jungle, countless hill tribe villages and ruins of ancient settlements and Buddhist shrines.

The northern part of Chiang Rai is part of the infamous 'Golden Triangle', which borders Thailand, Laos and Burma, and was once the hub of the global opium trade, but is now an agricultural area that produces coffee, pineapple, coconuts and bananas.

Chiang Rai town, with a population of only 200,000, is an excellent base for tourists to explore the region and plan treks to the jungle or mountains, and trips to the diverse hill tribe villages, where many still maintain a traditional lifestyle. The town is lower key than its famous neighbour, and many tourists prefer its more relaxed way of life.

In 1262, Chiang Rai was established as the first capital of the Lanna Kingdom, before it was relocated to Chiang Mai in 1296. Ever since, it has been under the shadow of its western neighbour. In recent years, tourism in the province has started to boom as tourists have come to appreciate how much Chiang Rai has to offer - with its pristine scenery and the opportunities to become immersed in local indigenous cultures. Chiang Rai has also been developed as a centre for community development projects.

Its northern location means that it has a cooler, more temperate climate than Bangkok and Thailand's central and southerly provinces. The daily highs range from 35° c (April) to 27° (December) and lows range from 24° (June) to 13° (January). The average yearly rainfall is 1,690 millimetres, with the wettest months being May to October.

Chiang Rai International Airport is well served by three regional airlines flying in from Bangkok and there are 3 flights per week directly from Kunming, China.

Alternatively Chiang Rai can be reached by road, via Chiang Mai, (by bus or car, approx. 3 hours) or directly from Bangkok, (approx. 12 hours).

Nan

Nan is one of the 17 provinces that makes up Thailand's northern region and is approximately 700 kilometres by road from Bangkok, covers an area of some 11,500 square kilometres and has a population of just under half a million.

It is bordered on its western side by the Thai provinces of Phayao, Phrae and Uttaradit, (north to south), and by Laos on its northern and eastern perimeters.

This little known province is located in the remote valley of the Nan River valley and is surrounded by forest-covered mountains. It was once an independent kingdom and in recent years has become a refuge for visitors who want to 'get away from it all' and to explore the natural beauty of northern Thailand.

In the 13th century, the earliest Nan rulers allied themselves with neighbouring principalities and established the kingdom of Lan Na. Its history, development, and architecture were influenced by various kingdoms, particularly the mighty Sukhothai Kingdom, which played important part in its development through the ages. In 1558, Nan was conquered and depopulated by the Burmese and by the late

18th century, Nan had forged an alliance with the new Bangkok- centric Rattakosin Kingdom. To this day, Nan is still the home of numerous Thai Lue and other hill tribes who retain many of their fascinating ancient customs and traditions.

Nan Province contains numerous hill tribe communities, including Hmong, N'tin, and Khamu, and much of the arable land is devoted to the production of rice and fruit.

Doi Phukha National park has mountains of over 2,000 metres high, and the province is an excellent destination for visitors seeking to trek though these scenic and remote mountain ranges, away from the hustle and bustle of nearby Chiang Mai and, to a lesser extent, Chiang Rai.

The small provincial capital of Nan has a population of around 80,000 and has some attractive, ancient temples and an interesting museum. There are also a number of riverside bars and restaurants where tourists may relax after a day in the mountainous countryside.

Nan's northern location means that it has a cooler, more temperate climate than Bangkok and Thailand's central and southerly provinces. The daily highs range from 38° c (April) to 29° (December) and lows range from 24° (June) to 14° (January). The average yearly rainfall is 1,004 millimetres, with the wettest months being May to September.

There are daily flights to Nan from Chiang Mai, and there are three direct flights per week to Bangkok.

The nearest train station is Den Chai, in Phrae province.

Busses from Bangkok take from 10-13 hours and cars from Bangkok are a couple of hours or so quicker. Busses from Chiang Mai take approx. 6-7 hours, and from Chiang Rai, 5-6 hours.

Lamphun

Lamphun is one of 17 provinces that make up Thailand's northern region and is approximately 700 kilometres by road from Bangkok, covers an area of some 4,500 square kilometres and has a population of 400.000.

Located in the Ping River valley and surrounded by mountain chains. Lamphun is sandwiched between the provinces of Chiang Mai and Lampang, (east and west), with Tak Province on it southern borders.

The provincial capital nestles on the banks of the River Kuang, (a tributary of the Ping), and the ancient, moat-enclosed old city is full of slow-paced, old world charm and contains numerous fascinating temples that can be visited on foot, bicycle, or by bicycle powered pedi-cabs. The local population is well-known for its hospitality and the beauty of its women.

It is thought that Lamphun was founded in the seventh century by Buddhist monks from Lopburi and was first ruled over by Queen Camadevi, daughter of the king of Lopburi, who established a legacy for the province's reputation for beautiful women. The kingdom thrived for several hundred years before it was conquered in the 12th Century by the Lanna Kingdom which then ruled over it for the next 1,000 years.

Today, this sleepy province stands in stark contrast to its famous neighbour, Chiang Mai, and many visitors may prefer its slow pace of life. The countryside consists of forests, mountain ranges, lakes and waterfalls and a number of national parks, including the famous Doi Khun Than National Park, which features many exotic plants and wildlife. There are also many ancient sites and hill tribe villages.

Its northern location means that it has a cooler, more temperate climate than Bangkok and Thailand's central and southerly provinces. The daily highs range from 37° c (April) to 29° (December) and lows range from 24° (June) to 14° (January). The average yearly rainfall is 1,004 millimetres, with the wettest months being May to September

There is a frequent bus service to Lamphun from Chiang Mai, which is only 26 kilometres away. There are also regular bus services directly from Bangkok which take approx.10 hours. It is a couple of hours quicker by car.

Lampang

Lampang is one of 17 provinces that make up Thailand's northern region, and is approximately 600 kilometres by road from Bangkok, covers an area of some 12,500 square kilometres and has a population of 3/4 million.

Located in the Wang River basin, it is bordered in the north and north east by Chiang Rai and Phayao, in the east by Phrae and Sukhothai, and on its western /south-western borders by Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Tak, (north to south).

It Famous for its Thailand Elephant Conservation Centre, (which includes the King's stable of white elephants), and the horse drawn carriages in its cities, the province is surrounded by mountain ranges with the Doi (mount) Luang at a height of 1697 metres. Thailand's largest power plant is located in the Mae Moe district, where lignite is mined. The agricultural sector mainly produces rice and pineapples.

The most well-known tourist spot in Lampang is the Elephant Conservation Centre, which is the oldest and only elephant centre sponsored by the government. It is the premier place in Thailand to learn about elephants and watch demonstrations.

As well as the Elephant Centre, the province contains a number of national parks, including The Kiu Lom Dam, Huay Tak Teak Biosphere Reserve and Doi Khun Tan National Park in the Khun Tan mountain range. There are also many historical sites scattered around the province, such as Kaeo Don Tao, where the Emerald Buddha, (now in Bangkok), was once enshrined, and numerous, spectacular hilltop chedis and temples.

Lampang town - which is often bi-passed by tourists who just visit the elephant centre and then go on to Chiang Mai - is a large town with a population of over 200,000. The city contains a number of beautiful temples as well as the famous Rooster statue, which is also the province's emblem – named after the former ancient name of the town, roughly translated as 'City of Roosters'. Horses and carriages are still used for local transportation, and after a day spent exploring this fascinating town and province, tourists enjoy relaxing in the riverside bars and restaurants and mixing with the laid-back, friendly, local populace.

There are also a variety of locally made products available, such as hand-made cotton products, wood-carvings and terra-cotta /ceramics. A variety of festivals are held throughout the year.

Its northern location means that it has a cooler, more temperate climate than Bangkok and Thailand's central and southerly provinces. The daily highs range from 38° c (April) to 30° (December) and lows range from 24° (June) to 15° (January). The average yearly rainfall is 1,046 millimetres, with the wettest months being May to October.

Lampang airport is served by three daily direct flights from Bangkok and it is also possible to fly to Chiang Mai and then take a connecting flight to Lampang.

The Bangkok/Chiang Mai trains pass through Lampang en route to Chiang Mai, and busses from Bangkok take approx. 9 hours. A frequent bus service from Chiang Mai takes approx. 90 minutes.

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