

Riding the Wave of Fame

Home-Based Business Spotlights in Major Motion Picture

By Sandy Larson

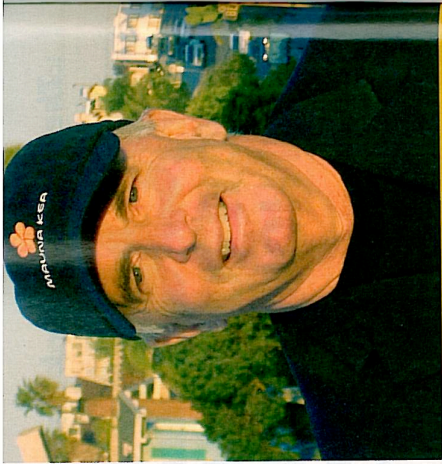
The *Holiday* — a Sony motion picture featuring Cameron Diaz, Kate Winslet, Ed Kushins, and Jack Black — is more than just another romantic comedy with big named stars that predictably becomes a box office hit. It is a free, 2-hour advertisement for one now-famous Hermosa Beach, California based business, HomeExchange.com.

The story is about two women — one in Los Angeles, the other in England — who decide to leave their unhappy lives behind by traveling somewhere new for the holidays. They meet at HomeExchange.com and decide to swap houses for a few weeks.

The president of this vacation web site, Ed Kushins, appreciates all the attention the movie has drawn to his business. "The immediate impact has been a huge spike in visits and credibility to home exchange as a mainstream vacation alternative."

Combining a Love of Travel with Work
A former submarine officer for the U.S. Navy and then later a principal for a scrap metal recycling company, Ed started his business in 1992. "I heard that there were a few

Ed Kushins is the president of HomeExchange.com, the vacation web site featured in Sony motion picture, *The Holiday*.



companies offering a home exchange service, and I wanted to try it," recalls Ed. "But it was difficult to locate them, and their offerings were limited, so I decided to combine my love of travel, held in the home exchange concept, and marketing skills to start my own agency."

The company started out distributing printed directories between members via mail or fax; however, after the Internet took off, Ed's business went exclusively online. "The advent of the Internet and e-mail in the mid-'90s completely changed the business, allowing instant posting and editing of listings, as well as immediate contact and response between members," he says.

Today, there are over 14,000 listings on his web site in locations around the world. Between 25,000 and 30,000 home exchanges took place last year alone. People interested in exchanging their home with someone else can sign up at HomeExchange.com for \$39.95 a year. The typical home exchange within the same country is between 1 and 2 weeks, while international exchanges generally last 1 to 3 weeks.

Growing a Virtual Company

Ed has two business partners that work with him on HomeExchange.com. One lives down the street from him in Manhattan Beach, California, while the other lives in

“Being an Internet business means I can operate from anywhere in the world I have a connection, which these days is almost everywhere,” comments Ed. This gives Ed and his wife Terri plenty of opportunities to take advantage of the unique service his company provides. They have completed over 15 home exchanges, with and without kids, in England, France, Ireland, Washington DC, New York City, Palm Springs, San Francisco, Colorado, and more.

Being able to take his business anywhere, Ed plans to spend about 2 to 3 months a year traveling — including two or three 3-week home exchanges, a few 1 to 2 weekers, and a lot of long weekenders — all in the name of outreach and research, of course. "We love home exchanging for the same reason most of our members do," says Ed. "Not only do we save a lot of money, but it is the most comfortable way to stay, and we love being able to experience an area as a local, not a tourist." **ED27**

For more information visit www.homebusinessmag.com and click the Businesses >> Success Profiles Channel.

— Ed Kushins, founder of HomeExchange.com

France. All three work out of their homes, as do the "virtual" customer service associates in California, Australia, Italy, Spain, France, Portugal, and the Netherlands. "We have a great team, and I truly enjoy every day together, even if it is a 'virtual' together," says Ed.

Enjoying the Perks of Working from Home

Working from home permits Ed to keep a flexible schedule. "I'm really working 24/7, but usually in 5 to 30 minute chunks of time," he says. "For me, that's perfect. I like being available for projects or errands, going for a swim or bike ride, or just taking a break."

And besides, what other job allows someone

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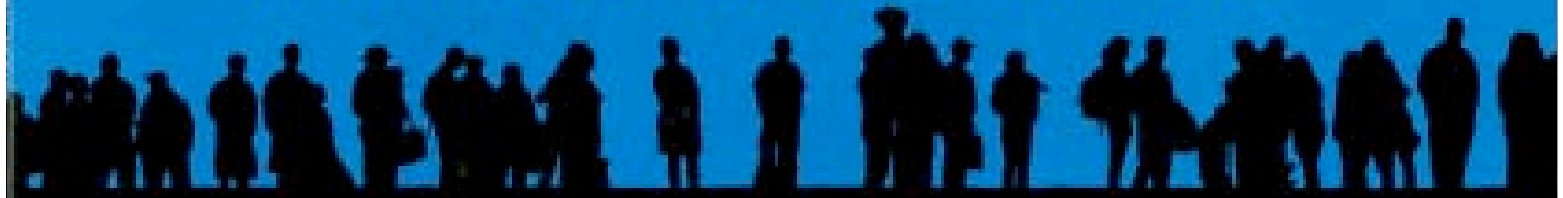
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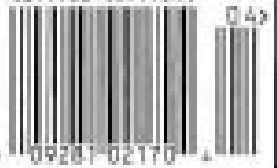
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