

Please Online

Jennifer Lopez, Liberty X, and Sara Cox are just a few of the famous names that have worn garments supplied by Sophie Kelley's and Charles Duncombe's successful online hosiery business, tightsplease.co.uk.

Frustrated with a lack of variety from store to store, Sophie saw a gap in the British market, and together with business partner Charles, started Tightsplease.co.uk, which now has 20,000 customers, many of whom buy from abroad. A milestone of its success was Woman magazine's Website of Year award in 2003.

Hungry for further success, they decided to diversify into travel. Holidaysplease.com was soon set up, but the nature of the holiday purchase required a different business model.

"The nature of this new business means a lot of outbound calling," said Mr. Duncombe.

"Customers are logging requests on our website about holidays and our team of seven call them back. They are constantly on the phone, but as we've grown, so has the team – and of course our phone bills rocketed."

After reviewing the costs, Duncombe approached BT for a more competitive rate on his lines.

"They sent two very helpful people to us, who ran us through the savings we could make on BT Business Plan against our supplier at the time. They gave an honest appraisal showing us when calls might be more expensive and when they would be cheaper. I concluded that BT was going to be more cost effective, especially with the 10p call cap that BT Business Plan provides."

After making the decision to go with BT, the lines were moved across a few weeks later. This included some of the home phone lines used by the freelance sales agents that Duncombe employs, for whom he would usually pick up costs for.

"The engineers were excellent. They turned up on time, completed the work and carried out testing within a couple of hours. They also transferred our broadband access seamlessly which I think is a first for any IT project that we have been involved in!"

"We got all the features we wanted on our lines and a few days later someone telephoned us to check everything had gone smoothly. This unexpected piece of aftersales care – together with the cost savings – reassured me that I'd done the right thing."