

HotelPlanner adds 50 jobs at West Palm Beach headquarters



HotelPlanner's headquarters has been at 205 Datura St. in West Palm Beach since 2015.
GOOGLE MAPS

HotelPlanner, a travel technology company and booking engine, will hire another 50 people at its West Palm Beach headquarters, according to the Business Development Board (BDB) of Palm Beach County.

The new hires will be onboarded over three years at HotelPlanner's 15,000-square-foot headquarters, at 205 Datura St. Currently, 73 people work in the office. Another 44 of its call center agents work remotely in Palm Beach County, according to the BDB.

BDB CEO [Kelly Smallridge](#) said her organization helped HotelPlanner locate vendors to recruit the 50 additional employees. The BDB also connected HotelPlanner with CareerSource Palm Beach County, a state-chartered employment agency.

[Philip Ballard](#), HotelPlanner's chief communications officer and head of investor relations, said the company is growing amid "unprecedented travel demand after the two-year pandemic."

HotelPlanner has more than 1,600 affiliate partners, Ballard said, including sports teams, universities, government agencies, and online platforms like The Knot and Wedding Wire.

"We anticipate hiring more software engineers, and more account managers to handle our growing number of affiliate partners," Ballard told the *Business Journal* via e-mail. "We also plan to hire more in-house customer service people to augment our gig-based call center platform."

Ballard said positions such as software managers and account managers will be salaried. Customer service personnel will be paid hourly.

"We allow for remote work for all employees if approved by their manager, so these new hires would have the choice to work remotely or a hybrid approach," Ballard said. "At present, we have about 40 people in the office every day. The rest work remotely or a hybrid."

HotelPlanner's goal to hire 50 more people comes as West Palm Beach and its surrounding areas have become increasingly favored for companies looking to expand in South Florida, Smallridge said.

"We continue to see great interest among corporate headquarters who have a strong desire to strategically expand or relocate here due to a business-friendly environment, taxes and work-life balance," Smallridge said.

South Florida has always been a magnet for wealthy people across the U.S. seeking good weather and low taxes. However, that trend accelerated to include working executives and well-paid remote professionals who moved from places such as New York and California in an effort to avoid state income taxes and Covid-19 regulations. At the same time, out-of-state companies [opened branch offices in South Florida](#) and, in some cases, [their headquarters](#).

Palm Beach County's office market has been performing well as local and out-of-state companies seek out spaces, brokers tell the *Business Journal*, though there's concern that rising interest rates will slow down the [pace of deals throughout the region](#).

West Palm Beach's office market is still pretty tight, however, as new-to-market financial services companies [seek out quality office spaces](#).

HotelPlanner's entry into West Palm Beach predated the pandemic, however.

HotelPlanner's entry into West Palm Beach predated the pandemic, however.

Founded in San Diego in 2003 by [John Prince](#) and [Tim Hentschel](#), HotelPlanner's headquarters moved to 777 S. Flagler Drive in downtown West Palm Beach in 2010. Five years later, HotelPlanner announced it was [hiring 75 people in West Palm Beach](#) and moving to a bigger space at 205 Datura St., **in what is now known as the Echo Building**.

Built in 1925, the Echo Building was renovated by Boca Raton-based Morning Calm Management in 2021. Headed by Mukang Cho, Morning Calm Management bought the Echo Building in January 2019 [for \\$14.22 million](#).

Available office space within the Echo Building is advertised on LoopNet.com for rent for between \$55 and \$60 a square foot.

Thanks to the boost in travel demands, HotelPlanner collected \$53 million in 2021, which Ballard said was a "record year." In 2022, Ballard said HotelPlanner anticipates earning \$100 million.

Ballard said HotelPlanner has no immediate plans to lease additional office space. "Based on growth, there may come a point in the coming decade where we have outgrown our existing space, but probably not for another five years or more," he said.

[HotelPlanner adds 50 jobs at West Palm Beach headquarters - South Florida Business Journal \(bizjournals.com\)](#)