

Pre-Trip Innovation STARTING ON THE RIGHT PATH

Innovation has been a big topic among travel management circles—how to achieve relevance and progressive management without sacrificing the benefits of traditional best practices, but also exploring ways to push beyond them. Together, **The BTN Group** and **Concur** are offering a series of webinars and white papers that will explore current trends across the business trip life cycle—pre-trip, on-trip and post-trip—and uncover use cases with companies that are implementing innovation within their programs. *For more ideas and examples, watch the webinar.*

OFF-CHANNEL MANAGEMENT

Most corporate travel managers will acknowledge an issue with some percentage of off-channel bookings in their travel program. Accepting as inevitable the lost data associated with these bookings, however, leaves a lot of program optimization opportunities on the table.

“You can use itinerary management to unlock a host of capabilities, when it comes to managing risk and controlling spend,” said Doug Anderson, vice president of travel product for Concur. “At the least, you can look at where travelers are booking when they are not booking through preferred channels and what suppliers they are booking with. But more important, you can get pre-trip visibility and take action on what is happening now.”

Those actions could be anything from messaging about out-of-policy suppliers or a

IMPLEMENT IT: COGNIZANT TECHNOLOGIES

At Cognizant Technologies, hotel bookings are largely driven by client hotel agreements. This represents good stewardship for the consulting company, but the flip side is that Kathleen Kaden, global travel manager for Cognizant, has had little control over the company's hotel data via traditional travel management strategies.

Using itinerary management tools, Cognizant has implemented a targeted test program to capture hotel data booked outside preferred channels. Travelers register their email addresses in the tool. Once registered, they forward hotel confirmations they receive at that email address to the itinerary tool. The technology matches the hotel reservation to a current air reservation at Cognizant's preferred TMC, enters it in the PNR and returns a full itinerary to the traveler.

“We are excited about ultimately mandating this,” said Kaden. “We want to set it up so that our associates make their reservations (air and car) and we want them to get a hotel in that reservation. We don't care how—whether through the TMC or through TripLink [Concur's tool]. We are really looking to broaden the definition of what is ‘in policy’ to being ‘what is in the PNR.’”

better hotel rate at a similar property to using data from itinerary management tools to feed to risk management tools to track traveler location even when they book off-channel.

At the end of the day, additional off-channel

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STARTING ON THE RIGHT PATH

volume booked at preferred suppliers can also be reported back in total volume for negotiations. More data is better than less—and itinerary management tools are broadening the scope of what travel managers can touch.

LEVERAGING TRAVELER KNOWLEDGE

Eric Bailey, senior travel manager, strategy and technology for Microsoft, may have an advantage over most travel managers when it comes to implementing technology innovation. Nevertheless, the strategy behind Microsoft's traveler-centric tools is applicable to most companies: Travelers know a lot about travel, use that knowledge to tailor everyone's travel experiences.

"The problem we are trying to solve is that with your smartphone, you are walking around with the history of the world in your hand," said Bailey. "But you don't really need all that information. At Microsoft, we want travelers to have information that is going to be relevant."

To that end, Bailey and a group of interns has built an online tool and mobile app that offers Microsoft travelers a view of the world through the lens of Microsoft.

"We've included information about the location of all of our offices around the world, the airports that we go to and preferred hotels. We allow people to add information about customer sites, restaurants and things like that nearby." The result is a tool that allows the traveler to map their trip in relation to Microsoft offices and preferred suppliers—and to review that information visually to make better decisions when traveling.

JOURNEY PLANNING

Business travel today incorporates much more than air, hotel and car bookings. Depending upon the destination, said Miriam Moscovici, emerging technologies director for BCD Travel, travelers and travel managers need to be looking at rail, public transit, ferries and even the option of walking to determine the most efficient transit options.

"The tools are out there to better define business travel needs door to door," said Moscovici. "Travelers can use consumer tools [like Route Rank or Rome2Rio] during the planning process or travel managers might use them in collaboration with their TMC or OBT to deploy a business version of these tools."

In addition to planning individual trips, there is

IMPLEMENT IT: WHIRLPOOL

While Microsoft offers a great use case, a handful of other companies are using the same concept but building on different platforms. Madia Sargent, senior manager, global travel services for Whirlpool Corporation is building a similar online tool and mobile app on a Google platform.

She has enlisted a group of frequent travelers as an advisor group as she builds the tool with the help of her IT department and she has asked local offices around the world to maintain local information on the tool. Sargent has also enabled travelers to provide additional information and travel tips for any business travel market.

"We can provide guidance to travelers, but the best part is that travelers can also give feedback—while they are at a restaurant or at a hotel, as they discover a one-dollar tram to the office, or other great insights," said Sargent. "It gives me great information. As travel managers, we have a general pulse of what's going on, but with this we can start to view the conversations between the travelers and that gives us more data to refine the travel program."

a strategic use for journey planning tools, as well. Travel managers can use them to research emerging destinations to better inform supplier negotiations and even shape policies.

"They really allow the travel manager to look more holistically at the market and consider the most beneficial options—even if they are not traditional to the program," said Moscovici.

GETTING IT DONE

Implementing innovation can be a challenge, especially as companies pioneer new management concepts and technologies in their travel programs. Advice from the pros: "Don't try to boil the ocean," said Moscovici; start small and grow innovation organically. That approach is evident in all the examples in this paper—each company beginning with a targeted group of travelers for their initial development and rollout, and tweaking their innovations based on feedback. Without companies willing to step outside traditional best practices and implementing progressive ideas, forging future best practices is impossible.

REGISTER NOW for "Implementing Innovation: On-Trip" airing live August 14th, 2014 and archived until February 13, 2015. Presented by The BTN Group and Concur.

ABOUT CONCUR

Concur is a leading provider of integrated travel and expense management solutions. Concur's easy-to-use Web-based and mobile solutions help companies control costs, save time and protect employees. Concur's open platform enables the entire travel and expense ecosystem to access and extend Concur's T&E cloud. Concur's systems adapt to individual corporate and employee preferences, and scale to meet the needs of companies from small to large.

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