**BUILD A EMPLOYEE TRAVEL APPROVAL APPLICATION FOR CORPORATE**

**PROJECT NAME: BUILD A EMPLOYEE TRAVEL APPROVAL**

**APPLICATION FOR CORPORATES**

**TEAM ID : NM2023TMID00787**

**TEAM SIZE : 4**

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**MAJOR BUSINESS TRAVEL CHALLENGES :**

**1.Getting the Best Inventory:**

Not having enough travel options is one of the major corporate travel management challenges highlighted by most companies. Your employees might be booking flights, hotels, etc., on the vendor’s website, oblivious to better options. Or, the TMC (Travel Management Company) that you prefer for travel booking might have access to a limited travel inventory.

In any case, if the employees are not getting all the travel choices, how will they choose the best option? Therefore, you must seek a corporate travel management solution that offers extensive travel inventory.

**Solution:**  Choose a TMC that deploys a wide range of travel options for the employees. You should enquire whether the TMC is getting travel inventory from a GDS (Global Distribution System) or not. A GDS offers real-time travel inventory and fares to the TMC. If not, it is highly unlikely that the TMC offers you good options.

**2.Tiresome Reimbursement Process:**

Travel approval and reimbursement is one process that companies can surely improve on to optimize their corporate travel management process.

There is a lot of time lag between booking a trip and getting approvals from the concerned authorities. This case even worsens in the case of multi-level approvals (generally for international trips). Even after a trip, reimbursement of expenses can take days.

**Solution:** The solution for this challenge is simple- adopt travel management software. Travel management software fast-tracks the approval flow by sending notifications to the approver as soon as you book a ticket. Moreover, the employees can see the travel policy in real-time, eliminating the issue of out-of-policy approvals.

**3.Cutting Down on Travel Costs**

Cutting down costs is a challenge for most processes. However, as far as business travel is concerned, it is a bit more complex.

A lot of factors lead to budget overspending at your company. Firstly, your employees might not be getting access to affordable travel options. Secondly, even if they get affordable options, they might not be willing to book it. Last-minute bookings and unclear travel policies can be some other reasons.

**Solution:** You should choose a business travel management solution with access to LCCs (Low-Cost Carriers), so the employee can choose from affordable options. Moreover, you can introduce an incentive program for your employees. Under this program, you can reward them every time they book a cheap flight, hotel, cabs, etc. Drafting a policy with stricter provisions for late bookings can also help in cutting travel costs.

Other than that, technology can help you overcome such cost-related corporate travel management challenges. You can invest in tech-forward travel management software that offers a virtual travel consultant. A virtual travel consultant like ITILITE Mastermind analyzes historical travel and expense data to provide data-driven insights about the ways in which your employees could have saved more. Hence, you get actionable corporate travel solutions to control travel costs.

**4.Integrating Core Processes**

Multiple departments are involved in a corporate travel management process, be it admin (travel manager), finance, or HR. All these departments use stand-alone apps for their process. As a result, data sync becomes an issue, leading to errors and irregularities.

For instance, if a new employee joins your organization, the data is updated in the HRMS software. However, it also needs to be manually updated in other systems like ERP or the travel management software you use.

**Solution:** The solution for this challenge is to choose a travel management platform that offers plug-and-play integration with all the essential apps. This way, you get a complete ecosystem where data is synced automatically, enhancing the travel process accuracy.

For instance, by integrating the HRMS system with your company travel software, you don’t need to add the employee data separately in the traveler database.

**5.Employee Travel Safety**

According to Amadeus, 84% of business travelers prefer traveling under the right safety protocols.

Business traveler safety has always been one of the significant corporate travel management challenges over the years. However, amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it has become imperative over the last couple of years. Travel regulations vary from country to country and keep changing with the situation. Moreover, it is tough to find accommodation for employees with all the necessary precautions.

**Solution:** Implement a Duty of Care plan to comply with the latest travel regulations. The plan must include:

* Vaccination policies
* Travel Insurance
* Keeping track of travel regulations
* Blacklisting unsafe hotels
* Ensuring traveler support
* You can also opt for a business travel management solution that track the employees in unfamiliar destinations so you know they are fine.

**6.Lack of 24/7 Support**

One of the major corporate travel management challenges companies face is offering employees support on a business trip. Whether the company handles the business travel in-house or a business travel company handles it for them, it is essential that the employees get support, whenever they need it.

Consider the situation where an employee goes on a business trip and is denied check-in at the hotel. The employee calls the TMC but gets no response as it is beyond their working hours. Imagine what a disaster that would be for the employee. Hence, you need a corporate travel management solution that provides A1 travel support round the clock**.**

**Solution:** Choose a TMC that offers 24/7 support via multiple platforms, such as call, chat, or email. Also, the TMC should provide a dedicated travel manager for your company who responds swiftly and is well-equipped to handle critical issues.

**7.Drafting an Effective Travel Policy**

Every company has a travel policy. However, what travel managers find tough is drafting a travel policy that is both cost-effective and employee-centric.

For instance, if you allow low flight fares for employees, they might not get the best options. Contrarily, if the flight fares are high, it might cost your company heavily.

**Solution:** To determine a corporate travel solution regarding effective policy creation, you should analyze your current business travel management process to identify the loopholes in the process. Draft a travel policy keeping in mind employee safety, travel guidelines, annual budget, and more. Taking employee feedback will also be a great help in improving the travel policy.

Here is a free template you can use to draft an effective travel policy.

**8.Complying with Travel Policy**

Drafting an effective policy is one thing, but it’s of no use if employees don’t comply with it. In some cases, travel managers are unable to communicate the travel policy clearly to the employees. In other cases, the policies are so impractical that it is tough for employees to comply.

**Solution:** To achieve policy compliance, opt for a business travel management solution that offers real-time policy visibility to employees. It will avoid out-of-policy bookings as they will get notified at the time of travel booking.

Also, try to understand the employee preferences and try to modify the travel policy around it. You can also introduce a business travel incentive program that benefits both.

**9.Controlling Travel Expense Fraud**

Travel expense frauds have been a headache for companies for quite some time now. Issues such as reporting duplicate expenses, filing under wrong expense categories, and policy violations hamper your corporate travel process.

**Solution:** You can control travel expense fraud by using an advanced corporate travel solution with an integrated expense management software that automates auditing and enables fraud detection -any duplicates are notified to the approved in real-time. Moreover, the best software tools also offer receipt scanning, ensuring that employees provide valid proof.

Also, educate the employee about the best practices of business travel booking and expense filing.

**10.Keeping Employees’ Data Secure**

One of the major challenges in corporate travel management is keeping business data secure. Managing business travel involves storing and processing a lot of critical information like employee PII (Personal Identifiable Information), credit card information, and travel arrangement. Such data can cause financial losses to the company and threaten employees’ security if leaked.

**Solution:** Invest in cloud-based travel and expense management software. A cloud-based travel management solution offers enhanced data security to help you protect all the travel-related information. The data is stored in servers located in safe warehouses that no one can access without permission. Moreover, the information is encrypted in a way that makes it challenging for cybercriminals to access it. Hence, with a cloud-based integrated T&E software, you can be sure that your critical data is safe.

**11.Managing T&E separately**

A mistake most companies make is adopting stand-alone tools for travel and expense for corporate travel management. In this case, when an employee books a trip, they have to file business travel expenses manually in the expense software, causing irregularities in the T&E process.

**Solution:** Choose an integrated travel and expense management software with both travel booking and expense filing capability on one platform. The employees can map the Trip ID while filing expense reports and all the expenses will be included automatically

**TRAVEL BOOKING FLOWCHART**

Open home page

Registered user

Register

Add available offers and coupens

RESERVE

Search for flights and hotels

Input travel info

Log in

Confirm

**TRAVEL REQUEST LETTEER**

**MARCH 20,2023.**

From

XXXX,

Sales associate,

A&B company,

22 nd avenue,

Chennai.

To

HR department,

A&B company,

22 nd avenue,

Chennai.

Dear mam,

I am writing to request approval for an international trip as per the employee manual. I have been invited to make a presentation at the multimedia marketing conference in new York in june.

The trip has been approved by my direct manager and details of the conference and the itinerary for my journey are attached.

I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter, and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need further details.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

XXXX.

**TRAVEL REQUEST FORM**

**Employee name: title :**

**Department:**

**Travel purpose: destination :**

**From To Days:**

**Approval budget:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Travel judtificsations** | | |
|  | | |
| **Estimated budgets:** | | |
| **Type of expenses** | **Description** | **Budgets** |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Total** | |  |

**Employee signature:**

**Supervisor signature:**

**TRAVEL APPROVAL PROCESS**

TRAVEL REQUEST

MANAGER APPROVAL

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

TRAVEL DESK

TRAVEL ASSISTANCE DESIRED

**DETAILS APPEAR ON A TRAVEL REQUEST FORM:**

* Employee name and contact details
* The business purpose of the trip
* Destination details
* Departure and return dates
* Predicted travel cost which are broken down by category
* Notes of any visa requirements for international travel
* Any relevant comments from the employee’s manager

**Who works on a travel request form?**

The travel request form would pass through the three stages.

* The employee
* The first level approval
* The second level approval

**THE EMPLOYEE:**

when an employee has cause to make a business trip, they need to start the approval process by filling out a travel request form. They need to collect all the relevant details and submit them to their superiors. Once the form has been received , managers will analyze the request and either approve or reject the suggested itinery

if a form is approved, employees are ready to start booking and organizing their travel plans. If the request is rejected, the employee must take the changes outlined by the managers before submitting it again.

**THE FIRST LEVEL OF APPROVAL:**

Usually, the first level of approval is conducted by the employee’s direct manager. At this stage, they check request form to ensure the employee information is correct and the estimated expenses are reasonable. If the manager finds the fault with any details, such as the purpose of travel or the suggested pricing for the trip, they will reject the request and include comments for improvement.

The form then goes back to the employee to make the appropriate changes before sending it back to their managers for another look.

**THE SECOND LEVEL APPROVAL:**

The next step of the approval process is very similar to the last, except it is conducted by a more senior staff member. Typically a department head or C-level worker, thre request form goes through the same process, checking for any mistakes and ensuring that the trip has a significant business.

If the trip request is approved, the employee has the green light to start booking their travel arrangements and scheduling their meeting. At this point, administration team will archive the request form. However, the management can still reject the request and ask employees to make further modifications.