

## CASE STUDY

# The benefits of a combined approach to travel & events.



**PAREXEL**

**Client Since**  
2006

**Employees**  
18,600

**Markets**  
52

### Situation

PAREXEL have been a client with FCM Travel Solutions, initially for their USA and Canada business since 2006. PAREXEL then consolidated globally with FCM in 2011 after an extensive tender. FCM are now servicing PAREXEL employees in 52 countries through a single global travel program.

In 2014, FCM Travel Solutions introduced PAREXEL to their sister-brand cievents as part of the FCM Client Advisory Board. The Global Procurement Manager for PAREXEL had indicated that MICE spend was by and large managed locally and therefore there was no central oversight or reporting; the company did not have a global meetings policy at this time.

### Challenges

- ▶ Little to no transparency on a global level for meetings spend via a separated reporting tool.
- ▶ Travel management employees had no central tracking or monitoring of local meetings spend on a global basis.
- ▶ The organisation did not have a formal meetings policy, previously meetings had been covered within the transient travel policy.
- ▶ Due to the lack of reporting on global meetings spend, it was difficult to build a business case to centralise meetings. In addition, meetings administrative staff had now always been favourable to support greater transparency of MICE.
- ▶ There had been several instances of last minute cancellations of meetings which were met with significant financial penalties to the business.

#### **PAREXEL charged cievents and FCM with three key goals which were to:**

1. Provide visibility of meetings spend through a global, centralised meeting registration process.
2. Bolster risk management around contracting and legalities of meetings.
3. Maximise on negotiated rates through consolidation of MICE spend.

### Approach

Due to the unmanaged nature of the locally managed meetings, the sheer number of MICE suppliers and volume of spend presented an initial challenge which had to be overcome. Essentially, PAREXEL needed to apply some controls and parameters to manage their meetings spend – similar to what they had already done with their regular corporate travel with FCM.

**Approach** (continued)

The team had their work cut out for them and implemented a number of strategic tactics to create a mechanism for control and transparency:

- ▶ A global meetings and events policy was created, this defined in clear terms what constituted a “meeting” so that there was clarity across countries and business units
- ▶ A tiered structure was created by dollar value to determine approvals for meetings and what level of approval was required for a certain cost
- ▶ The next step was to implement a global meetings registration portal (which can also be accessed through the FCM Portal) where details of meetings were captured including location, cost, attendees etc
- ▶ A budget template was created and distributed to administrative staff responsible for planning meetings, this would assist with understanding the true meeting spend and improve the accuracy of spend reported in the portal to be consolidated across the business
- ▶ Lastly, PAREXEL were able to start running reports on meetings spend based on the data being input into the cievents meetings portal

With such a large program spanning many countries, it would have been very difficult to implement a firm mandate on the meetings program. Rather, a soft mandate approach was launched with a view to creating advocates for the program by assisting administrative staff to better manage meetings and help them save time when doing so. This approach has been beneficial as initially there was resistance from administrative staff who enjoyed managing meetings individually with little to no approvals required.

**Results**

The implementation of the approach above has largely been a success, as PAREXEL now have a much clearer picture of their MICE spend through the meetings portal data – which they now plan to integrate with their corporate travel data using FCM ClientBank Connect – this will allow them to further negotiate with suppliers as they have a clearer picture of their meetings and travel spend combined. Further results included:

- ▶ Creation of the meetings portal has resulted in a global “meetings calendar” which allows users of the portal to view all planned meetings over the year. Using this calendar, meeting planners can “piggy back” off other meetings occurring in similar locations which brings down the total cost of meetings through consolidation in suppliers.
- ▶ With the meetings portal, PAREXEL now enjoy visibility over their cancelled space, which gives them the opportunity to reallocate to other meetings whereas previously this space often went unallocated and was a significant cost to the business.
- ▶ Administrative staff have reported smoother registration process since introduction of the meetings tool which has reduced the amount of time required by them to organise meetings delegates. Through involvement of travel management into the process, local FCM offices at the meeting place destination country help organising local transportation. Flights can be booked through FCM countries and data is fed back to the meeting

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**Results** (continued)

administrator. This has resulted in a much more transparent process and using the leverage between local service for the transient part and central management of the meeting. use the best of both worlds.

- ▶ Equipped with more holistic data of their MICE and travel spend, PAREXEL are now able to focus efforts on negotiating better deals with suppliers and also have reduced their risk through contracts not being fulfilled due to cancelled space which were previously commonplace

PAREXEL have found working with the closely aligned team at cievents and FCM invaluable as this has made collaboration between the three parties simpler. It is easier to share data between the three groups and with both service providers located in the same hub offices globally, the travel and MICE programs are able to mirror structure and management set-up making it a seamless experience across each one.

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“Integrating meetings management into our transient travel program was always on our list. The combined strength of cievents and FCM as sister brands was the perfect addition to our program. ”

**Benjamin Park**

Director, Procurement & Travel – PAREXEL