Case Study
The University of Wollongong

Travel program transformation

When the University of Wollongong (UOW) took its travel program to tender in 2017, the university had ambitious plans. The organisation was looking to transform its program and appoint a new travel provider to guide them through the rollout of a restructured program enhanced with new technology, processes and systems. The change management required for the university to achieve its program objectives was significant. Pivotal to the process was selecting the right travel partner.

2017
In partnership with FCM since 2017

1500+
Travellers

150
Travel bookers

Background

With three different organisational entities, a team of more than 150 travel bookers and 1500+ travellers, UOW's travel requirements are unique and complex. Travel for academic purposes takes its diverse team of travellers to destinations around the world. The university's mix of travellers includes highly experienced and regular international travellers to academics that travel once annually, student group travel, VIPs, executive and corporate travel.

Prior to going to tender, the university managed its program via a travel panel including two different travel management companies (TMC). Trip approval was done on paper manually, online booking tool usage was below 10% and there was substantial booking leakage.

Following the tender process, FCM was appointed as preferred TMC because of its university travel management experience, and ability to fulfil and support UOW's complex technology requirements.

UOW's objectives

UOW Procurement Manager John Da Fonte said the university sought the right kind of technology for their needs and a TMC that could effectively manage a high touch change and implementation process for their travellers and travel bookers.

FCM

UOW's vision for program transformation included:

- **Consolidation:** shifting from a panel environment with two TMCs meant the university needed to consolidate all bookings and travel requests through a single TMC.
- **Visibility:** UOW was keen to increase visibility of its travellers to strengthen its reporting and duty of care capabilities.
- **Compliance and leakage:** prior to appointing FCM, UOW had significant air and accommodation booking leakage and a panel environment meant policy compliance was challenging to maintain.
- **Antiquated systems for approval:** trip approval was completed manually on paper.
- **OBT and online trip requests:** UOW sought an appropriate online booking tool.
- **Travel risk management:** UOW was keen to strengthen its duty of care program.
- **Reporting and data:** the university was looking for more consolidation and visibility of its data, enhanced analysis and business intelligence to enable strategic program change.
- **Expense and reconciliation processes:** UOW sought increased productivity and visibility in this area.

Our approach

Service model

To ensure the change management process was well supported, senior staff from across FCM's account management, implementation, operations and management team were involved.

Technology

FCM helped UOW to implement a suite of new travel technology including:

- **Travel Hub:** a central portal for all travel matters was created for program centralisation.
- **Pre-trip approval tool:** Approve was implemented with integrations to DFAT and the university's new online booking tool. A daily export of travel approval request data integrates with UOW's own business intelligence tool (Tableau), to provide dashboard reporting and analysis of travel volume, destinations, etc.
- **Online booking tool:** a market leading OBT was implemented. All travel bookings are automatically sent to UOW's risk management provider Crisis24. All staff domestic trips are automatically approved with notifications sent to travel approvers and finance.
- **Reporting:** a dedicated dashboard and business intelligence tool is now being utilised.

Technology implementation

FCM provided UOW with high-touch support during the implementation of the new systems. This included 17 in-person and webex training sessions. Ongoing training is provided monthly and FCM's team is always available for immediate support.

Expense and reconciliation

FCM provided advice on payment options for the university to reduce the demand on the resourcing required to reconcile central credit card transactions for travel expenditure. An FCM trading account with enhanced data was put in place.

Travel initiatives

A dedicated UOW Travel Expo was held for the first time in 2018 and showcased 15 travel industry suppliers and technology partners. A large contingent of UOW travellers and travel bookers attended on the day.

"FCM has been instrumental in providing expertise in the overall rollout of the travel program across the university. Most significantly, the partnership between key university and FCM stakeholders was strong and everyone worked tirelessly and seamlessly to ensure a smooth implementation and ongoing success."

JOHN DA FONTE
PROCUREMENT MANAGER FINANCIAL SERVICES
UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

Outcomes

UOW has transformed its travel program with amazing results. With help from FCM the university has rolled out a new travel program, policy and technology to reform their travel process, create productivity efficiencies for booking, approvals and reconciliation.

Importantly they have developed a strong and effective partnership with FCM that is built on trust and a commitment to progressively work through challenges for greater outcomes.

Results

- **$1.1 million+ in savings** achieved since go-live in July 2017. This is the result of enhanced program management, program consolidation and UOW's use of discounted fares and rates.
- **Significant savings annually** from improved productivity due to UOW's new payment and expense management process.
- **Zero leakage** of travel expenditure on airfares
- **50%+ OBT uptake**, which has increased from less than 10% for domestic travel bookings.

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