



ENGAGING YOUR TRAVELERS TO BOOST MANAGED TRAVEL PERFORMANCE

messages, but reminds them of the call to action you want them to take."

CAP, CRACKLE, POP

Effective communication is particularly vital when a travel program changes its structure and policies, especially when those changes prove more restrictive to travelers' choices. This was the case in 2015 when food manufacturing giant Kellogg Co. drastically changed its travel program and introduced daily expense reimbursement caps, hotel rate caps and a newly mandated policy.

"Like other consumer packaged-goods companies, Kellogg embraced the concept of zero-based budgeting, in which budgetary line items are reset to zero each year instead of carrying over the previous year's projection," said panelist Cecile Mutch, Kellogg senior director of corporate services.

"So if my department spent \$2 million on air in 2015, I would start at zero and justify every trip as it was built into the 2016 budget," she said. "That was a very difficult concept for a lot of people."

Consultants promised massive savings for the program's 7,000 travelers, and Kellogg introduced a mandated policy with daily expense caps (replacing its previously "strongly suggested" philosophy). The move required Kellogg to change its booking tool to Concur which was better able to handle the new program. And it also required a major initiative to communicate the new rules to traveling employees.

A BCD client since 2010, Kellogg called on its agency to provide end-to-end services for the communication initiative. Agents were cross-trained to assist with all aspects of a trip, including booking and expense reporting. When Mutch found there would be no funding available to help promote the travel program changes to employees, she called on BCD.

"There was significant change management required. We needed to do more than just email everybody because they were inundated by other areas of zero-based budgeting coming into play," Mutch said. "BCD's consulting arm, Advito, helped us develop a

brand for Kellogg travel that would stand out in a sea of other information."

Kellogg and Advito unveiled KTravel, a brand bolstered by consistent and identifiable icons designed to catch travelers' attention and guide them in their decision-making.

Advito and Kellogg also partnered on the "ABCs of Travel," a one-page information guide that highlighted policy details including travel alternatives, booking guidelines and hotel selection procedures. The ABCs served as the landing page for KTravel's intranet home page. All graphics were illustrated in shades of blue and purple to provide consistency and recognition among travelers.

Kellogg's travel department was the first within the organization to deploy the Yammer social communications tool, enabling Mutch's team to quickly answer specific questions from travelers on policy topics.

As a result of the effort, Kellogg reached a first-year goal of a 40 percent year-over-year reduction in travel. "In the beginning that goal seemed unattainable," Mutch said. "But implementing hotel and meal caps, embracing pre-trip notification tools, pushing all of our reporting with exceptions, leveraging hotel and air reason codes, and forcing leaders to recognize the weakest links in the organization really got us across the finish line."

"The educational materials developed to engage travelers helped Kellogg secure better compliance," Mutch said, "And the company has continued its effort this year." To further reduce travel, the company, which now has \$50 million in annual global travel and entertainment spending, is pushing alternatives like remote conferencing and encouraging use of onsite Kellogg meeting rooms instead of hotel meeting spaces.

"Once we got through that first year of success, we knew we needed a refresh," said Mutch. Kellogg retired the ABCs and launched a new series of web banners, using the ABC color palette, that when clicked would launch an infographic about the program, and when clicked again would unveil a detailed graphic.

Mutch also promoted the BCD travel app. "We have more tech savvy travelers now and they're open to



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learning about new tools that can help them work more efficiently," she said.

CREATING LINKS

Radical change to a travel program certainly requires traveler engagement—so does building a program from scratch. That was the position panelist Leslie Hadden found herself in at LinkedIn where she serves as global travel and event operations manager. Given the social networking service's non-mandated culture, communication was key in Hadden's effort to persuade travelers to follow the travel department's procedures—particularly, booking through preferred channels.

"I was tasked with improving the travel experience to make travelers happier and more productive on the road," Hadden said. Her first step in engaging travelers was to brand the program's offerings and communications, all including the "In" concept from the company's name.

A series of focus groups followed. "In order to improve the travel experience, we wanted to learn more about them," Hadden said. From those meetings and surveys came an action roadmap. Hadden began offering sharing economy suppliers like Airbnb and Uber to

LinkedIn's travelers and enrolled her people in the Global Entry and Clear expedited airport security programs.

In an effort to increase compliance to the program, Hadden created a service-level program that classified employees by their frequency of travel and targeted communications. Each subgroup received targeted communications such as frequently asked questions and myth-dispelling messages.

"Because we're not mandated, we're not telling them what to do," Hadden said. "We're giving them pros and cons and making them think about what the best decision is."

Hadden followed this up with a series of U.S. roadshows where suppliers and travelers met face-to-face. "The goal is to connect travelers to the program, connect them to me and connect them to suppliers," she said.

The results of Hadden's efforts are a compliance rate of 75 percent to LinkedIn's booking tool and rising employee satisfaction, with 79 percent of respondents to an internal survey classifying the program as "great" or "fantastic."

"My advice," Hadden said, "is that in order to be successful you need to connect with everyone, have fun doing it and get some help." •

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About BCD Travel

BCD Travel helps companies make the most of what they spend on travel. For travelers, this means keeping them safe and productive, and equipping them to make good choices on the road. For travel and procurement managers, it means advising them on how to grow the value of their travel program. In short, we help our clients travel smart and achieve more. We make this happen in 108 countries with almost 13,000 creative, committed and experienced people. And it's how we maintain the industry's most consistent client retention rate (95% over the past 10 years), with 2016 sales of US\$24.6 billion.

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