

Implications

In the recessionary economy of 2008-09, airlines are less flexible on contract terms, applying unyielding pressure on corporations to meet negotiated goals. The waivers and handshake deals of three, five and 10 years ago have vanished as airlines have struggled with fluctuating fuel prices and new business models.

The pressure exerted by airlines to meet contracted terms puts the onus on TMC's and travel procurement solutions like GetThere to provide tangible results. When corporations can showcase their ability to quickly move market share – with statistical evidence akin to the results demonstrated by Emerson – they can leverage their air travel spend much more effectively, driving both value and savings to their bottom line.

Innovative features like Dynamic Messaging play a much more critical role in the travel booking process. That's why Emerson plans to build on its domestic success by adding new messaging with more city pairs and in other countries. Emerson has deployed GetThere in five countries – it is the first GetThere client to roll out in the Philippines – and already utilizes Dynamic Messaging on a limited basis in Belgium.

Company: Emerson

Business: Global manufacturing and technology

Employees: 140,000

Business Travelers: 16,000

Challenge

Emerson spends \$100 million on air annually, with a majority of these bookings occurring in North America. After completing a thorough review of its global air volume, Emerson made significant changes to the designated preferred airlines in its global program. In an effort to increase savings on domestic bookings and meet contractual goals with new preferred airline partners, Emerson enlisted GetThere and its travel management companies, American Express and Carlson Wagonlit, to help shift share to one of its preferred carriers in a key U.S. market. At the time, compliance with the carrier was below 30 percent.

Solutions

Emerson built its plan to increase compliance around employee communication and chose to use GetThere's Dynamic Messaging functionality to drive awareness of new providers at the point of sale. As a GetThere customer since 2001, Emerson has increased its cost-savings by booking travel online at an adoption rate of 70-plus percent across North America.

GetThere's Dynamic Messaging functionality allows travel managers to deliver timely market- and vendor-specific content to travelers as they shop online, with the relevant information presented to users at the point of sale. Emerson rolled out Dynamic Messaging with a soft mandate in the second quarter of 2008. Emerson utilized Dynamic Messaging with 29 city pairs, urging travelers and arrangers to book with its preferred carrier for simple domestic bookings. Users are only directed to book another carrier if the ticket is less expensive.

Supporting this initiative, Emerson's travel team conducted division meetings with arrangers and sent periodic emails to frequent travelers and arrangers. GetThere adjusted functionality within the booking tool to more prominently display the company's preferred carrier. GetThere also participated in preparation meetings with travel team and agency contacts to maintain unified messaging.

"In the course of these meetings, we worked jointly to determine which city pairs to target and crafted the dynamic message based on the change the traveler was being asked to make within the new global airline program," said GetThere Customer Success Manager Susan Edstrom. "The communication and the technology came together for an extraordinarily seamless rollout and execution."

Results

In just one quarter, market share with Emerson's targeted preferred carrier rose 11 percent – a testament to the impact GetThere's Dynamic Messaging technology can have when married with creative travel management and effective communication to key audiences. By the end of 2008, Emerson recorded a 13 percent increase in compliance in this market, driving tens of thousands of annual savings and fortifying the company's position for all 2009 airline negotiations.