



Stefanie Tretola
Travel Services Manager

Program Benefits

- 82 percent program adoption
- \$1 million in agency transaction savings (2007) – highest since implementation
- 11 percent year-over-year trip growth (2006-07)

Established in 1958, the MITRE Corporation is a not-for-profit organization chartered to work for public interest in the areas of systems engineering, information technology, operational concepts and enterprise modernization.

The MITRE Corporation has principal locations in Massachusetts and Virginia, as well as additional sites located across the country and around the world.

Challenge

With roughly 3,000 business travelers and air spend of \$15 million annually, MITRE implemented a directive in mid-2007 requiring employees below a top executive level to book their own travel. The move greatly impacted the role of the company's travelers, who were now tasked with making their own arrangements.

Along the same time, MITRE changed its corporate communication policy, heavily discouraging company-wide emails. Changes to the travel policy were previously communicated in a weekly email to all employees, but they contained such a glut of information that messages tended to get lost.

As a GetThere customer since 2000, these directives made it imperative for MITRE to maintain and even increase online adoption. Since rolling out with 50 percent adoption, MITRE has steadily improved adoption over the years with each upgrade and addition of new features.

Solution

MITRE was inspired to create a core group of its most active travel arrangers, who are dubbed the 'Travel Gurus.' The initial group of 35 Gurus has grown to 80 members, who are instrumental in providing direction on MITRE's overall travel program, including features they'd like to see within the booking tool. They serve as a tremendous internal resource for pilot testing, and also provide training for new hires and existing employees.

So rather than build support for the new initiative around a mandate, the MITRE travel team focused on communication by leveraging the Travel Gurus. Travel Services Manager Stefanie Tretola credits this tactic as the main driver behind their success.

"We offer training on a regular basis," Tretola said. "With the help of the Gurus, I firmly believe that having our travelers understand how the tool works to their benefit has really helped us grow the program and increase adoption."

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-Stefanie Tretola
MITRE Travel Services Manager

Results

MITRE’s adoption rates, savings and program growth have all gone up, proving the travel team right for relying on a communication-based plan.

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MITRE’s successes are noteworthy in any industry, but especially in the government contractor sector, according to Tretola.

“We benchmark our overall travel program against other Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs), and we always look good comparatively,” Tretola said. “I go back to our Travel Gurus. I don’t think we’d be where we are without them.”

Implications

Tretola conducts monthly meetings with the Gurus, where her team is able to collect feedback and discuss changes in the industry. She highlights the company’s latest travel data including adoption rates, savings and missed savings (which is later sent to executives). The meeting is far from a strict number-crunching session, however.

“We have vendors and guest speakers come in to show off new products and talk about the industry,” Tretola said. “We try to keep them fresh and interesting, and stay away from the mundane.”

Gurus, who are listed on the company intranet and possess their own distribution list, can then report to their assigned business department. Tretola has determined this targeted communication is a much more effective method to reach end-users.

MITRE is also working on incorporating Unused Ticket Tracking and the GetThere Ground Network into its program, as well as improving a traveler user survey to obtain more useful results.

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