Empower Business Travelers and Control Corporate Costs with SAP Travel OnDemand

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Many business travelers spend an inordinate amount of time managing the administrative aspects of their business trips, including verifying travel policies for booking, sorting through receipts from multiple trips, copying or scanning receipts, and keeping track of expense details such as who was present for a customer dinner. These non-value-added activities can hinder employees from performing their jobs. And with the expense of travel again on the rise, it is more important than ever to control the cost of business trips while maximizing employee productivity.

To help companies meet these goals, SAP has released SAP Travel OnDemand, a solution that empowers employees to travel smarter, spend better, and get reimbursed faster, all while staying compliant with travel policies.[1] It allows employees to give their full attention to meeting the business goals of their trips. Let's break down the capabilities and benefits of SAP Travel OnDemand.

End-to-End Management of a Business Trip

SAP Travel OnDemand supports the entire end-to-end process of managing a business trip. After researching options, a business traveler can submit a travel request, which includes estimated costs, using the SAP Travel OnDemand solution. This step is optional; some companies may opt to forego a trip request as part of the process. For companies that do choose to include this functionality, once the line manager approves the trip, the traveler can book the itinerary. (Online booking is provided through partnership with GetThere.) An expense report is automatically created as a follow-on process. The traveler can capture expense receipts while traveling, then submit expense reports for reimbursement.

[1] SAP Travel OnDemand is currently available in the United States and Germany, with plans for additional releases in other countries.

The solution also accommodates non-travel-related expense reports that are not associated with a date range. This capability allows employees to expense non-travel items, such as office supplies or data plans for their mobile devices, in a way that does not interfere with expenses related to a trip. This avoids the problem of overlapping date ranges for these extra expenses.

Usability and Automation on Mobile Devices for an Intuitive Experience

SAP Travel OnDemand was designed and developed to reflect the way business travelers work. In addition to enabling online web access, SAP placed special focus on the solution's usability on iPhones, iPads, and BlackBerrys (see **Figure 1** on the next page). The ability to capture travel expense receipts using the camera on mobile devices greatly reduces the chance of lost or inaccurate receipts. Business travelers can leverage standard device features such as location services and date defaults to tag receipts. They can then supplement receipt information with notes that document additional tips for services (such as taxi fares), participants at customer and team meals, and other details.

The process of assigning travel receipts to expense reports is primarily automatic, accelerating expense report submission and eliminating errors by reducing manual steps. Examples include the automatic assignment of travel receipts to expense reports based on the date range of the trip, and the inclusion of feeds from corporate credit cards for charges made during trips. Standard itemization of expenses is supported, such as the splitting of hotel receipts into details such as room, Internet, and meal charges, as well as designation of personal expenses. Expense reports can be processed online and on an iPad, further accelerating the submission process.

Corporate and Country-Specific Compliance to Control Travel Costs

Compliance is a critical aspect of processing expense reimbursements. Employees must comply with legal and

FIGURE 1 ◀ SAP Travel OnDemand's various interfaces, displayed on a laptop, iPad, iPhone, and BlackBerry

country-specific regulations that affect the handling of per diems and allowable mileage reimbursements. There are also tax implications of expensing customer entertainment. Corporate travel policies are defined for employees in SAP Travel OnDemand. Companies can set expense limits by expense type and country, including limits for meals, taxi fares, and parking charges. Also, companies can designate preferred travel suppliers through GetThere.

Approval and auditing steps are also built into SAP Travel OnDemand. Rules defined by the business determine whether an approval or an audit is necessary, and are set by country, expense type, and expense amount. For example, there may be a higher limit on meals depending on the destination country; alternately, if the meal expense is below a set amount, an approval may not be necessary. When an approval is required, line managers are notified and can quickly approve or reject these items through a mobile device, accelerating the processing time of both trip requests and expense reimbursements.

Integration with SAP ERP for Faster Reimbursements

SAP Travel OnDemand's integration with SAP ERP further accelerates the expense reimbursement process for business travelers. Details from a traveler's expense report that are transferred to SAP ERP Financials (to the FI and CO modules) include information about the legal entity and General Ledger accounts to which expenses need to be posted. Controlling assignments can be made for expenses, including cost centers, internal orders, and projects. In addition, employee information from SAP ERP Human Capital Management (SAP ERP HCM) can be reused in SAP Travel OnDemand.

The integration with SAP ERP Financials also benefits finance departments and shared services organizations by seamlessly integrating reimbursement processes into the accounts payables process. By accelerating the reconciliation and reimbursement of travel expenses, a company's overall corporate liability is reduced, enabling better cash management.

Analytics for Improved Insight

To effectively manage travel budgets, it is critical for managers to understand where travel spend occurs. Reports are built directly into SAP Travel OnDemand to allow detailed analysis of travel expenses across different dimensions, including cost centers, geographic destinations, and expense types. Additional reports are also available that identify travel suppliers, enabling companies to better negotiate with these vendors when it comes time to renew preferred provider contracts. Any expense information from SAP Travel OnDemand that is transferred into SAP ERP can also be leveraged by SAP's business intelligence solutions for analytical purposes.

Travel Smarter, Control Costs

All of the features of SAP Travel OnDemand are designed to simplify the administrative tasks of traveling so that employees can focus on the more important aspects of their business trips. From a corporate perspective, finance organizations also benefit from the solution, which provides the ability to control travel costs, facilitate both corporate and legal compliance, and increase the efficiency of processing travel requests and reimbursements.

For more information about SAP Travel OnDemand, visit **http://travel.ondemand.com**. ■