

EBV Elektronik

## "It's a snap"

**EBV Elektronik has gone online: The Munich-based microchip dealer books more than 72% of its business travel online using cytric by i:FAO. This way, the company saves time and money and can be sure of getting the best fare. Managerial assistants call the tool "helpful and easy to use."**



The numbers are revealing: EBV Elektronik saves 20 to 45% on the transaction fee every time it books a trip within Europe online as compared with what traditional booking over the phone would cost. For international flights, the online versus offline price advantage is 57%. Note that this applies only to the transaction fees that EBV negotiated with its travel agency, American Express. Yet EBV saves not only on fees, but on the flights themselves, since the system books the most economical tickets. To Stefan Stadler, Administration and Travel Manager for EBV Elektronik Europe, this much is clear: "Online booking is an excellent way to lower direct and indirect costs." The daughter company of the American electronics firm Avnet has been booking tickets online using i:FAO AG's product cytric since 2000. Says Stefan Stadler: "We got used to this tool early and wouldn't trade it for the world."

EBV Elektronik leads Europe in the sale of semiconductors and active components for the IT industry. The corporation has 50 offices in 24 European countries, in the EMEA region (Europe, Middle East, Africa), and in South Africa. The company not only sells components, but provides application consulting services. Many of the company's employees are engineers that do a lot of

traveling: In 2004, the company counted some 200 business travelers and spent some 370,000 Euros on flights.

Whenever the business travelers at company headquarters in Poing, near Munich, want to book a trip, they turn to Birgit Röhrig and Barbara Wegner. These two managerial assistants are heavy users of cytric. Half of all company bookings are made through these two women. This is by design, since Birgit Röhrig and Barbara Wegner know the application and the travel industry better than anyone else at the company. Although cytric has no built-in fare restrictions, bookings made through these two managerial assistants prevents "savings opportunities from being overlooked," says Barbara Wegner. Not everyone is familiar with how to book multi-destination tickets, she continues. For EBV, online booking is a good way "to save a lot of money." Barbara Wegner and her colleague provide a guarantee that EBV's business trips can be bought economically.

Barbara Wegner is very pleased with cytric. "It's simple and easy to understand, and I enjoy working with it." Getting used to the system is no problem for someone with "a little computer experience." Barbara Wegner uses cytric three to four times a day. She books point to point flights exclusively online. Only for complex intercontinental fares with multiple destinations does she reach for the telephone. Hotel rooms are usually booked on location by EBV, but cytric is also used to make rental car reservations after flights have been booked.

Five years ago, EBV was a daughter company of the multinational corporation E.ON, and already then it used cytric at its Munich location. In the fall of 2000, the company

was sold to Avnet. In 2003, the company released a call for tender to travel agencies, which was won by American Express. Since 2004, EBV offices in all countries have been migrated to American Express. When calling for tenders, it was helpful that EBV Elektronik was already used to the booking system offered by many travel agency chains. Says Stefan Stadler: "Even if we had decided on another bidder, the online booking tool would have been the same."

Barbara Wegner is lightning quick at online booking. When she has all the trip information on hand, "it's a snap," and booking takes only three to five minutes. She sees a great advantage in the fact that low-cost carrier fares are advertised using DynaWeb™ technology. "You can see right away what the low cost airlines have to offer." The use of low cost carriers is still rather low, but the trend is fast increasing. EBV's use of the airline Deutsche BA increased by 100% in 2004; use of Air Berlin increased by 3400%.

Even beyond the low-cost carriers, the American Express fares found by cytric inspire confidence. Barbara Wegner likes to run a little test: She visits Lufthansa's reservation page and compares the fare she finds there with the fare she just found using cytric. Only once would the fare have been lower when purchased directly from the carrier. "That must have been one of Lufthansa's super special online prices." She also likes that fact that when she books online, she knows right away which fares are sold out. This leaves her with a clean conscience: "This way I know that it would have been impossible for the company to find a cheaper fare."

The two EBV managerial assistants have gotten used to the fact that cytric saves the personal preferences of individual travelers. The company has a few traveling employees who have flown their way into the Lufhansa Senators program. They are quite happy with the improvements offered by cytric v7 since version 4: The "Travel Arranger Dashboard" makes life considerably easier for the two managerial assistants. When one of them is out of the office and someone makes a flight inquiry, nobody has to flip through a file folder. The homepage's Dashboard shows all booked fares in a user-friendly view, and the assistant on site can easily page through the fares booked by her colleague. "It's a big improvement," says Barbara Wegner.

For all the praise, both of these travel professionals see room for improvement. Barbara Wegner for example, would like to be able to see fares that are sold out, instead of having them blanked out. She writes down ideas like this and submits them to the company's travel services provider.

Stefan Stadler conclusions about online booking at EBV are positive: Faster booking times, fewer questions posed by travelers, fewer transaction fees and lower fare prices -in part because low-cost carriers are represented in the system. In the past, says the Travel Manager, agencies did not always bother to let fliers know about these.

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