

Canon Europe

## Champagne makes online bookings bubbly

Champagne for this year's online booking champions. At Canon Europe, the most frequent online bookers can win a prize every year. The European travel management of this Japanese technology group generates statistics using the Travel Manager Dashboard™ to evaluate employee booking behaviour.



Dirk van der Hilst, European travel and car fleet manager at Canon Europa N.V. in Amsterdam, likes cytric's new reporting functions. Cytric Enterprise Reporting introduced in 2007 as part of the new Travel Manager Dashboard™ provides him with crucial information and statistics about the online booking behaviour of European staff. Which journeys are booked most frequently online? What prices are paid? Which pre-booking deadlines are complied with by staff?

Obviously, as Dirk van der Hilst says, these data are also delivered by the Group's travel agent service provider, in this case American Express Business Travel. The key aspect here is to be able to compare the data provided by the travel agency service provider with that generated from the online bookings in order to have a basis for comparisons and conclusions. The expanded reporting function, "Advantage Reports", provides the travel manager, located in Amsterdam/Holland, with information about the booking behaviour of staff members, such as: which savings are (not) achieved, because bookings were (not) made early enough. Dirk van der Hilst: "This is significant information if we can

use it to optimise the booking behaviour of our employees."

Dirk van der Hilst is a happy man. In Canon's 12 European countries the volume of business travel increased during 2006 by more than 10 %, the number of transactions increased with 13% but the travel agent cost increased only by 8.3%. The average ticket price fell by 17.5%. The Canon manager thinks this positive effect is due to the online booking of business trips. The new transparency provided on screen to frequent travellers and travel arrangers helps highlight the alternative prices available. "cytric always displays the lowest cost price", says Dirk van der Hilst. And this is having unexpected consequences: in the mean time, reports the travel manager, prices available in the public domain are actually often lower than company rates negotiated with service providers. The online booking tool helps that Canon staff are now aware of these prices and are able to select the lower priced alternative (Visual guilt) A further bonus is the reduced processing cost: at Canon, an online booking costs nearly 1/3 that of an offline booking.

In 2002, Rosenbluth Travel, former travel agency service provider to Canon Europe, introduced online booking to the Group with 11,000 employees in Europe. Rosenbluth suggested cytric as the software of choice, Canon liked the system, and American Express Business Travel continued with cytric after it took over Rosenbluth. Canon first implemented cytric at its central European operations HQ in Holland and subsequently in Germany and Great Britain. Online bookings are currently made in eleven of Canon's entities in 12 European countries. Canon currently also uses the system offered by a GDS provider in some European countries. This concurrent use of several systems is not a problem, according

to Dirk van der Hilst. Having said that he does not wish to exclude the possibility that at some time in the future one might move away from this heterogeneous online booking landscape to a standardised European-wide system.

The start in Holland was a cleverly orchestrated move. The Dutch accepted the new way of buying their tickets much more rapidly than for example their German colleagues. Despite this, the change process at Canon still took some time. After an initial 12-month period, travel bookings with cytric had reached a level of 10 % online in Holland, only reaching a figure of 50 % after three years. In Germany the adoption rate is currently 15%, in Europe it is 43 %. The booking rates could rise higher if Canon were to introduce more content to the booking options: the plan is to integrate car rental partners into cytric by the end of 2007, while a custom hotel program with 150 hotels is already being implemented, with a second phase planned for smaller regional hotel selections.

Change management to encourage online booking is "not a straightforward issue," according to Dirk van der Hilst. It is simply not that easy to change people's habits. One important tool is communication. Dirk van der Hilst has joined forces with his travel management colleagues to organise twice-annual workshops in the various countries to allow travel arrangers to exchange and discuss experience with the system. Dirk van der Hilst uses this opportunity to explain innovations and changes to the system, "so that we can get even more out of this application." Dirk van der Hilst points out: "Not everyone knows exactly what this system can do - it has a huge scope". Canon Europe has introduced incentives to use the cytric application. The most frequent

online bookers in any one year can look forward to a bottle of excellent champagne. Dirk van der Hilst has agreements with its travel agent partner to pay extra bonuses if targets for online adoption rates are exceeded (40% & 50% a.r.)

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