

# How to... Involve your travellers in an RFP

Discover how one company got its most frequent business travellers involved in the RFP process as it sought a new travel management company.

## THE BACKGROUND

Bruker is a specialist in high-performance scientific instruments and analytical and diagnostic solutions. Lisa Barnett is Commercial Contract Specialist based at Bruker's UK offices in Coventry, where the UK travel programme is just a small part of her remit. There are around 100 regular travellers who generate a lot of domestic bookings but also travel frequently to a range of international destinations.

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## THE TASK

Bruker's travel programme was outdated and inefficient and Lisa was tasked with transforming it. Optimising savings opportunities while increasing traveller productivity and efficiency through traveller engagement were the main aims of the project. The intention was to appoint a new travel management company and online booking tool as part of the overhaul and, crucially, to involve Bruker's regular travellers at every step of the process.

## THE PROCESS

"I started by speaking to our employees that travelled the most to see what they wanted," says Lisa. "They also shared what they'd seen and liked about travel programmes in other Bruker offices overseas. I also planted the seed of an online booking tool with them."

Her findings were presented to senior management. "I got buy-in from the managing director right away because he was a regular traveller himself," says Lisa.

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After researching the TMC market she issued an RFI and received 12 responses. These were discussed with both senior management and regular travellers and whittled down to five TMCs for a full RFP.

"We chose them based on feedback from our travellers, their cultural match with us and their size. I'd had experience of being with a large TMC and I didn't want to be that small fish in a big pond," Lisa explains.

Three TMCs were invited to present to a panel of eight Bruker staff comprising regular travellers, travel arrangers, senior management and Lisa herself.

"The travellers really grilled them. It was probably the most important stage of the whole process," says Lisa. "The panel was unanimous in its preference which made things easy for us."

The winner, Omega World Travel, "came across as really strong on service even though the booking tool was important to us. They weren't the cheapest but it wasn't all about price," says Lisa.

## THE RESULT

Omega was appointed in 2013 and has been with Bruker ever since.

The TMC's air and hotel content aggregation addressed savings targets and the Concur Travel & Expense booking tool was rolled out across the company. "Over the first six months adoption

rose to 75% and today it sits at 85%," says Lisa. Bruker also saw the immediate benefits of better data and duty of care procedures.

"Having our travellers involved from the start was crucial in making the right decision. Travel is not 100% of my job so if I'm going to procure, operate and manage a service successfully within our UK offices then I'll consult and engage with my colleagues as it is their service provision, after all."

She adds: "We do a lot of ongoing traveller satisfaction surveys and they continue to come back really positive."

Omega's Director of Sales and Client Services, Francesco Deluca, adds: "I've not seen many companies get their travellers involved in the selection process as deeply as Lisa did, but I think they probably should."



