Batcole Corporation: Corporate Travel Management

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A. INTRODUCTION

Rationale for the Study

Globalization and technology are major forces today that have largely reshaped the business environment. Industry leaders must respond appropriately and with urgency. Max (2017) explained that globalization and technology have trends that are defining how business interacts with customers and respond to competition. These two elements have created a new environment with fierce competition, and organizations must adapt and be proactive to survive. Advances in technology are currently driving information and communication trends which have powered globalization and are continuously creating new markets. Max (2017) further argued that advances in the digital market, "driven by the Internet, such as dedicated websites, social networks, smartphone apps and email" (par. 3), have increased the potential for businesses – both small and large - to capitalize on affordable advertising that will reach many potential customers. So, while technology is spurring globalization, both are driving international trade, global business travel, and new communication platforms for marketing, customer relationship management, and team networking (Manyika et al., 2016). Business development spending in Europe is now 51% of international business travel, a 5% increase on last year. TTS (n.d.) provided this data, and acceded that the growth is a result of many factors including improved economies, advancement in transportation and technology, and the internationalization of business due largely to globalization.

As business people are increasingly travelling to connect with new and current clients, this is creating new demands for Corporate Travel Management (CTM). CTM is that service function that is responsible for developing and directing the way organizations effectively plan and implement strategic and operational business travel policies (Darson, 2009). These policies may include negotiating affordable prices with the various vendors; capitalizing on benefit from credit card incentives; facilitating safety and security planning for the travelers; using efficient booking methods; and hiring specialized staff to supervise these activities. Business travel can be stressful but well-planned and efficient travel arrangements will result in a successful trip and "positive business impression" (Smith, 2017, par. 1). The outsourcing of this business function to corporate travel management companies enables many companies with significant budget allocated to travel expenses to more effectively analyze and control spending. CTM's have the expertise and experience to plan, develop and implement effective strategic policies and relationships which will reduce business travel cost, assure safety, manage travel program more efficiently, develop internal expertise in the travel office, and measure the returns effectively (rocketrip.com, 2016; Smith, 2017; and TTS, n.d.).

Rocketrip.com (2016) identified the key performance indicators (KPIs) of successful corporate travel management as: booking visibility, payment visibility, contract competitiveness, total negotiated savings, cost of travel management, and spend under contract. For example, "some TMCs give their clients nearly 20% savings over trying to book each component individually" (TTS, nd, p. 9). These are the improvements that Batcole can achieve with an effective travel program.

Background For The Case Study

The purpose of this assignment is to help Batcole Corporation assess its technology needs and improve the effectiveness in the operations of its business travel program. Batcole touts itself as the largest and most reliable wholesale clothing supplier in the world. Headquartered in Seattle, USA, it has 250 employees and buyers in more than 45 countries, and growing.

B. SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

Due to its extensive business interests and customers both nationally and internationally, its management is seeking to streamline the uncoordinated business travel program and find effective long-term technological solution to the rising travel cost and many other inefficiencies currently experiencing in: booking travel and accommodation services; measuring the efficiencies of the current policies; and to efficiently coordinate all the activities associated with its travel program. Batcole Corporation has decided to contract an experienced corporate travel company to carry out all its travel planning and trade shows. The company wants to improve operational efficiency in the travel office by hiring management expertise, and to adapt digital technology to improve the overall effectiveness of the program. The plan is to carry out research, undertake short-term projects to implement the recommendations, and improve the operational improvements to achieve these. Batcole decides to pursue the following remedial actions:

1. Identify the link between a successful corporate travel management and the business performance.
2. Undertake research into ways that Digital Technology can improve and achieve business transformation in the corporate travel program and across the organization.
3. Outsource the management of its travel program to a Corporate Travel Management firm.
4. Recruit an experienced internal travel team. The suitable candidates must have successful background in Travel, Operations, Project, and Events Management.
5. Carryout project activities to implement the findings and recommendations of the study.
6. Evaluate, measure, and monitor the outcomes.

Role Of the Corporate Travel Consultant

CMS Corporate Travel Management Limited (CMS LTD) hired by Batcole is an innovative and cost-effective travel management solutions to the corporate market. The company is based in Ohio, USA but since inception in 1995 has expanded across Australia, New Zealand, the US, Europe, and Asia. The selection of this firm by Batcole is a best fit for the problems that it is currently experiencing as CMS Limited offers a highly personalized service model and commitment to innovation in both technology and travel management. The firm can boast that it's high-caliber service and performance have garnered the company several awards. The Australian Federation of Travel Agents (AFTA) named CTM the "Best National Corporate Travel Management Company in Australia" 10 times. The founder was named one of the most influential travel executives of 2014 by the prestigious BTN Group in New York. Headquartered in Ohio, CMS employs more than 1,200 staff globally and provides local travel service solutions in more than 70 countries worldwide. The firm has excellent reputation in integrating social business and social computing structure that helps its clients to build relationships and expand their networks. It has deployed successful process improvements, business analytics, and cloud computing which have resulted in improvements in their clients' productivity. The services competencies of CMS Limited are ideal to meet the current needs of Batcole.

Your Role

You are a Corporate Travel Manager at CMS Limited. Your experienced team will be directing and developing effective initiatives to improve the corporate business travel program at Batcole. In this role capacity, you are responsible for research, strategic planning, travel operations and quality management for the travel program. A key assignment that your team will be undertaking is finding technology solution for cost saving measures in Batcole's program, while still fulfilling the employees' travel needs and the business requirements simultaneously.

C. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT

The Project Objectives agreed on include the Project Life Cycle (PLC) of three months to carry out:

1) Researching digital technology solutions that will improve operational efficiencies in Batcole's travel program.

2) Selecting the right digital tools to provide corporate booking solutions for the team and to keep them connected to the workplace, customers, and business goals while travelling, **and implementing technology-based recommendations within three months**.

3) Controlling costs, by booking trips in advance and developing relationships with the Vendors to benefit from contractual discounts. E.G. developing a lean program by cutting cost, wastes, and inefficiencies and increasing quality results.

4) Controlling costs, by finding amenities and places with complementary services such as free breakfast, WIFI and spa; and selecting the most convenient airlines and ground transportation services.

5) Implementing smarter and more cost-efficient decisions such as upgrades, more legroom on aircrafts and mileage programs; complementary hotel services such as free breakfast, WIFI, meeting spaces, spa at the hotel; convenient ground transportation services and other amenities given the importance of the travelling employees being able to relax after all-day meetings and trade shows.

6) Managing safety, security, insurance, and credit cards benefits for the travelers.

7) Dispersing travel knowledge to bring awareness to the decisions and changes necessary.
8) Developing the knowledge and competencies of current employees.

D. PROJECT METHODS

PROJECT DELIVERABLES

FOR UNIT 6: MANAGING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS PROJECT

FOR UNIT 4: RESEARCH PROJECT

Research Project

The project requires you to carry-out research on how digital technology can be incorporated to improve the corporate travel program at Batcole. Batcole is a global corporation with business interests and employees in over 45 countries.

- **_Research Project Deliverable_**: You will produce the 3,000 words research findings and recommendations in a written report.

FOR UNIT 16: OPERATIONS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Creating a service for external customers

You will develop and produce effective itineraries for two senior executives and two sales team members at Batcole who are travelling overseas to separate events. The executives are travelling to London from October 15 – 18 to a trade show. The sales staff are travelling to Miami, Florida from November 1 – 6, to visit four major clients. They will visit the show-rooms to deliver samples to the purchasing managers for a new line of swim-wear. It is usual for the sales team to host individual customers separately for dinner. You will coordinate all the various travel and hospitality elements successfully. The outcome must be cost efficient, reduces wastes, is attractive to the business travelers, appropriation service selections for the purpose and class of travel, and in case one, meets the needs of the distinguish top executives of Batcole travelling to London.

- _Events Project Deliverables_: Two professional itineraries with appropriate travel and hospitality components for the personnel of Batcole.

E. PROJECT METHODOLOGY

You are required _to:_ firstly, review the areas of gap and inefficiencies in Basco's travel operations. Then, create a plan of action over the project life cycle of three months. You will _undertake research to study the different ways that digital technology can improve these issues found_, and present the findings and recommendations to the Chief Operations Officer (COO) of Batcole Corporation. Further, you will be required to _undertake a project_ to _implement the recommendations and solve the problems in Batcole's travel program,_ for the desired transformation sought.

According to TTS, (n.d.), the research and project outcomes should yield the following positive outcomes:

1. Identify gaps and needs in the current operations.
2. Increase knowledge of how the various elements of the business trip may be coordinated in a cost-effective way.
3. Improve travel planning in the company.
4. Effective strategies for operational efficiency.
5. Fulfill the needs of the travelling workers while controlling cost.
6. Improve the ability of the company to evaluate, monitor and measure the success of the change actions and the impact on the travel program and the company.

Assignments

The assignments for the group discussion forum and term-papers that are to be completed can be accessed in the respective Assignment Briefs. See Units 4, 6, 11 and 16.

Abilities and skills that you will develop and demonstrate upon completing the assigned activities:

1. Researching
2. Research Writing
3. Operations Management
4. Project Management
5. Travel Planning And Management
6. Event Management
7. Business Contract
8. Business Management
9. Presentation Skills

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