

From Excel to Excellence:

HOW KN GROUP REVOLUTIONISED HOTEL BOOKING MANAGEMENT WITH ROOMEX

Roomex.com

It's not unusual for office managers to be burdened with long-winded, inefficient processes to make corporate travel bookings - but that doesn't make it OK.



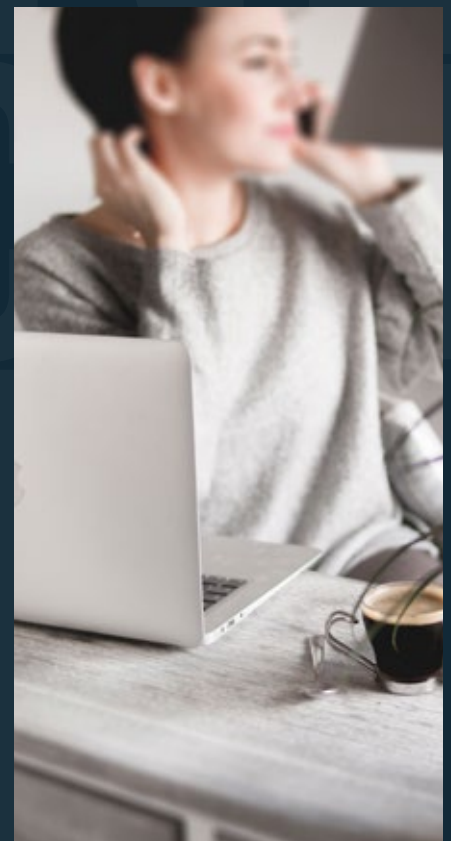


A hotel booker's typical path to a reservation might look something like this:

- Phones hotel to make booking or books via hotel booking website
- Provides credit card details for payment to hundreds of hotels (not always secure) via phone and email
- Fills out third party forms for payments and expenses, printing/ scanning and emailing details to hotels.
- Details are recorded on the Microsoft Office suite including Excel spreadsheet
- Notes and reporting relating to the booking - price, cost-centres and Duty of Care information is added to Excel sheet
- Excel spreadsheet is manually updated to reflect changes to the booking (when the booker remembers and has time to update it!)
- Excel spreadsheet is printed and presented to management as the official record of travel and expenses

What's clear from this example is that the humble Excel spreadsheet is given too much prominence in the corporate hotel booking process. Not only that but a disproportionate amount of staff time must be given over to ensuring it is updated and booking details are accurate. This method of doing things may be workable - but there is a better way than workable.

For companies whose staff are travelling to various locations the probability of things getting messed up is high. Monitoring existing bookings becomes a real headache for your office managers, PAs and administrators.



Case in point

2014 was a good year for KN Group, winning contracts for telecommunications and infrastructure projects across a huge geographical area, covering Ireland and the United Kingdom.

Whilst delighted with the growth, the uptake in business posed challenges for the company in terms of resource allocation. Managing the huge volume of interactions involved in travel planning for operational staff was going to be a major category spend for KN Group.

Time, cost and reporting all came into view as challenges, while duty of care also emerged as a concern to its HR department.

From a travel booking point of view, KN Group was heading towards a significant challenge and took steps to pre-empt this with Roomex.

Turning point

With large groups of engineers and staff on the road, covering projects lasting several days to weeks, overnight accommodation was often required to fulfil business commitments. It became clear to the procurement managers at KN Group that Excel spreadsheets simply weren't going to cut it.

The company was honest about the difficulty it had managing hotel bookings. It knew the existing processes posed significant challenges and were not efficient. Since the company was tendering for a lot of work, keeping overall costs down was essential, and delivering significant time efficiencies was also a company priority.

On top of all this, KN Group needed somewhere to consolidate and store all the travel information so that when the CFO came knocking, it didn't take hours (or even days) to rustle up a report on total hotel spend for the last quarter.

"We tried other systems but when it comes to booking and managing hotel accommodation Roomex delivered. We have been very happy with the platform over the past four years. The biggest advantage for KN Group is that it saves our procurement team a huge amount of time in the booking process: each booking with Roomex takes a minute or less; without Roomex this would take ten or 15 minutes. We have our own corporate negotiated rates with some hotels and these are loaded into Roomex, which makes it very convenient, and we are confident that Roomex will get us the best rates elsewhere. It's a one-stop shop for getting the best deals."
Richard Fitzpatrick (Group Procurement Manager, KN Group, Dublin)

Best fit solution

In 2014 KN Group looked at a number of Travel Management options, but since the company's employees usually travel in their own vehicles it quickly realised it didn't need a traditional travel management company (TMC), and the costs associated with using such legacy providers. Instead it opted for Roomex which operates a new and disruptive business model that meshes the benefits of a TMC - service, reporting, cost control, and centralised payment - with the flexibility of an Online Travel Agent (OTA) with no fees.

KN Group didn't need much convincing that Roomex was the best fit solution for its hotel booking problem.

"Important as they are, time and cost savings are by no means the only advantages of Roomex. With Roomex you get your own booking platform, customised to your needs, such as meal allowances, and this provides additional convenience for our team members out in the field."
Richard Fitzpatrick (Group Procurement Manager, KN Group, Dublin)

WHY KN GROUP USE ROOMEX

SECURITY

FLEXIBILITY

EFFICIENCY

Bespoke portal

KN Group was given its own specially-built portal. This meant KN Group's pre-negotiated rates with long-standing hotel partners were easily factored into the new hotel booking process, preserving these existing relationships. All other content on the company's hotel booking portal was entirely bespoke, created by the Roomex team.

Booking behaviours and common destinations were analysed and the most frequently booked / favourite hotels were highlighted to facilitate a quicker booking process.

For office managers in all office locations – Ireland/UK/International - the portal put an end to cross-referencing, double-checks and the risks of booking outside of the standard recommendations. Everyone in every KN office had the same access to the same hotels and rates. When travel managers logged on to Roomex, they could book with confidence, in a fraction of the time, and within budget.

"It is also a great advantage to be able to pay a single consolidated monthly invoice from Roomex rather than having to pay each hotel individually. As well as saving us a lot of administrative hassle, this significantly eliminates our exposure to credit card risk. There is always a security risk with credit card details and all the more so when you are working in remote areas. Roomex serves as a virtual credit card in this respect – with Roomex, we can be fully confident that we will only be charged the exact amount on the booking."

Richard Fitzpatrick (Group Procurement Manager, KN Group, Dublin)

Visibility across the organisation was also improved. Any authorised person could login to the portal and access the information they needed.

The portal also provided visibility on hotel spend and savings and consistency of style in terms of reporting for senior management with access to reporting. Since all the reports looked the same, staff and management became familiar with them.

For KN Group, Excel spreadsheets are now firmly the preserve of the finance and accounts department - one place you definitely won't find them is tracking hotel reservations and costs.

"Roomex already provides great visibility over hotel spend through the reporting functionality – it is a goldmine of information."

Richard Fitzpatrick (Group Procurement Manager, KN Group, Dublin)

