
SUCCESS STORIES

Addressing policy and regulatory challenges in the tech sector





INTRODUCTION

Navigating policy and regulation

Policy and regulation can have a significant impact on businesses, especially those operating in the technology sector. The rapid pace of innovation is driving the political and regulatory agenda, and organisations are at risk of being affected by outdated laws and hastily introduced regulations that negatively impact their business. At the same time, policymakers often seek to identify breakthrough innovations that can provide an economic or social advantage, and this can present an opportunity for companies wanting to innovate in a new space.

As a business leader in the tech sector, monitoring political and regulatory trends and engaging with decision-makers should be a priority. Using a public affairs agency or political consultancy can help you identify the strategies that will deliver your business objectives whilst providing a flexible and adaptable level of support.

In this eBook, we will look in detail at seven case studies highlighting how Inline Policy has worked with companies across a wide range of sectors where technology and regulation meet. By providing the most up-to-date information on policy thinking and regulations that will affect clients' business, and developing political engagement and campaigns, we have enabled companies to grow quickly and manage their reputation.

Read on to learn how Inline Policy supported these seven companies in developing a political and regulatory strategy to help them achieve their business goals:

- [Onefinestay](#)
- [DJI](#)
- [Drivy](#)
- [Short-term Accomodation Association](#)
- [Yobike](#)
- [Gett](#)
- [TransferWise](#)



Campaigning for a change in the law

Inline Policy were commissioned by onefinestay to design and implement a campaign to secure a change in UK law that would allow them to operate in one of their target markets.

The challenge/situation

In 2014, onefinestay, a company offering high-end homes for short-term rent around the world, faced a regulatory hurdle that prevented them from doing business in London. At the time, homeowners in the UK capital were banned from letting out their property for less than three months without explicit planning permission, meaning the business could not operate effectively in this key European market.

They recognised that in order to grow their business, they needed to secure a change in the law to allow London homeowners to let their homes on a short-term basis without the need for planning permission. They sought our help to design a lobbying campaign to achieve this change in the law.

How Inline helped

Inline Policy first helped onefinestay develop what the optimal policy framework would look like if the law were changed. We then crafted a clear set of communications materials explaining the benefits of a change in the law. With all the materials in place we developed and implemented a lobbying campaign targeting key decision makers and stakeholders, enabling onefinestay to win the support of a number of Parliamentarians.

Successes and ROI

Having won support of these key stakeholders, the UK Government agreed to introduce primary legislation to facilitate a change in law. Our lobbying work continued through the passage of the legislation to ensure it was passed without threatened amendments that would have undermined the benefits of the change. The final text passed into law as part of the Deregulation Act 2015. It is now considered one of the most pragmatic regulations governing the sector across Europe. onefinestay now offers over 400 homes in London, as well as over 2,500 homes globally, and they are now part of the AccorHotels family, a worldwide leader in hospitality.

In order to grow their business, onefinestay needed to secure a change in UK law to allow London homeowners to let their homes on a short-term basis without the need for planning permission.



Establishing DJI as an authority on the regulation of drones

Inline Policy works with DJI to help put them at the forefront of informing the public debate around the regulation of drones.

The challenge

Around the world, drones are coming under intense scrutiny from regulators and other public authorities, largely due to concerns about the perceived risk they pose to public safety and privacy. DJI is the world's leader in civilian drones and aerial imaging technology and has an ambition to be at the forefront of informing the political and public debate about the opportunities that drones can offer. In the UK, they therefore needed a partner who could help them connect with regulators and policymakers to ensure that the developing regulatory framework for drones strikes the right balance between protecting individuals and critical infrastructure on the one hand, and enabling innovative uses of drones across the economy, on the other.

How Inline helped

Inline developed a programme to support DJI in their mission to play an active and constructive part in the design of future UK drone regulation. Our work started with a full analysis of the policy environment, the key decision makers and those in a position to influence the debate. We then delivered a targeted programme of outreach to help policymakers understand DJI's approach to the regulatory debate and how the company's expertise could inform Government deliberations on important issues. Inline act as an extension of DJI's in-house team, providing – where appropriate – on-the-ground representation and engagement with policymakers, regulators and at industry events.

Successes and ROI

Our work has allowed DJI to be at the forefront of the public debate around drone regulation in the UK. We have helped DJI build an open and constructive dialogue with government ministers, officials, and Parliamentarians, contributing significantly to the safe use of drones and the realisation of the benefits that drones can bring to the UK.

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Cross-European political regulatory monitoring

Inline Policy worked with Drivy, the French car sharing and peer-to-peer hire platform to track political and regulatory developments across the EU and six countries.

The challenge

Drivy is a rapidly growing scale-up operating across six different European countries. As such it has to keep track of national legislation, EU regulations and local rules of different regional and city authorities. The level of centralised or devolved decision-making is different in each country, creating a highly fragmented political and regulatory environment for urban mobility. Drivy needed a partner that could help them make sense of this complex landscape.

How Inline helped

Inline developed a bespoke structure for monitoring EU developments, national policy in the six target countries and local politics in 19 European cities. With so much information being reviewed, it was necessary to filter out the noise to deliver monitoring services at three levels:

1. Instant alerts for urgent and significant new developments in the most important markets
2. A weekly briefing organised by country and policy area with summaries of all relevant developments and links to sources and further information.
3. A monthly report that prioritises and tracks individual pieces of legislation and key policy initiatives in the EU and in each of the countries.

Our team of multilingual consultants was the key to success, analysing source materials in their native languages to ensure that important points of nuance were not lost in translation. Their linguistic and local knowledge fed into the core client team who prioritised and tailored the information that was passed to Drivy.

Successes and ROI

By closely monitoring each of the target cities Inline were able to identify opportunities for Drivy to engage and shape mobility policies as they are being developed in cities and governments around the EU. As Drivy continues to grow, they are increasingly seen as an important stakeholder in discussions of urban mobility.

“Inline provide us with the information and insight we need across legislative, policy and regulatory developments in France, the EU, the UK and a number of other European markets. Their briefings are always timely and provide the right level of information to help us pilot our public affairs strategy. Their work and insights contribute to bringing value to our business.”

Sviatoslav Beysens
Head of Public Affairs, Drivy

The Short Term Accommodation Association (STAA)



Establishing a new industry body to influence policy and raise standards

Inline Policy helped lead the creation and management of STAA, the industry body for the short-term accommodation sector in the UK.

The challenge

The short-term accommodation market refers to the rental of houses, apartments or rooms for short periods of time. While this market has existed as a commercial model for many years, the advent of sharing economy online platforms, such as Airbnb, has created a new dynamic in the market with many new players. As the market has changed, so the industry that enables the expansion of the market has faced increasing regulatory scrutiny and media attention. There was no existing organisation in place to speak for the interests of the new platforms and associated companies involved in this rapidly developing sector.

How Inline helped

Inline Policy were asked by a number of the key players in the industry to help establish a representative body that could speak for the member companies and act as co-ordinating point to set and raise standards in the sector. We worked with the founder members, including Airbnb, onefinestay and HomeAway, to plan the Association, set it up formally and act as its secretariat. Working as an honest broker between fiercely competitive companies, we established the Association in March 2017. Within a year we had led the creation of an industry code of conduct, and co-ordinated a package of voluntary industry measures to aid local government enforcement work. We continue to co-ordinate the Association's policy engagement with the UK Government, devolved administrations, parliamentarians and local authorities, as well as providing political monitoring and intelligence to all STAA members.

Successes and ROI

The STAA has become the recognised voice of the industry in the UK and is regularly consulted by governments and local authorities. With the sector growing every year, the STAA now represents the platforms on which the majority of UK short term rentals are booked. We have helped the STAA ensure that the UK regulatory environment continues to enable short-term rentals, which benefit the millions of customers who use the services provided by the Association's members.

With the UK short-term accommodation marketplace evolving rapidly, the industry was facing increasing regulatory scrutiny and media attention.



Stakeholder engagement to secure entry into the UK market

Inline Policy helped YoBike become the first dockless bike sharing scheme to launch in the UK by identifying target cities and working with policymaker to gain the necessary permissions and support.

“Inline played an integral part in YoBike’s success when we entered new UK markets. The team’s expertise in local government informed our business strategy at the early stages of our growth and meant we were able to quickly move into new markets. I never hesitate to recommend Inline to my contacts.”

Jade Ebenezer
Director of Business
Development, YoBike

The challenge

In 2016, Inline Policy was commissioned by YoBike to help them enter the UK market. At the time, the company was not yet fully operational and had no prior track record. Nevertheless, the company had ambitious plans for expansion in the UK.

YoBike came to Inline to provide the expertise they needed to scope out the political landscape, understand the regulatory requirements, and engage with policymakers, in order to secure a successful entry into the UK market.

How Inline helped

With cities around the UK all having their own specific transport needs and challenges, it was important to first identify where to concentrate YoBike’s efforts. We conducted an in-depth analysis of ten UK cities, setting out the demographic, political and competitive factors in order to draw up a shortlist of target cities.

We then focused efforts on the forward-thinking cities who would be more receptive to YoBike’s business mode and created a strategy for engaging the local authorities in the target cities. By creating tailored messaging and engagement plans for YoBike we helped them introduce the company and its business model to local authorities and other key stakeholders.

Successes and ROI

Within three months of starting work with YoBike, we had helped secure permission to enter Bristol and Southampton, with soft commitments for launch in other cities at a later date. YoBike became the first dockless bike sharing scheme in the UK, a model that a number of other companies have now followed.

Gett



Building profile and engagement with the EU institutions

Inline Policy helped on-demand mobility company, Gett, establish themselves in the EU as a significant player in the collaborative economy and build long-lasting relationships with policy makers.

At a time when collaborative economy guidelines were being initiated and further legislative interventions for on-demand transportation models were being considered, Gett needed to have their voice heard and to establish their position in the sector.

The challenge/situation

Gett, an on-demand mobility company founded in Tel Aviv that allows customers to order a taxi or courier through their website or app, wanted to expand their business in Europe. Gett's business model was not widely understood in Brussels, and at a time when collaborative economy guidelines were being initiated and further legislative interventions for on-demand transportation models were being considered, the company needed to have their voice heard and to establish their position in the sector.

How Inline helped

Gett enlisted the help of Inline Policy to help them understand the regulatory landscape in the EU and to engage with the relevant institutions to put forward their ideas for regulations in the sector.

We designed and executed an outreach and engagement strategy to establish relationships with policymakers in the Commission, Parliament and Council of the EU. The briefing materials we produced for Gett helped them make their case as an important stakeholder in the collaborative economy and put forward ideas of how different ride-hailing and ride-sharing models could be regulated sensibly.

Successes and ROI

The campaign led to Gett's senior management engaging with and establishing lasting relationships with high-level policymakers in the EU institutions.

Gett's business continued to grow and is now one of Europe's largest on-demand car services by revenues and operates in more than 120 cities worldwide.



Building a reputation as an industry thought leader

We helped TransferWise to maximise the impact of their campaign for fairer fees in the foreign exchange market, bringing about change in the industry and establishing a reputation as a thought leader.

The challenge/situation

For decades, banks and brokers have been charging consumers and businesses hidden fees when using their money abroad, through confusing and misleading exchange rate mark-ups. TransferWise pride themselves on offering fair fees in foreign exchange and are on a mission to bring an end to hidden fees in the industry. To stop hidden fees in foreign exchange, TransferWise needed to build awareness of the issue with political decision makers. They needed a partner who could help them bring their Fairer Fees campaign into mainstream political debate.

How Inline helped

Inline Policy designed, organised, and managed panel events at the 2015 UK political party conferences to bring the issue of hidden fees to the attention of key policy makers and regulators within the Government. We created events that were true to TransferWise's innovative brand in seeking to stimulate genuine debate, push the boundaries of discussion, and generate a buzz amongst a sea of more traditional policy events. The events were standing room only and generated publicity well beyond the conferences themselves, giving TransferWise a strong platform from which to continue their campaign with policy makers.

Successes and ROI

TransferWise saw a lot of success early on in the campaign. The Conservative Party made an election pledge to stop banks and brokers from using misleading pricing in foreign exchange. Thanks in a large part to this campaign, TransferWise is now widely considered as a thought leader in the industry and many new and established players in the credit card and banking markets have scrapped these fees altogether.

“Inline were great to work with at Party Conferences. They helped create a lively and engaging event that captured a lot of interest. Their professionalism, efficiency and attention to detail were key in making sure that things on the day went without a hitch.”

Jo White
Director of Communications,
TransferWise

Summary

The biggest issue for the tech industry is keeping abreast of the political and regulatory landscape in which they operate so that they are ready to tackle the challenges and opportunities when they arise.

Trying to deliver an engagement programme without professional assistance is a significant undertaking. With the help of a public affairs agency, you can give political and regulatory activity the appropriate energy and attention it needs to allow your business to thrive in a competitive and increasingly disruptive marketplace. An agency will offer a wide range of services that are tailored to suit your needs, from policy monitoring and analysis to political risk assessment, message development, lobbying campaigns and reputation building strategies.

Inline Policy's experts in London and Brussels work across a wide range of sectors where technology and regulation meet. From collaborative economy marketplaces, through travel-technology platforms, to European energy markets, we are proud of our record of successfully improving the regulatory position of market entrants and established players.

If you would like to find out more, or to discuss any of the case studies in this eBook, then please get in touch at enquiries@inlinepolicy.com.

About Inline Policy

Inline Policy was founded in 2013 to meet a gap in the public affairs market for a consultancy that could provide in-depth policy and regulatory analysis to fast-moving innovative businesses in the technology sector. With technology transforming every aspect of our economy and society, we provide strategic insight into what policymakers and regulators are thinking and how best to influence their decisions.

Everything we do is driven by delivering a great service to our clients. We believe that a great consultant-client relationship comes from being dependable at every level and getting the details right - in strategy, in implementation, and in logistics. We are proud to work for highly-demanding clients who stretch us and our track record of delivery.

You can find out more at www.inlinepolicy.com