

## Background

The British Medical Association has been a client of Gray Dawes for over 10 years. The BMA's travel profile of mainly point to point domestic and European flights and UK rail was a perfect fit for booking online and so in 2007 Gray Dawes worked with the BMA to implement gbookonline, Gray Dawes' online booking system.

It was the ease of use of the system and the ability to apply their own travel policy procedures that made gbookonline the ideal online solution for the BMA. A phased implementation was completed with onsite training and an adoption level of 40% was reached within the first year.

## Objective

In 2010 the focus on cost savings intensified as the BMA was required to demonstrate at Board level what they were doing to reduce travel costs within the organisation.

As part of this strategy, further emphasis was put on increasing online adoption through gbookonline and setting appropriate targets.

Furthermore, by working closely with the BMA and through close analysis of its management information, Gray Dawes identified opportunities for the BMA to make additional savings through changing booker behaviour. Key areas of focus were to :

- Encourage advance purchase of rail tickets and reduce ticket on departure bookings;
- Educate bookers to 'think smarter' and plan and book flights further in advance of travel;
- Reduce the overall cost of long haul travel by promoting and encouraging the use of Gray Dawes' specially negotiated fares and cheaper fares available through alternative carriers.



It was important to change buyer behaviour by working with them to think smarter:

- Plan ahead
- Book in advance
- Source alternative fares

## The Solution

Keen to take advantage of the time and considerable cost savings that could be achieved by booking more travel online, the BMA worked with Gray Dawes to firstly review its travel policy and make it mandatory for all point to point Domestic and European flights and all UK rail travel to be booked online.

Secondly, it was important to mutually agree achievable online adoption targets. An overall adoption target of 80% was set in 2010, but it was also felt important to agree individual targets for each element of travel. i.e Domestic air (75%) and UK rail (85%), so that it was easier to identify areas of success and equally areas where further attention was required.

A bespoke online training programme was put into place to train bookers and travellers alike. This was conducted at BMA's offices in London and designed to reflect the BMA's travel profile and authorisation processes. Today there are 60 trained bookers at the BMA and any additional training is conducted on a one-to-one basis via webex.

In support of this online strategy Gray Dawes provided detailed reporting that identified any bookings made via a consultant that should have been made online. With the ability to drill down to individual bookers this made it easy for the BMA to identify adverse trends and any potential training issues. Progress was closely monitored and reported on quarterly.

Visual Guilt, (an alert facility built into gdbookonline), also played an important part in driving down costs. By highlighting to the user when the cheapest fare hasn't been selected, it encourages better fare selection. Comprehensive reporting supported this feature and enabled the BMA to identify where there was a need for improvement.

When it came to adjusting booking behaviour, positive communication was key. In addition to regular travel alerts and bulletins, a quarterly bulletin was produced specifically for bookers at the BMA. This included fare saving guides that identified ways of reducing costs and progress reports on adoption and savings targets.

#### Gray Dawes delivered:

- Achievable online targets
- Bespoke training programme
- Detailed reporting and analysis
- Positive communication at all levels



## The Result

The BMA successfully achieved its online adoption target of 80% in 2010 and achieved levels of 88% in the first half of 2011, exceeding the initial target for the year of 85%. And by changing booker behaviour and encouraging the use of Gray Dawes' special fares and switching to alternative carriers where appropriate, Gray Dawes delivered savings of over £30.5k to the BMA in the first half of 2011.

Time invested in encouraging a smarter approach to booking travel through regular communication and monitoring and reporting on agreed targets reaped further benefits. Tickets on departure fell by a further 2% (5% in 2010) saving £1,236, and targets for booking air and rail travel in advance of travel (28 and 14 days respectively) were both met.

**Adoption levels reached  
88% in the first 6 months  
of 2011**

It was Gray Dawes' flexibility of approach combined with regular communication and a true understanding of the common goal of both organisations to increase adoption levels and reduce travel costs that delivered this result.

"Business priorities are constantly changing and the BMA have benefitted immensely from Gray Dawes' flexible approach throughout the contract. The support provided in terms of growing online adoption and in re-educating our travel bookers to work smarter has been a winning combination and delivered real savings for the BMA."

**Chris Fincham, Purchasing Manager, BMA**