

Development of corporate travel management system`s content for company x

Līga Senkāne - Matisāne



Author(s) Liga Senkane – Matisane	
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Teacher/s or Supervisor/s Jarmo Ritalahti	
<p>The management of business travel is fundamental in supporting business in any business field where a company need to reach their clients and co-workers. With increasing opportunities for travel and technologies, the process of the business travel management can be simpler than before.</p> <p>The thesis plan is to develop the content for solution of business travel management within one company. The company`s business during last fifteen years have spread almost all over the world and business trips are essentials for doing business. With the spreading business, the number of business travellers have increased dramatically. Nevertheless, the process of business trip arrangements and management have stayed behind.</p> <p>Initially the project plan was planned to take a year for development the content of the upcoming process for business travel management within the company. However, development process took more than expected and until the finishing this thesis, the new tool for business travel management within the company is not properly implemented in the company`s daily routine.</p> <p>To reach the aim of thesis constructive approach is used and different solutions to the company`s need have looked for. With the development of project, in the company some internal processes have been changed and internal documents updated to adjust current situation and needs.</p>	
Keywords Thesis Project, Business Travel Management, Corporate Travel, Business Travel Guidelines, Constructive Approach	

Table of contents

Table of Figures.....	1
1 Introduction	3
2 Background.....	5
2.1 The company x and its business travel destinations.....	5
2.2 The traveller`s profile	10
2.3 Existing corporate travel management process in the company.....	11
2.4 Business travel guidelines at the company.....	15
3 Travel management	16
3.1 Business travel.....	16
3.2 Travel management requirements for a company/ Business travel policy	20
3.3 Systems for travel management – different approaches of business travel management	22
4 Methodology	23
4.1 Constructive research	23
4.2 Data collection and analysis.....	24
4.3 Stakeholders` interviews and findings from feedbacks	24
5 Project plan and implementation	28
5.1 Implementation stages and difficulties during adaptation	28
5.1 Business Travel management offers for companies	30
5.2 The business travel request process in the test environment (March 24 th , 2017)	33
5.2.1 Feedback and issues during business travel management adaption	43
5.3 The beginning of final version and transitional period.....	44
5.3.1 Collected feedbacks since October 20 th 2017	51
5.3.2 Releases of additional functionality	53
5.4 Future plans for the company`s business travel management.....	58
6 Conclusion	61
References	63

Table of Figures

Figure 1 Business trips per year and average number of trips per month 2013 – 2017	5
Figure 2 Number of different destinations in 2013 – 2017	5
Figure 3 Apportionment of business trips` destinations in 2013 (%)	6
Figure 4 Apportionment of business trips` destinations in 2014 (%)	7
Figure 5 Apportionment of business trips` destinations in 2015 (%)	8
Figure 6 Apportionment of business trips` destinations in 2016 (%)	9
Figure 7 Apportionment of business trips` destinations in 2017 (%)	9
Figure 8 Changes of average length of business trips 2013 – 2017	11
Figure 9 Corporate travel management process in the company until October 2017	12
Figure 10 Demand-side factors in the growth of business travel and tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner 2001, page 18)	16
Figure 11 Supply-side factors in the growth of business travel and tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner 2001, page 19)	17
Figure 12 An individual business trip supply side (Swarbrooke & Horner 2001, page 37)	19
Figure 13 Key feature of constructive research (Holmberg 30 August 2013)	23
Figure 14 The process of constructive research (Holmberg 30 August 2013)	23
Figure 15 Required information for creating business trip request in existing process	28
Figure 16 New business travel management process in the company in test environment	33
Figure 17 Creation of business trip request, step 1 in test environment	35
Figure 18 Creation of business trip request, step 2 in test environment	36
Figure 19 Creation of business trip request, step 3 in test environment	37
Figure 20 The planned calendar view in internal system for activities	37
Figure 21 Short overview of upcoming business trip in the calendar view	38
Figure 22 The view of all information in the internal system for an employee	38
Figure 23 The project manager`s view for declining a business trip	39
Figure 24 The project manager`s view for assigning work stream for an employee	39
Figure 25 The business travel manager`s view for all business trips in the system	40
Figure 26 The changed Business Travel manager`s view of all business trips in the system	41
Figure 27 The view of each business trip request for Business Travel manager	42
Figure 28 Screenshot from informational video about changes in business trip requesting	44
Figure 29 New business travel management system released on October 20 th , 2017	45
Figure 30 Business Travel manager`s overview of all business trips	46
Figure 31 Employees view of pending business trip request in the system	47

Figure 32 Business Traveller` view of approved but not processed business trip.....	47
Figure 33 Employee`s view of processed business trip.....	48
Figure 34 Business Travel manager`s view of each business trip	49
Figure 35 Information about all business trips for all employees	50
Figure 36 Information about business trip that is available for all employees	50
Figure 37 Calendar view within the system	51
Figure 38 Printable business trip summary for an employee	55
Figure 39 An employee`s view of Processed business trip request with attachments	56
Figure 40 Partly filled-in business trip expense report.....	57
Figure 41 Business Travel Procedure and responsible person in each step after Business Travel Guidelines reviewing.....	60

1 Introduction

This study focuses on developing the content of the information technology solution and implementation for corporate travel management for the commissioner. The commissioner for this thesis is the company which offers information technology solutions and is a travel agency's corporate customer in tourism field. For the company it is important to do its own business and to have smooth business travels only as tool to reach its clients.

For more than fifteen years the company has offered information technology solutions for finance and banking companies around the world without any client based in the country where it operates from. During these years the company has grown from five employees to more than 420 employees in 2017. And almost all its clients are based outside of Latvia where the company is located. From beginning there were only a couple of business trips a month which were taken care of by the company's secretary alongside secretarial duties. Starting from 2013 there is the office manager/ business travel manager that organizes all that is necessary for the company's employees' business travels and business travel management is this person's main priority. In 2016 there were around thirty five business trips each month.

The company has grown fast and that is one of the reasons why not all internal processes are adapted to its current size. One standardized process for business travel management requests from business travellers is missing and that creates an opportunity for human-error.

Besides the business travel management within the company there are some related outdated business travel processes for other stakeholders not only for the business travel manager and travellers. Any employee's business trip needs to be reported to the accountancy, the human resources department and Project Support office (the department in the company responsible for monitoring the process to fulfil agreements between the company and its clients and following all agreements' rules). All the company's stakeholders have their own solutions that are manually filled-in, mostly excel tables. In the end of 2016 there are at least three different excel files where the same information about the company's business travels and its expenses are adjusted to the owning stakeholder.

The research aim will concentrate specifically on one company's internal needs for its business travel management. This research is expected to find the best corporate travel

management solution for all involved stakeholders in the company. The corporate travel management tool will be embedded into the reporting system of the working hours.

The research objective will be addressed from the company`s business travel`s stakeholders` points of view. The main subject of this research is individual business travel form within the company.

In order to meet the aim and objectives the research seeks to find answers to following questions:

1. What is efficient in the existing travel management process in the company? How it could be better/ more efficient? What are main problems that need to be fixed?
2. What is available “out there” for business travel customers - companies? What can be used for the company`s new corporate travel management tool?

These questions will help to identify all requirements to develop efficient corporate travel management system incorporated in the existing working hours` report that will reduce work spent on manual filling-in of tables for all stakeholders.

The study is divided in six parts. The thesis starts with introduction part that introduces with background and the scope of the research.

The existing process in the company is shown in chapter 2 as starting point for developing the content of new tool – corporate travel management system.

Chapter 3 provides theoretical framework of travel management and business travel. It is also looking for unifying components for a customer's / a company`s needs and seeks for electronic corporate travel management solutions. As an instrument for business travel management regulation within a company, a business travel policy`s role is explained.

Chapter 4 describes the methodology of the research – its design, methods and data collection process and analysis.

In chapter 5, the corporate travel management systems implementation process is described and the outcomes of the feedback from stakeholders is collected.

The last chapter 6 holds the conclusion of the research.

2 Background

2.1 The company x and its business travel destinations

Company x is Europe oriented IT solution and services provider that started in 1999 with five employees, in the beginning of 2017 it has 420 employees. Maintaining long term trusted relationships with its clients the outcome is that company x has some clients for more than 15 years. The company is project-based organization and it means that each project has an assigned team. Each team is combined of necessary professionals with various skills for the project – software developers, testers, analysts and project managers.

The company mostly has clients outside the country where it is based – Riga, Latvia. Business travels are very common for the company and number of business trips each year increases and average amount of business trips per month increased from 26 business trips per month in 2013 to almost 40 business trips per month in 2017 (Figure 1).

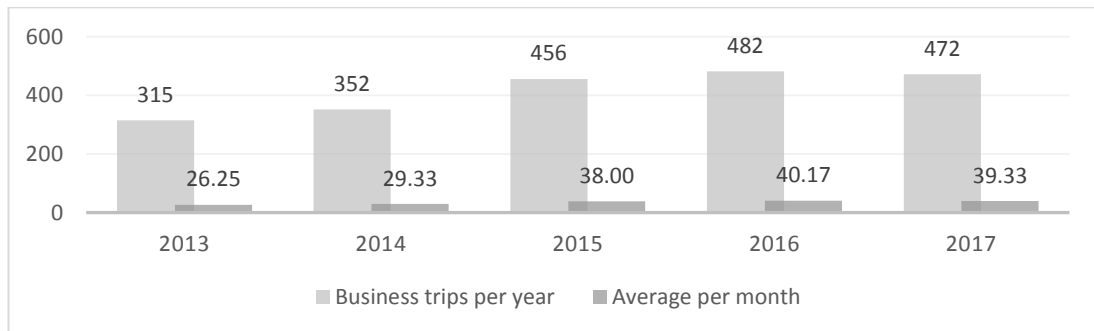


Figure 1 Business trips per year and average number of trips per month 2013 – 2017

The main destinations are in Europe and North America. From 2015 number of destinations in Asia increased (Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7). Despite the fact that the number of business trips noticeably increased during the last few years and new destinations in Asia appeared the total number of destinations have not changed greatly (figure 2).

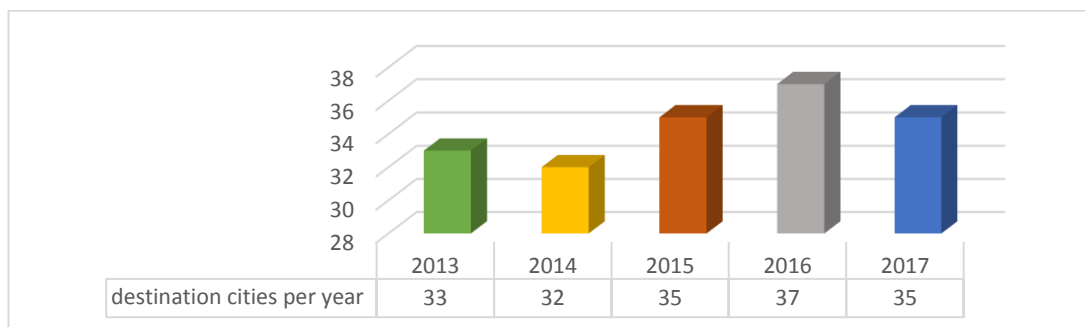


Figure 2 Number of different destinations in 2013 – 2017

The number of destinations per year has not changed a lot because of the company's work profile – it is a project type work and when a project finishes another comes instead and the destination of a client changes. Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6 and Figure 7 shows that the two main destinations have not changed in the last five years. More than half of all business trips are to Zurich and London (Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7). Although, the changes in ratio can be seen. If in 2013 and 2014 almost 1/3 of all business trips were to Zurich and a quarter to London then in 2015 that changed and business trips to London took the first place of the most visited destination in the company and it stayed like that for the next three years.

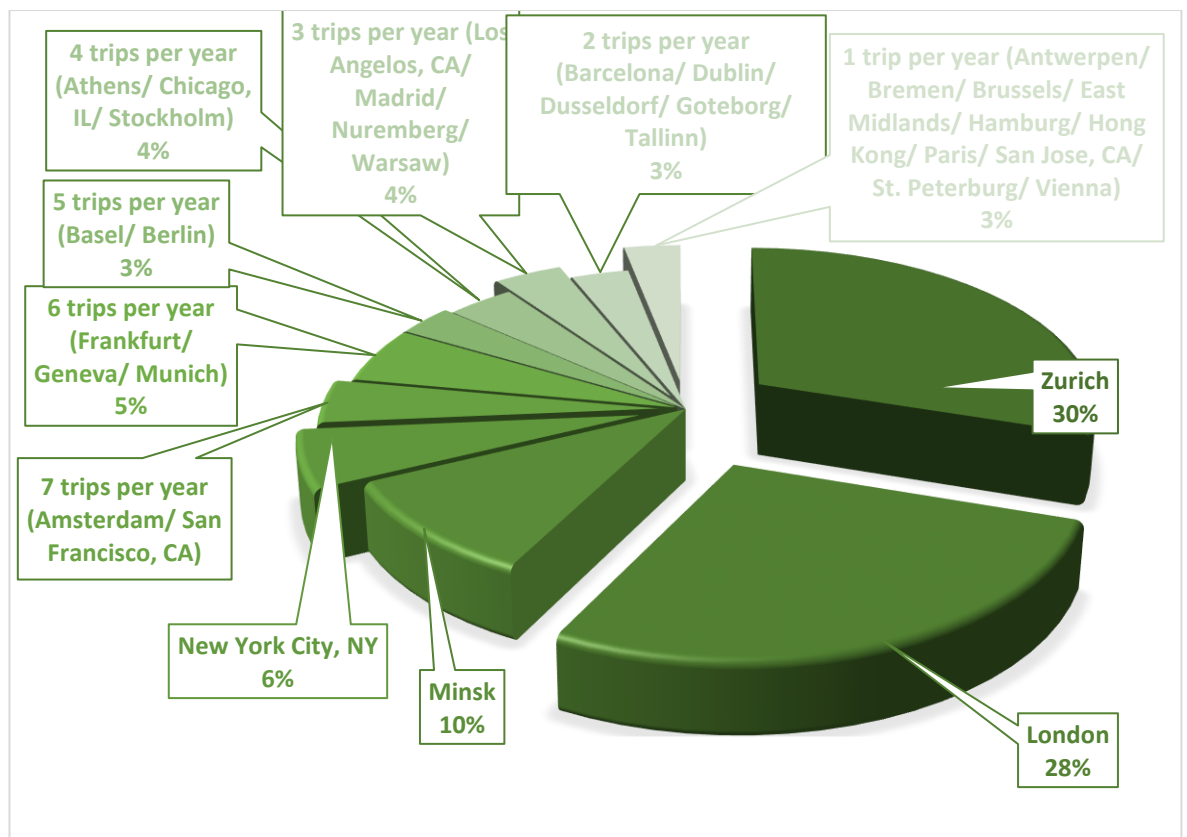


Figure 3 Apportionment of business trips' destinations in 2013 (%)

All figures – Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7 – show also percentage of those destinations that the company's employees travel to only a few times per year and are rare destinations. Those destinations are almost only in Europe and give an insight in destinations for conferences where the company offers to travel employees to travel as bonus.

All business travels are managed and arranged as individual business trips. However, all trips can be divided in four categories – business trips requested by a client and client covers some expenses for an employee`s trip; the company fully covers expenses for employees` trips to attend conferences or specific trainings, business development travels and employees` travels to Minsk where the subsidiary of the company is located.

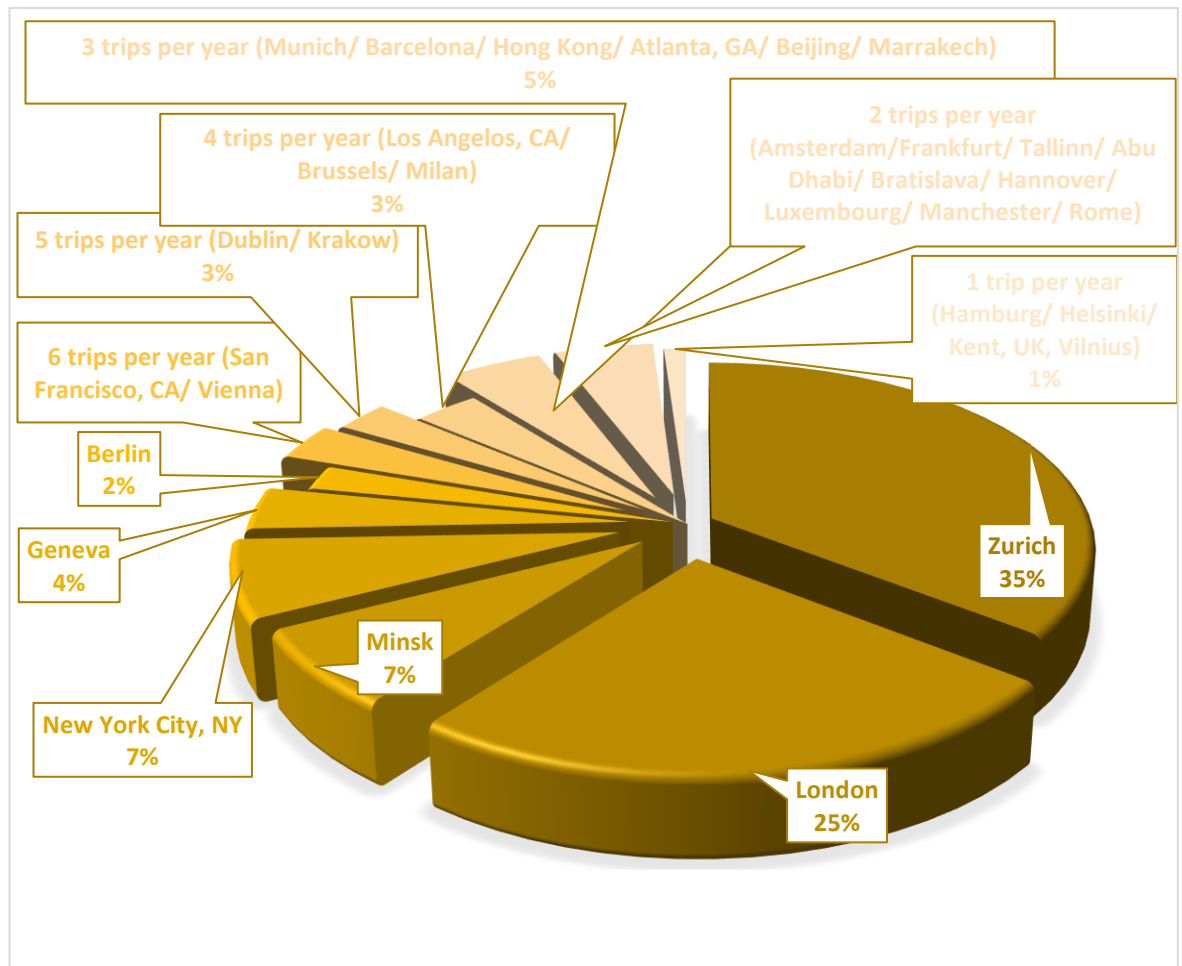


Figure 4 Apportionment of business trips` destinations in 2014 (%)

The length of each business trip depends not only on needed time in the premises of a client but also on preferences of travellers. If an employee is not an “early bird” and he/ she needs to be in the office of client early in the morning then it is understandable to travel to the destination in the previous afternoon/ evening. There are also cases that if an employee needs to be at the client premises Monday morning, then his/ her trip might start already on Saturday. This happens with more far destinations and mostly Asia where connections might not be the best. The company also allows employee to arrange his/ her travel to any work related destination with extra days in case if he/ she would like to stay longer at their own expense. For example, an employee goes to the conference in Barcelona for two days but he/ she would like to stay over the weekend to explore the city. An

employee agrees with the Business Travel manager about preferred dates and flights and business travel manager compares the prices between the originally needed and

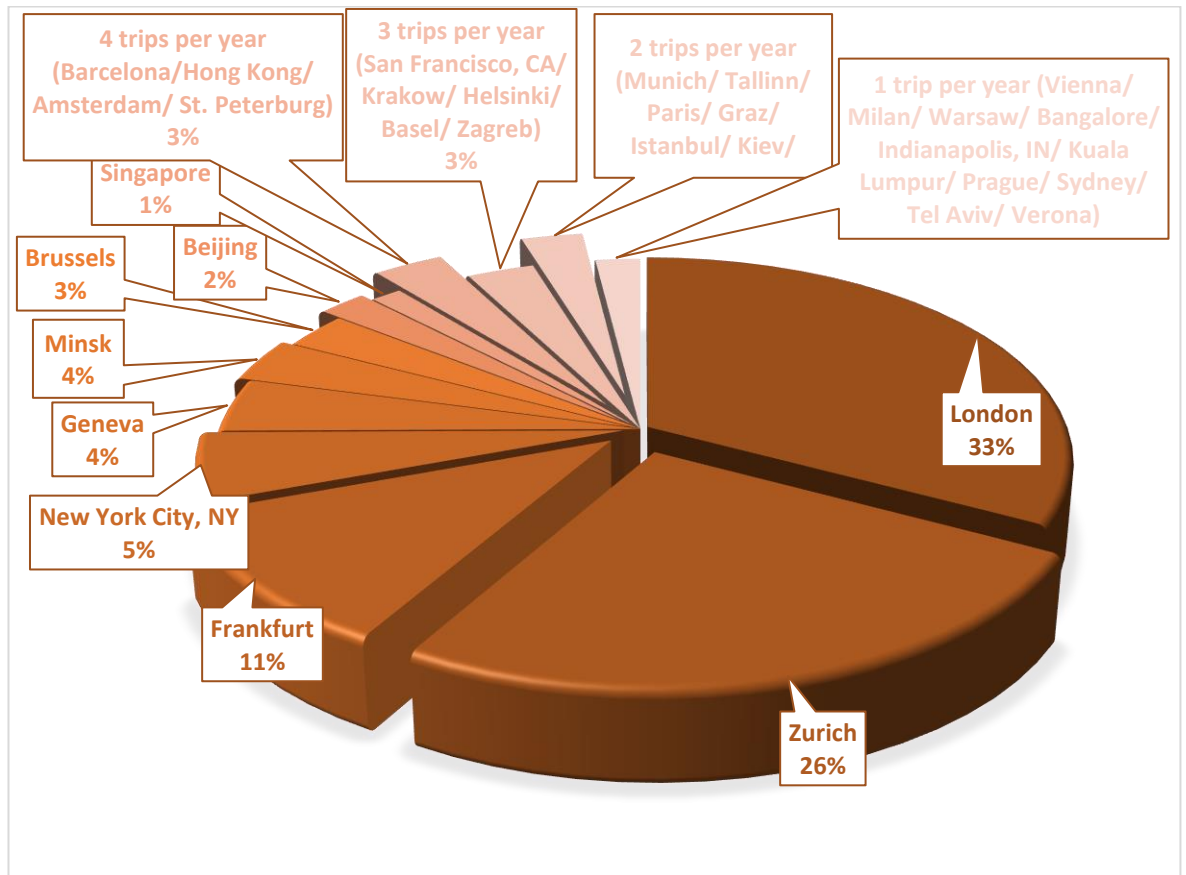


Figure 5 Apportionment of business trips` destinations in 2015 (%)

employee`s preferred. The price for airplane tickets should be the same or employee needs to cover the difference. For all business trips, it is employees` responsibility to divide the travel for work from personal preferences as existing business trip request system does not have such option and also Business Travel manager, Accountancy, Senior Human Resources specialist or Project Support Office specialist are not able to divide these things.

The shortest business trips takes one day and several employees are willing to travel like that because not all destinations are easy to reach any time of the day and often employees need to spend full working day at the premises of clients. One-day long business trip for an employee means that his/ her outbound flight is between 6 am and 7:30 am and he/ she returns to Riga airport not earlier than 10:30 pm, mostly it happens after midnight.

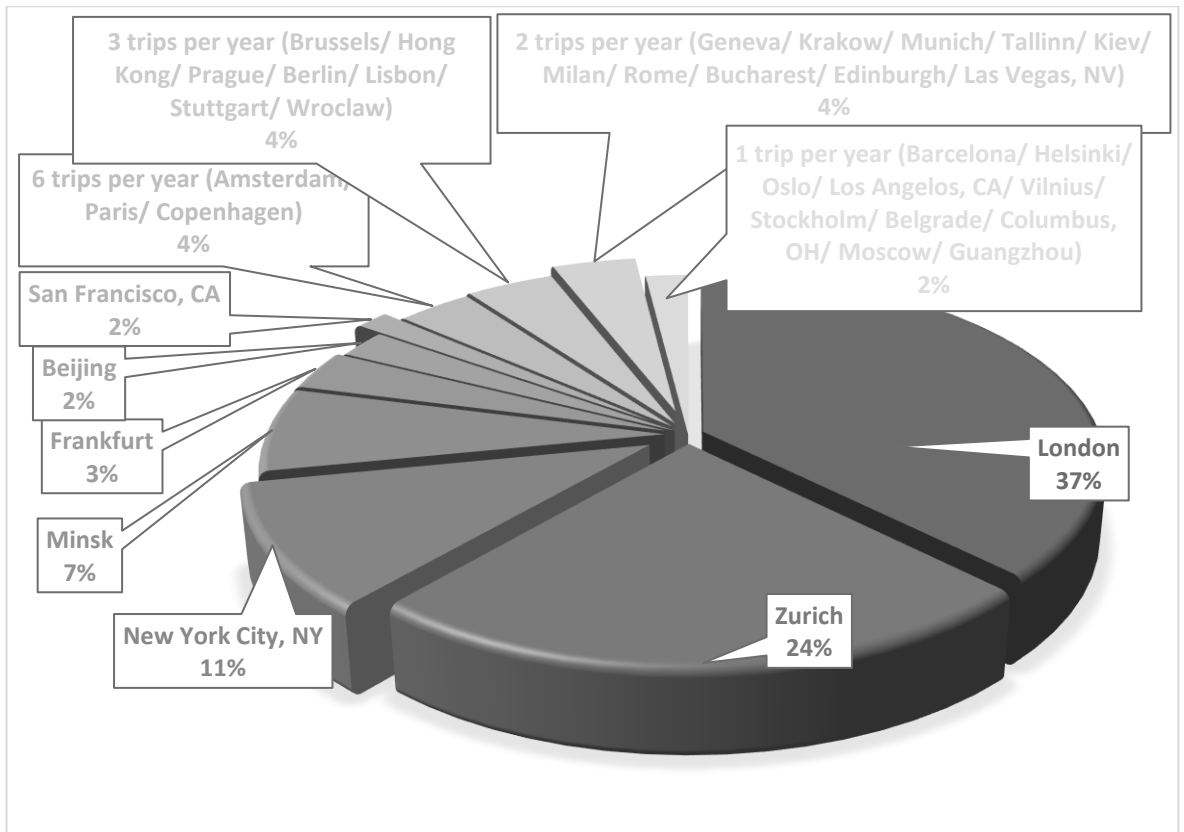


Figure 6 Apportionment of business trips` destinations in 2016 (%)

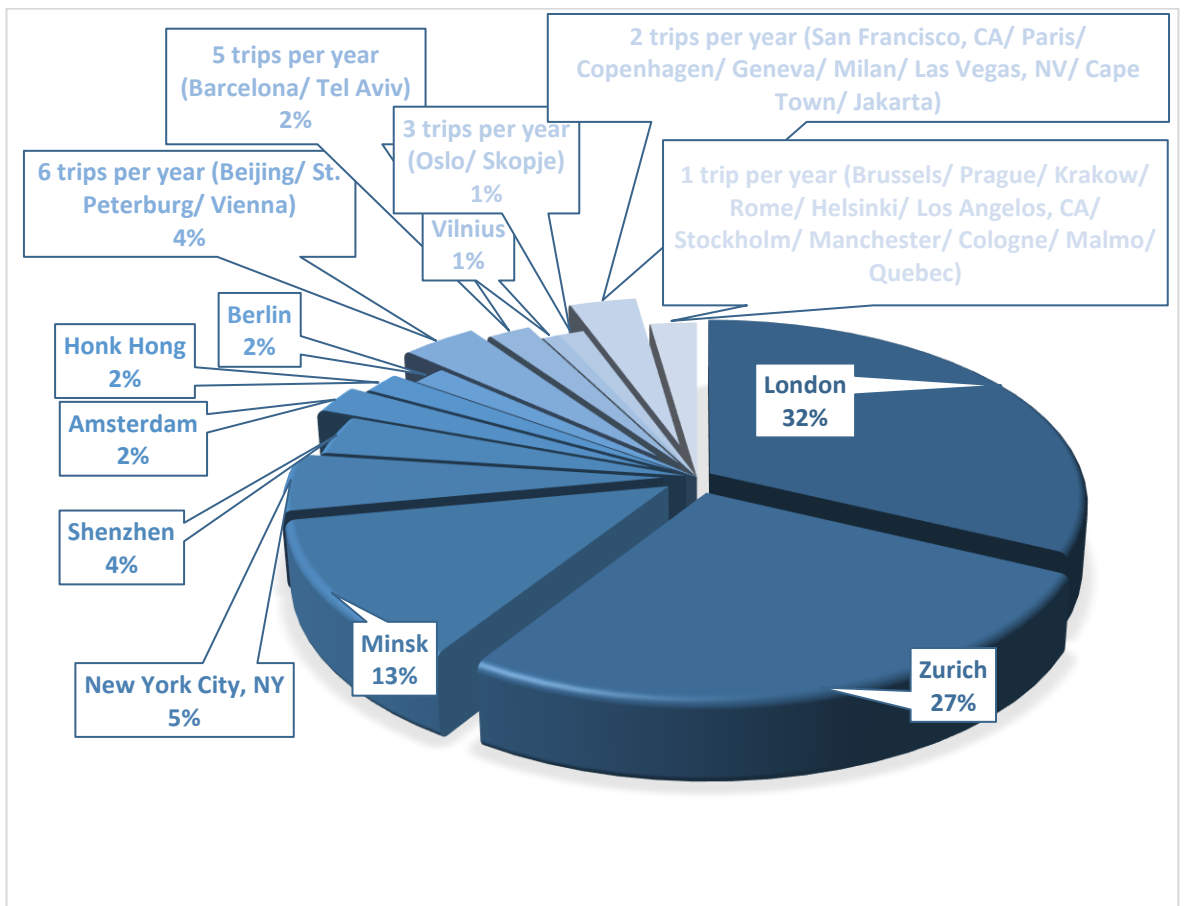


Figure 7 Apportionment of business trips` destinations in 2017 (%)

2.2 The traveller`s profile

Business Travel manager in direct online AeTM booking system has created profiles with information about business travellers (name, last name as it is in travel documents, date of birth, all loyalty cards for airline companies etc.) that gives opportunity to work remotely as all correct data to make reservations are included in a travellers` profile. In the end of 2016 in AeTM there are 246 profiles for the company`s business travellers from which around 100 travel on regular basis.

Although the amount of business trips per month increases with each year in the company (Table 1), the length of each business trip has not changed crucially during last five years (Table 2). In 2013, for the first half of the year the average length of business trip was higher than it is in the end of 2017 because in 2013 there was a group of five employees who had long-term business trips (Figure 8). One more reason why the length of business trips in 2013 is longer than in the following years, is the amount of total business trips per month/ year increased but the length is shorter. There is a great difference between the amount of long-term business trips and short-term business trips – short-term business trips are more common than long-term.

Table 1 Amount of business trips per month 2013 – 2017

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2013	17	29	24	31	38	39	16	25	31	37	14	14
2014	31	19	35	29	46	41	26	15	27	38	30	15
2015	24	23	24	27	43	36	51	30	54	58	55	31
2016	36	28	33	56	75	32	21	35	35	44	42	45
2017	37	26	64	46	46	38	21	13	52	45	44	40

Table 2 The average length of business trips each month 2013 – 2017

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	average
2013	7.37	8.11	7.54	7.71	6.45	5.42	5.02	4.65	4.87	4.79	3.26	3.51	5.73
2014	5.68	4.18	3.93	3.71	4.52	4.92	3.47	5.01	4.83	4.38	4.89	3.86	4.45
2015	4.96	4.74	3.59	4.17	6.02	4.62	3.84	4.26	6.43	4.73	4.62	3.53	4.63
2016	3.67	3.92	4.59	5.39	4.91	4.65	5.84	5.41	6.48	5.12	4.31	4.28	4.88
2017	5.42	5.31	5.16	6.27	5.18	4.76	3.42	4.64	5.04	5.23	5.07	5.37	5.07

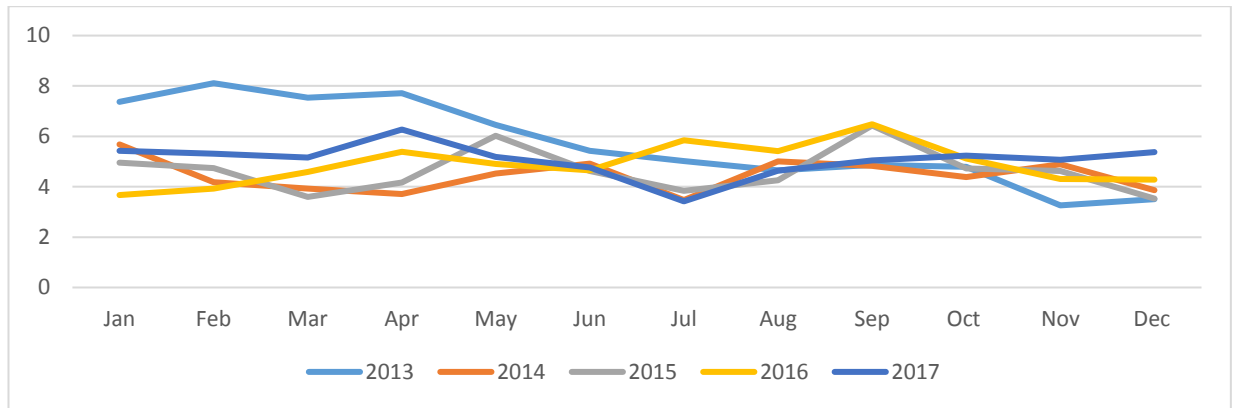


Figure 8 Changes of average length of business trips 2013 – 2017

The company`s regular business travellers are mainly project managers, business development director, business and system analysts, key developers, testers and designers of projects. Mostly business travellers are males, however, the ratio between male and female employees in the company is around 70/ 30.

2.3 Existing corporate travel management process in the company

There are several stakeholders for management process of business travel within the company – Project Manager, Business Traveller, Business Travel manager (Office Manager), Accountancy, Senior Human Resources Specialist, Project Support Office and Driver. All mentioned stakeholders` roles are important to have business travel as efficient tool for the company. Project managers are interested in carrying out the work with limits set by agreement with clients and within the settled budget. An employee as business traveller is interested in smooth business travel without stressful situations and to be on time to the meeting with a client.

The Business Travel manager is responsible for finding the best available solutions as for transportation, as for accommodation for business traveller. After all necessary arrangements for transportation and accommodation are made the business travel manager is responsible for passing the information about upcoming business trip to the Accountancy, the Human Resources department and Project Support Office. The Accountancy is making the calculation for expenses that the traveller will need for accommodation and per diem money. The Human Resources specialist will prepare internal documents for the employee`s upcoming business trip. This is important to follow the legislation of the government of Latvia. The Project Support office will follow the business travel expenses and the employee`s reported working hours to make sure that the process fits in the limits stipulated by the contract with the client. The company`s employees go on business trips by

planes, trains, busses but not using their own transport. The driver of the company will take all travellers to and from the airport or the train station or the bus station in Riga. The driver receives the information about all departures and arrivals from the Business Travel manager.

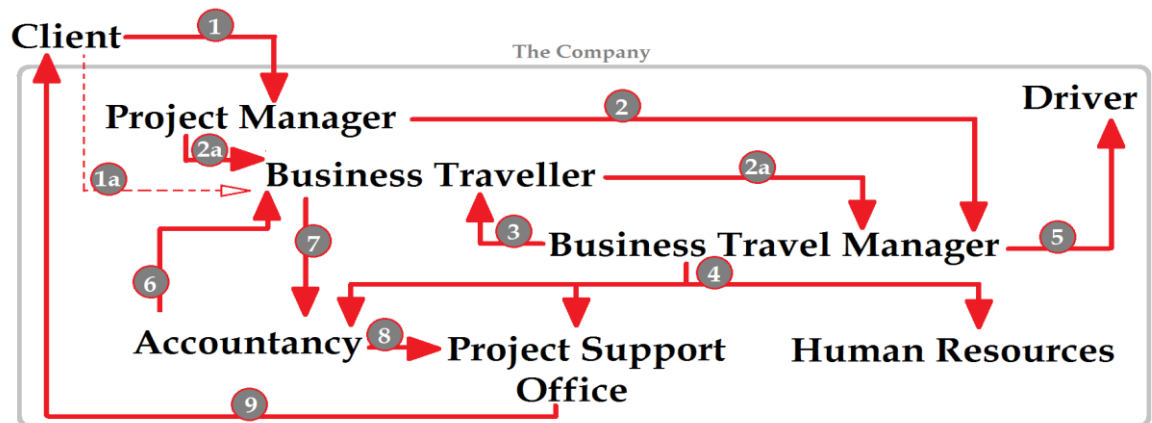


Figure 9 Corporate travel management process in the company until October 2017

The existing process for corporate travel management before planned changes shown in Figure 9. The figure shows the corporate travel management course of the communication. The numbers in the figure shows the continuity of the process.

The Table 3 shows the information and communication channels used in the company for travel management process.

Numbers “1” and “1a” shows the initiator for the business trips as employees take the business trips after agreement with the client’s side employees. The company’s requirements would request the project manager to create a task for the Business Travel manager in the internal electronic system – business travel request (“2”) or the employee to create the task (“2a”) and allow the project manager to follow the progress of the process. However, there are several channels how the necessary arrangements are requested. In the figure... behind number “2” and “2a” can be internal electronic system’s request OR request by email, OR Skype, WhatsApp etc. message, OR even a personal request without any written form. From beginning, it was fully acceptable to have more channels for requesting the Business Travel manager to make all arrangements for a business trip. Already in 2014, the corporate management process showed that it is complicated to have many employees traveling to different destinations and the way of used approaches create possibilities for human error.

Table 3 The information and communication way for corporate travel management process

Number in the Figure	Meaning/ Communication way
1 or 1a	Request for an employee to be in the premises of a client/ Email, phone call, Skype meeting
2 or 2a	Request for the organization of the business trip/ Internal electronic system, email, phone call, Skype/ WhatsApp message, request in person
3	Information about available transport options, a visa if necessary, accommodation, travel insurance/ Email, sometimes phone call
4	Information about an employee`s upcoming business trip`s destination, length and necessary expenses for hotel/ Email
5	Information about business travellers` departure and arrival point and time/ The list for the driver (word document)
6	Calculation of money – expenses for a hotel and daily allowance/ Money transfer to an employee`s bank account
7	Information about expenses during business trip covered by the company/ Travel expenses report and checks/ invoices
8	Information about business travel expenses/ Email (excel file)
9	Information about business travel expenses that need to be covered by a client/ invoice

After receiving the request from the project manager or the employee, the Business Travel manager will send an email to the employee (number “3”) with information about available travel options. Only after receiving the approval for purchasing a specific ticket in written form the business travel manager will proceed with ticket`s purchase and making all arrangements for upcoming business trip. The Business Travel manager will email to the employees email airplane/ train/ bus ticket, a confirmation for hotel and information about travel insurance (“3”). When the information about the transport of the employee`s business trip is confirmed, the business travel manager will include information about the employee`s departure and arrival in the list for a driver (“5”). Starting from the middle of 2013 business travel manager uses AeTM (Amadeus) booking system provided by the travel agency to book tentatively certain flights before the necessary approval is received from

travellers/ clients. It is very useful for Business Travel manager and traveller to have such option because business travel requests come in short notice and prices increase fast.

Usually on Friday mornings all the information about upcoming business travels for the following week is emailed by the Business Travel manager to the Accountancy, the Senior Human Resource specialist and the Project Support Office manager ("4"). This is usually done on Fridays only for business trips that start the following week to make work for the Accountancy easier. All daily allowances and necessary amount of money for hotels are calculated and transferred to an employee`s bank account before the business trip starts ("6").

The next step in the process is happening after the employee comes back from the business trip ("7"). The employee needs to fill the travel expenses report and together with all expenses documents bring to the Accountancy. This process is done manually and there are times when it takes a lot of time for the employees takes a lot of time to fill the travel expenses report and the Accountancy cannot finish the total expense reports which are needed for the Project Support office manager ("8"). The Project Support Office manager from the Accountancy`s reports will create an invoice for the client to cover the business travel expenses ("9"). As the Project Support Office manager follows points of the contract, only those expenses that are agreed they are including in the invoice.

The current process does not satisfy the needs of stakeholders and is out of date. For example, many approaches to the Business Travel manager with requests for all arrangements create situation when some important details are missed and misunderstood. Also for the Accountancy, the Human Resources department and Project Support Office who have a lot of manual paper work to do that repeats with the same data just adjusted to each needs. The Senior Human Resource specialist calculated that to prepare documents for business travel orders for eight months, the manual paper process takes nine working hours. The current system also does not allow for the Business Travel manager to identify to which of the company`s projects employees are traveling to or to get a full picture of the expenses approval. That also influences work of Project Support office and in end of each month the process of preparing the invoices for clients goes slower. One more thing that does not satisfy the Accountancy is the slow process of the business travel report by employees. Sometimes that happens because the travel expenses report seems too complicated for employees. The travel expenses report includes parts that are out dated and mislead reporters and it reflects on Project Support Office work and clients.

2.4 Business travel guidelines at the company

The latest version of Business Travel Guidelines in the company had been reviewed by the Business Travel manager/ Office Manager in the middle of 2015. The content of Business Travel Guidelines gives employee an explanation of the procedure and means of going abroad in 12 points. In guidelines the responsible person for each step is mentioned. Employees are responsible for coordination of business trip with the client and direct manager, creating request for Business travel manager in certain way, checking the expire date for passport and necessary visas, collecting all the travel expenses checks and filling business report for Accountancy, however, some parts of these are not fulfilled by employees.

Although Business Travel Guidelines within the company do not set any limits for transportation tickets or accommodation for an employee, this information is set by a legislation and some parts are set by contracts with clients. For example, contracts can define the class for business traveller or that the clients actually do not pay for hotels.

The guidelines for business travel within the company is more formal internal document than it is actually used by all stakeholders. It contains several other internal documents with described usage policies. However, some of those are outdated and not used by business travellers.

3 Travel management

The travel management is a complex process as for leisure tourism, as for business tourism. It is possible to see the difference between leisure tourism and business tourism, however, in the future it is also expected that this distinction becomes less apparent between the two major tourism markets (Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 62).

Huge potential can be seen for travel apps, which hold hotel confirmation, flight-boarding passes and entertainment tickets and are now being used to avoid printed confirmations – they can also work with calendars to provide timely reminders of travel bookings. It is this part of technology that holds perhaps the greatest potential for changing the way travel companies interact with their customers.

3.1 Business travel

Even if business tourism and business travel even if appear to be similar, there is a significant difference. **Business tourism** is a broader meaning, which includes all aspects of the experience of the business traveller. It also includes **business travel** which focuses more on a business traveller`s movement from point A to point B (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001, page 3).

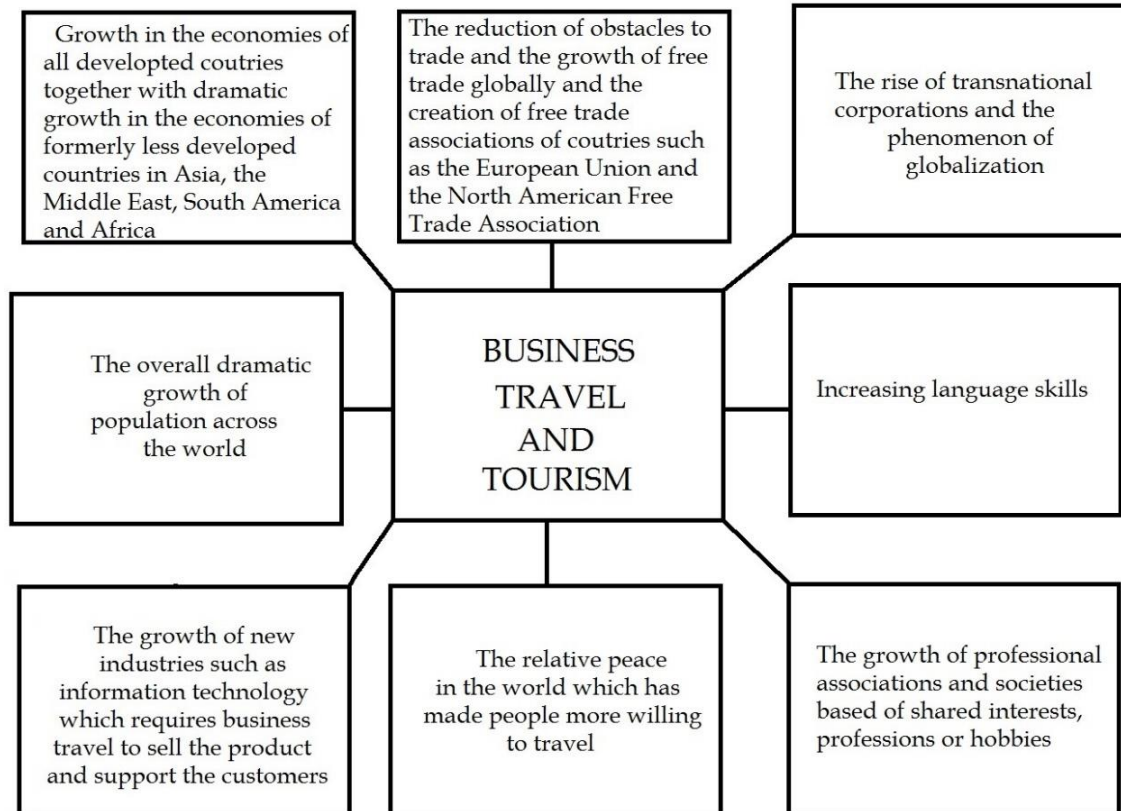


Figure 10 Demand-side factors in the growth of business travel and tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner 2001, page 18)

Business tourism is one of oldest forms of tourism as from ancient time's man travelled for trade. A **business traveller** is a person who travels with a purpose which is related to his/her work (Davidson & Cope 2003, page 2). However, from only 1950s business travel and tourism experienced the explosion which could be happened because business travellers' demand's and business tourisms supply`s sides have been influenced by different factors. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2001, page 17). These factors are shown in Figure 10 and Figure 11. Demanding – side factors with growing economies and reduction of obstacles for trade and the globalization could become influenced by the development of transportation. The transportation became faster, bigger and promoted mobility of people. With new technologies also increased the number of specialist intermediaries that could provide necessary services for business travellers.

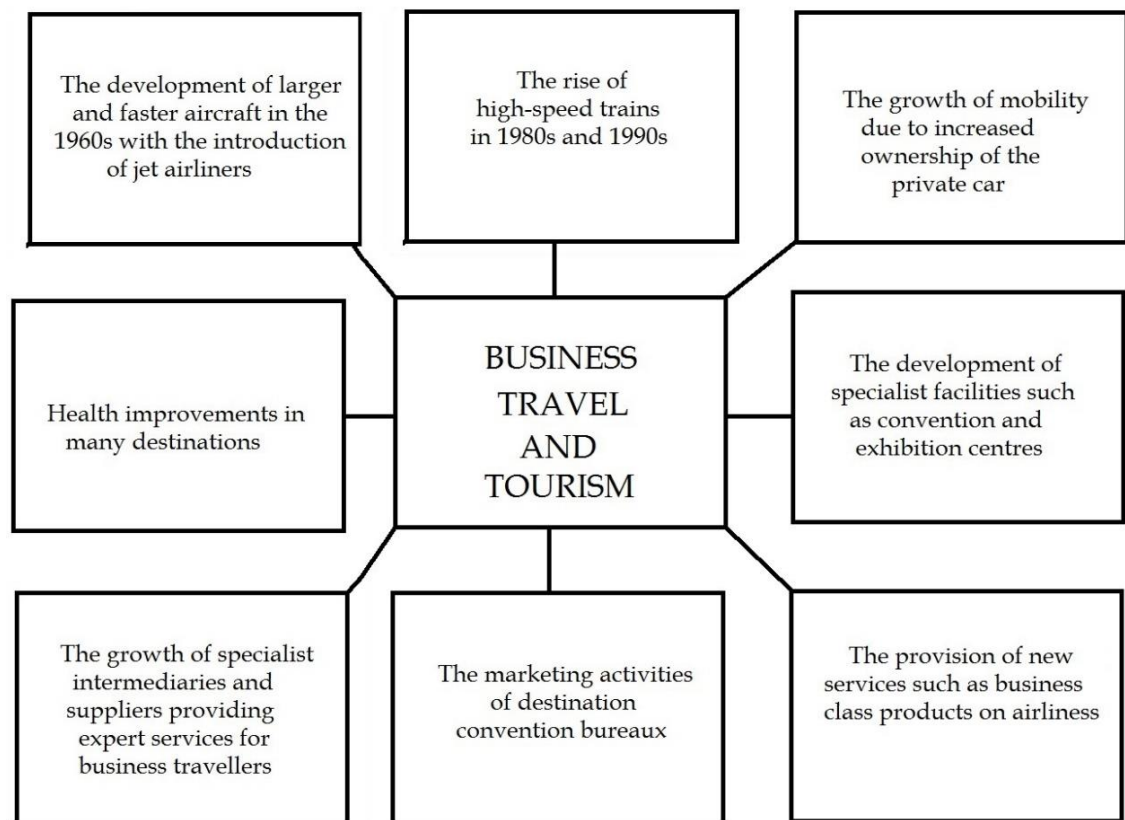


Figure 11 Supply-side factors in the growth of business travel and tourism (Swarbrooke & Horner 2001, page 19)

Since the business travel and tourism have experienced the rise from 1950s a lot of things changed and business travel management become more complex process (Nevmerzhitskaya J. 2013, page 12). The supply side of the business travel and tourism has more complex character because of the different types of business tourism. Each of these types need its own specific supply chain (Swarbrooke & Horner 2001, page 26).

In second decade of 21st century business tourism has four key`s forms. The **travel for purpose to attend different types of meetings** which vary impressively in their size is one of the most widespread form of business tourism (Davidson & Cope 2003, page 72; Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 319). The meetings are organized primarily with an objective that is linked to the attendees` professional activity, for example, conferences (organized by professional/ trade associations, government organizations) and corporate meetings (organized by companies). However, there are other types of meetings (SMERF) that are not held by professional associations, companies or government organizations. Those are **social meetings** which includes all groups meeting for social interaction (special interest groups), **military meetings** for reunion of people who served in the armed forces during periods of conflict, **educational meetings** are generally attended by teachers, lectures and academic researchers to share their research in particular subject area, **religious meetings** for bringing together people who share the same faith, and **fraternal meetings** of sororities, fraternities and other fraternal organizations (Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 321).

The similar form of business tourism to the travel to attend meetings is **travels to attend exhibitions and trade fairs**. However, the main difference is that exhibitions and trade fairs are market events where attendants are members of public seeking to buy, find information about product (goods or service) that is need for their own personal consumption, or trade fairs` visitors are looking for vital goods and services to the effective function of their business (Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 331).

Incentive travel can be used to motivate employees of any company to work harder. The incentive travel is fully paid by a company for travel of employees who have been awarded a luxury trip as prize for high results at work. Usually on incentive travel go individuals or teams and the trip would last for three to five days long. As prize the incentive travel is one of the most luxurious and highest spending form of tourism that exist and it should encourage employees to their utmost to get it. Otherwise, people who go on incentive travel look and behave like leisure tourists (Davidson & Cope 2003, page 159; Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 327).

The last key`s form of business tourism is **individual business travel** which also can be referred as **corporate travel**. These travels are taken by all individuals who are oblige to travel because of work. Travels can be either regularly or on occasional basis (Davidson & Cope 2003, page 32; Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 335).

The business travel is a highly competitive market and different companies can use travel agencies and travel management companies (TMC) to try to reduce business travel costs (Page 2007, page 266 – 267; Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, page 147; Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 319). As for travel agencies offering corporate travel service for companies need to deal with situation when their customer is a company, but their offered service consumers are the company`s employees. The individual business travel`s simplified supply side chain is shown in Figure 12. It clearly shows that the business traveller is mainly a consumer within business tourism when his/ her employer is the customer who decides the destination of travel, influences the time period for the trip etc. The travel management process when it comes to business travel is different from leisure tourism because business traveller (Table 4) will be very demanding of time and service, often booking are made at short notice, sometimes outside regular office hours (Page 2007, page 266; Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 669).

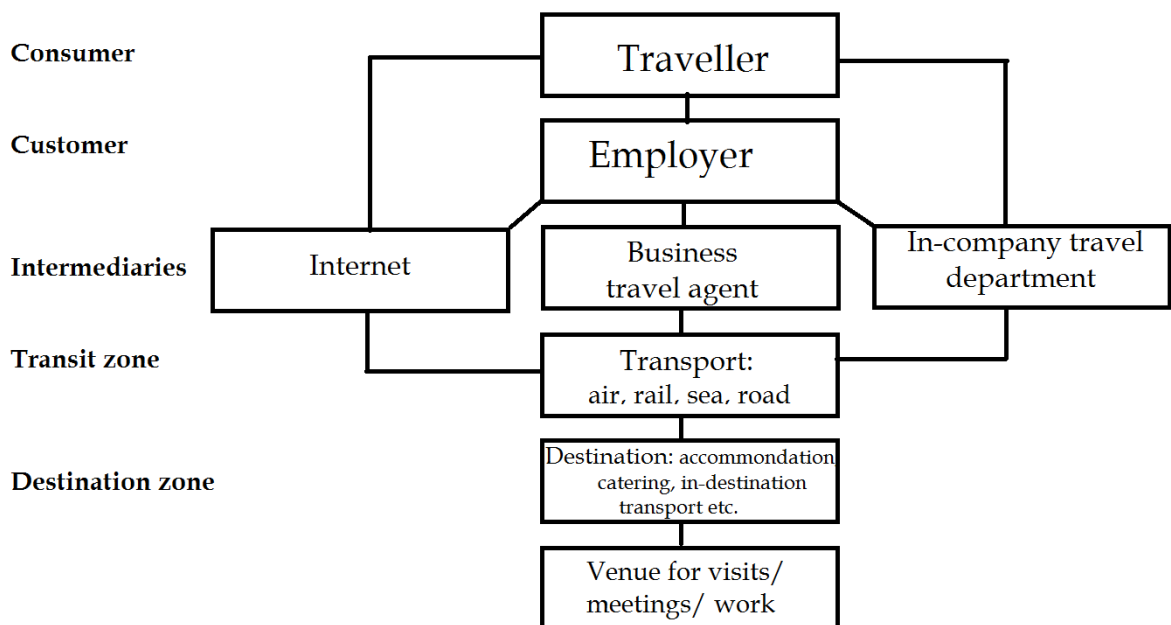


Figure 12 An individual business trip supply side (Swarbrooke & Horner 2001, page 37)

The business travellers` expectations tend to be higher as they are more experienced travellers, they often are travelling on higher daily budget than the average leisure traveller and also the suppliers like airlines and hotels focused their promotional efforts on impressing the business traveller as they have recognized how lucrative is business tourism and travels (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, page 147). However, Carlson Wagonlit Travel (CWT) Travel Management Institute`s research in 2015 about the impact of emerging technologies and managed travel showed that one of the trend is sharing economy and business travellers are using such services as Airbnb or Uber for ground transportation (CWT 2015).

Table 4 Differences in consumer behaviour between business tourist and leisure tourist (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, page 146)

<i>BUSINESS TOURIST</i>	<i>LEISURE TOURIST</i>
Is the consumer who uses service but not the customer	Is both the customer who makes decision and pays the bill and consumer who uses the service
Does not usually choose their destination	Nearly always chooses their destination
Travels relatively frequently	Travels relatively infrequently
Takes trips which are generally shorter in duration	Takes trips which are on average longer than the business tourist
Trip planning period can be very short (hours) to very long for conferences delegates (several years)	Plans trip over generally medium timescale (few weeks to a year)
Less budget-conscious as not paying the cost of the trip	Relatively cost-conscious as usually paying the bill themselves
Usually more experienced, demanding consumer	Generally less experienced, less demanding consumer

3.2 Travel management requirements for a company/ Business travel policy

Business travel and tourism is important part of part of tourism because of its lucrative and sustainable nature. Business travel and the expenses related to the travel are the third largest for corporations (Cook & Yale & Marqua 2006, page 58). Companies, for who's own business carrying out, business travels take important role, set up a number of measures to control and limit their employees` spending on transport and accommodation while they are travelling on the company`s business. The company`s **travel policy** is the main technique that is used to control expenses (Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 335).

Before was mentioned that one of the business tourism supply side factor was the provision of new services such as business class in airplanes (Table 4), today as corporate travels` expenses for companies are high they are looking for options to cut them or make expenses more effective. Efforts to cut costs are ensuring that business travellers no longer spend as freely as they did before (Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 335). Today for example business class could be used for long haul flights as exceptional or if it is predicted in the business travel policy of the company. For last years, this trend have been noticed by airlines and today some of airlines have invested to create new class in

aircrafts – premium economy. It is still economy, but offer more space for a traveller that is highly appreciated. To cut the costs companies are willing to buy more tourism products, particularly air tickets through the Internet (Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 338).

Tourism suppliers taking into account business travel nature of being inflexible for price and seasonality try to become more attractive and work on creating Business to Business (B2B) offers. The Internet has facilitate also the reservation of hotels. For example, one of well-known hotels` reservation site Booking.com offers companies create profile and make booking as corporate customer. In addition, the low cost carriers made their way to attract more business travellers and become more attractive to corporate customers by setting fares that include all services that could be crucial to business travellers.

A **business travel manager** is a company`s employees who is responsible for monitoring the travels of employees and ensuring that they comply with the company`s travel policy. The travel manager may also be responsible for negotiating with suppliers like airline companies and hotels for better agreement conditions and rates (Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 336). However, for the second part duties – negotiation with suppliers from a company`s side – can be done by travel agencies/ agents if a company is their corporate customer. If a company has an employee responsible for arranging and/ or monitoring all business travels then this person might also have different duties in a company like secretarial for example (Gustafson 2012, 279).

The business travel plays fundamental role in supporting business and that is the reason why business travel management should be treated seriously (Roby 2014, 22). The last decades have shown that the development of technologies cannot influence business travel so much to decrease the need for business travel.

Even if companies are seeking for the most efficient value for money from business travel and tourism providers it is misleading to believe that companies always look for cheapest fares and hotel rates for their employees who are travelling on business. Companies would not cut their corporate travel costs if those affect employees comfort, safety and employees` loyalty and morale (Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 336). Actually, all previously mentioned reasons are not worth to cut the costs that during the employees` business trip could be situation that can create increase of expenses or even affect the work of an employee that is the main travel purpose. It is important to have within a company proactive approach control management of business travel and expenses by using reasonable travel policy (Holma, Bask, Kauppi 2015, 61 – 63).

3.3 Systems for travel management – different approaches of business travel management

By how business travels are organized, they can be divided in two groups – managed business travel or unmanaged. Unmanaged business travel would be when all business travel bookings are made by employees themselves or only some arrangements are done by travel agencies.

Companies whose successful work relays on their employees business travel outcome looking for solutions for more effective travel costs led to corporate travel management process has been connected with travel management software. The technology and its possibilities allows IT companies to provide systems for corporate travel management that can be linked to accounting software. It allows to manage travel bookings and expense payments. That allows to control an employee's spent business trip and ensure that travel bookings are in line with a company's corporate travel policy.

These travel software's can contain negotiated discount rates or fixed prices for a company's business travel needs. As the safety of an employee during business travel is one of a company's basic need such software can keep track of employees in case of emergency by using booking information (Holloway & Humphreys 2016, page 703).

With increased possibilities for technologies and increased business trips there are working numbers of corporate travel management (CTM) companies providing management systems of business travel for companies all around the world. When a company choose to use one of many offered business travel management systems or even orders their own tailor made there are a lot of benefits like all their business trips' systematization, expertise of travel management companies, existing relationship with suppliers, consistent policy improvement and even risk management and emergency assistance. On the other side, systems of business travel management are costly and in some cases there might be resistance from employees.

4 Methodology

4.1 Constructive research

As the best approach for this thesis have been chosen constructive research. The constructive approach should solve managerial problem through construction of models, plans, concepts, toolboxes and it should create new reality without explaining the existing one (Figure 13). It also produces novel solutions to practically and theoretically problems (Holmberg 30 August 2013) and should improve the business travel management practice within the company.

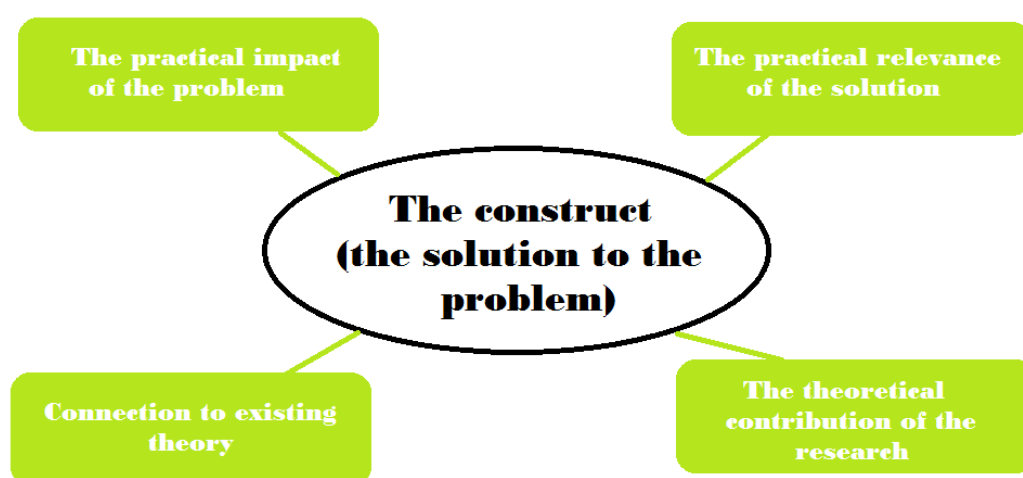


Figure 13 Key feature of constructive research (Holmberg 30 August 2013)



Figure 14 The process of constructive research (Holmberg 30 August 2013)

The constructive research (Figure 14) gives opportunity for researchers and developers to use different methods to collect data. It allows using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Also very common is combination of them. For data collection can use interviews, focus groups, observation, document analysis, learning other innovative techniques and surveys (Holmberg 30 August 2013).

4.2 Data collection and analysis

To reach the aim of this thesis data will be collected in several ways:

1. Separate interviews – feedback collection of existing process from following stakeholders – business travel manager, project support office, accountant, human resources specialist and project managers;
2. Regular focus group meetings – twice a month with business travel manager, project support office manager, head of human department and responsible project manager and designer for the development of new business travel management tool;
3. Feedback collection from business travellers starting from the new tool's first release;
4. Focus group meetings with business travel manager, project support office manager, head of human department, human resources specialist, accountant and responsible project manager of the development of business travel management tool to discuss and prioritize necessary improvements for the tool and adjust project implementation plan;
5. Feedback collection from all stakeholders after main planned functionality of the tool is released.

Separate interviews were conducted with Project Support Office manager, the Accountant, Senior Human Resources Specialist and Business Travel manager. The interviews were conducted in the end of 2016 about existing process and after those; the process of business travel management was described.

4.3 Stakeholders` interviews and findings from feedbacks

First feedbacks about existing business travel management process collected from following stakeholders – Business Travel manager, Chief Accountancy, Project Support Office specialist and Senior Human Resources Specialist. It is planned that the new travel management system will relieve manual workload for previously mentioned stakeholders first hand. This information reveals the main problems and allows for employees who create the new look and workflow of the upcoming system analyse needs of stakeholders. Business travellers` feedbacks will be collected after new system will be created because current process reveals the main problems for other stakeholders not for business travellers as the current process allows them to communicate in many ways and other stakeholders work very closely with each other to provide as much as possible smooth process of business travel management.

During interviews with Project Support Office manager, Senior Human Resources and Business Travel manager reveal that none of stakeholders without information from a business traveller or business traveller` direct manager cannot name specific project that business travel expenses need to be added. The worst situation with it is for Business

Travel manager because she sees only request for dates from one of business travellers. However, the very common case is for Project Support Office manager to request information about specific project`s business travel expenses. For the Accountant the most trouble creates business travel expenses reports that employees do not provide on time and even creates situations when the Accountant is forced to approach several time to an employee to receive it. For that stakeholders agreed that future business travel management tool should automatically send notifications to an employee if he/ she do not pass the business travel report within five business days.

The inner information about business travel, as in business travel guidelines as in intranet, gives to only interested employees some information about responsibilities during the process but not the specific information what happens after what. For example, Project managers, several business travellers and Business Travel manger said that the employee`s manger is responsible for creating the business travel request for the employee but in reality it happens quite rare cases because project managers are too busy or finds this as employees responsibility. As there cannot be found information about the limits for transportation, mainly airplane ticket, expenses Business Travel manager often gets into situations when she cannot explain to the employee rules of the limits for each business trip. However, the project managers are responsible to follow budgets of projects. Also the company`s contracts with clients are confidential information and Project Support Office manager can reveal that in contracts, about business travel expenses, is said that the employee should travel in economy class. Additional to covering expenses for transportation clients pay daily allowances for business days that the employee spends in the premises of client. The company, not the client, covers the hotel expenses during the business trip. Business Travel manger and Accountant reveals that the amount limits for spent for hotels during business trips in Latvia is set legislation and often happens situations when employees request to stay in certain hotels where stays also clients but the rate per night is over legislation set limits. In those cases, other hotels are chosen. Due to that employees time to time critique the current business travel process and the company`s business travel guidelines.

Business Travel manager marks that the situation with hotels and the need to explain reasons why requested hotels could not be booked for employees gives an idea that not all business travellers are familiar with contracts` information. And that project managers as more competent for the project`s scope should monitor the situation with business travels more agrees also Project Support Office manager.

The recommended existing business travel requests requires to create tasks for Business Travel manager in the internal system and as mentioned already before this request process is not always preferred from business travellers side. Business travellers admit and Business Travel manager agrees that sometimes it is faster to send an email or just text. However, already the existing process allows the Business Travel manager to follow all actual business trips and easier to find information if changes are requested. Business Travel manager says that usually business travel requests were closed after business trip ends and an employee is back in Riga.

One more thing that revealed about the process of business travel request during interviews with business travellers is that they do not follow if they will need visa for their travel or even if they need travel insurance or do they have yearly travel insurance. Business travellers with in the company believes that they do not need to know that because it is Business Travel manager`s responsibility.

During group interviews of stakeholders, except business travellers, participated also the team responsible for the development of new tool to get fuller picture of things that should be mandatory for new process of business travel request. One of things that Business Travel manager, Project Support Office manager and the Accountant agreed that in new system of business travel requests business traveller should be involved so much that without official business travel request they would not be able to fill in working hours or somehow in other way they would be forced to follow the rules.

Group discussion led to specific previous cases that were discussed to understand what new tool should get along with. Such case was previously described situation about common situations when employees would like to stay longer/ arrive earlier at the destination to stay some days on their own expense. The development team offered to include such option in the original request of business trip and an employee would only need to tick the box if he/ she would like use such opportunity.

Also during group interviews/ discussion about current situation and experienced cases stakeholder came to idea that for future management process of business travels should not be allowed cases that employees could create requests of business trip with passed date. One of problem marked by Business Travel manager and Chief Accountant was that employees promise to create business trip request for Business Travel manager but after some parts of business trip have arranged do not even try to fulfil the promised. Such cases most often happens when business trip is request short notice before the travel date via email, message or call.

From interviews outcomes it became clear that business travellers are not willing to get involved in business travel management process more than at current process. For example, previously mentioned AeTM booking system allows for business travellers book necessary airplane/ train ticket on their own, however, Business travel manager explained that business travellers are not interested in using it or it seems too complicated for them.

5 Project plan and implementation

5.1 Implementation stages and difficulties during adaptation

It was agreed with the company that before the actual process is going to be started for real and implemented in the daily work life, approximate process will be created to know the costs and to collect feedback from stakeholders. All that is going to be done to calculate planned success – simpler process for all stakeholders, less manual paper work, more systemized process, additional monitoring and easier overview.

The development of the business travel request's system will be integrated in the system for working hours report and the vacation planning tool. That will allow to automatize the working hour report during business trips for employees.

The general project implementation is divided in two main parts with the company:

1. After analysing and discussing the current process of business travel management, the new business travel management will be in test environment and Business Travel manager will work together with the team who is responsible for development of the new tool;
2. The release of the new business travel management tool and the elimination of the current business travel request process.

The actual implementation of the new process were several times postponed because several senior managers strictly objected of the need of new business travel request process as they as business travellers did not see the need for it. Necessary information to request business travel in the existing business travel management process is shown in Figure 15.

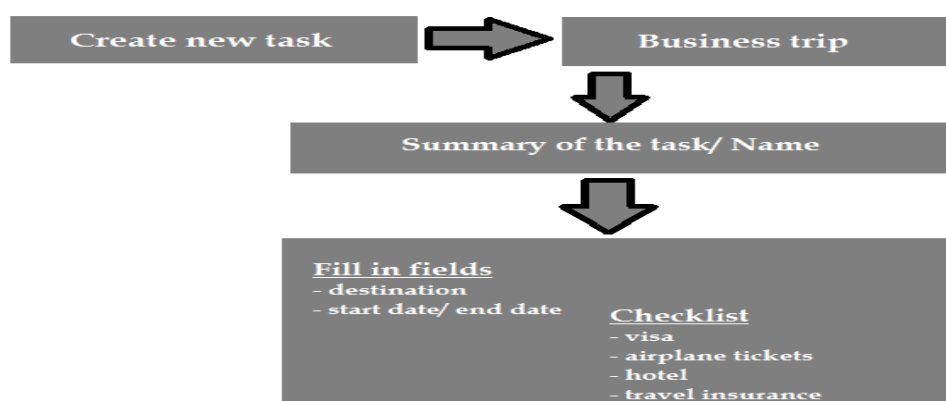


Figure 15 Required information for creating business trip request in existing process

As in the existing business trip request, required information is not mandatory, except for summary of the task; employees often choose to fill only that part of the task. As example,

Business Travel manager mentioned that complete request of the business travel can be described as “Please organise business trip to Zurich for Nov 9 - 13”. Although, there is available description field where business travellers can be more specific about their upcoming business trip, for example, for time when they need to travel (morning/ midday/ evening), by giving the address where they need to be so that the hotel can be booked nearby. To help Business Travel manager it was agreed with the development team that there should be mandatory fields for specifying the time before when an employee need to at the destination and after what time an employee can leave to travel back home.

The objection against new business travel management tool even reach the point where the development of new business travel request process was stopped and there were attempts to improve the current process by adding some functionality and explain business travellers again the process of business travel requests. However, even after such action other stakeholders insisted on new advanced tool, as there were opportunity to add valuable functionality to the whole process of business travel management. The overpower were gained when the existing tool could not provide functionality of signing the Data Protection Awareness form that business travellers needed to be in charge and were requested by clients.

After several group interviews of all stakeholders, except business travellers, were initiated in the beginning of 2017 to discuss the work stream for new business travel management tool. Other resources like inner documents, business travel guidelines, and internal officially published information, “about business travel” in Intranet, were used to answer unclear details about the process within the company of business travel management. During the development of the new also this other internal information were improved.

During the analysis of the of the process of business travel management the Accountancy, the Project Support Office manager, the Business Travel manager together with the responsible the Project Manager of the development of new tool reviewed the report of business travel expenses. The business travel expenses report was updated and for future tool of business travel management planned to be part of it. The idea is that the employee will be able to download the report directly from space where all information about specific business trip will be stored. To invite employees to use this new tool by downloading the business travel expenses report it will be party filled with necessary information. After new business travel expenses report where introduced to the company`s employees, Chief Accountant said that the collected feedback from business travellers and filled business travel reports showed that the new report employees find easier to understand.

5.1 Business Travel management offers for companies

While new tool for business travel management within the company was in progress, different offers for business travel management were looked through. As mentioned before for business travel management can be used many online tools that are offered. Usually those who offer online tools for business travel management also offer to adjust existing their platform to clients` needs for additional money and then a company can get almost tailor made business travel management solution. "Almost tailor made" wording is used because the tool or platform will be adjusted to offeror`s original platform. However, if the tool, program, or platform will be created from zero, it will be expensive.

Some of online solutions for business travel management is advertised as "free to use". However, when the solution is investigated more properly, a company might find that the offered free solution does not work for their needs and they need the solution for additional money.

To get better overview of several platforms of business travel management – offers were inspected more carefully. Even if some of platforms informed that they have available free demo, not all were easy to explore closer without any registration. The registration means that contact information is given already to a platform`s sales people who will try adjust their offer and sell it. In some cases, service provider was outside of Europe and that creates communication problem with time zone.

The more careful picture were discussed with Travelperks about their offered automated business travel platform (Table 5). They actually at first try to sell their product with "free for use" phrase and it might be excellent solution for some companies. The platform is combined Skyscanner and popular hotels` booking sites. They advertised themselves as platform where, for example, airplane tickets can be purchased less expensive. However, there might be serious underwater rocks afterwards. The sites for purchasing tickets that are used at first gives the cheapest tickets for basic fares that mostly are non-refundable and non-changeable. Nevertheless, these nuances might be critical for business trips when plans might change very fast.

After comparing six simple and already created systems for business travel management that are offered (Travelperks 2017, Trippeo 2017, NexTravel 2017, Skyjunxion 2017, CWT 2017, Travelport Locomote 2017) as easy to use and adjust to each company`s needs, can be seen certain similarities. For example, as already mentioned Travelperks, as Trippeo platform gives specific prices for using their platform – it is around 10 EUR/ per

booking. One booking is made for airplane ticket and hotel reservation. Some platforms also offers to create expense reports and travellers can add pictures of invoices and checks directly to the platform.

Table 5 Online business travel management platform`s Travelperks offer

Pros as advertised	Cons after closer look	Price
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Possibility to book all business trips in one place; ✓ The cheapest available flights; ✓ The cheapest available hotel options; ✓ Business trip can be booked for only yourself (one traveller) or for others as well; ✓ Securely store personal data for all travellers including loyalty cards and preferences; ✓ Possible to add corporates for hotels; ✓ Built in travel policy option; ✓ Overview of all business trip booked; ✓ Real time expense reports; ✓ Integrate with popular apps; ✓ Approval workflow; ✓ 24/7 Customer Support service; ✓ “free to use”; ✓ “All business travel expenses in one place and one invoice”; ✓ “up to 30% saving on business travel” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The online platform is built from combining the most popular travel platforms – for flights Skyscanner.net and for hotels Booking.com, Expedia, AirBnB, AMADEUS, Travelport; - Privacy policy according GDPR is doubtful; - Most of advertised pros are included in Premium package plan including more than one automated travel policy, custom approval workflows, custom repots, monthly money transfer option, travel optimization insights, custom integration, 5 minutes to speak to the Customer service, travellers` requests and preferred hotels; - Any custom integrations are also not included in premium package plan; - Not possible to add any corporate codes for airline companies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Free to use ➤ 10 EUR/ per booking ➤ Any custom integration for additional charge

For the company in Latvia business travel expenses are not only for airplane tickets and for hotels` stays. The expenses also include daily allowances, transportation, local sim cards and internet for more far destinations. All these things are important to include in expenses reports to get full picture of business travel management within the company.

Suggested incorporated business travel policies for all business travel management solutions included that business trip arrangements should be made certain time before planned business trip dates. For example, airplane tickets should be booked at least one week before planned travel dates or hotels should be booked at least two weeks before planned visit. These offered policies are reasonable, but with business travel within the company, there are no guaranties that this kind of policies can be fulfilled.

Other business travel policies can also include limits of spending per hotel in destinations or suggest using preferred airline companies.

Most of online offered solutions for business travel management leaves impression that they consist of expenses for airplane (transportation) tickets and spending for hotels. These two great positions of expenses all offered solutions of business travel management suggest to include in one invoice for convenience. Although, online solutions for management of business travel offer to give invoices for specific departments, that not always could fit for the needs of the company for cases when some part of business trip expenses are included in the invoices for clients.

Most of founded online solutions for business travel management include for business travellers to make their reservations on them own. For example, if within the used tool business travel policy of the company is set correctly, business travellers will be able to see what they can choose to fit with the company`s business travel guidelines/ policy.

As already mentioned before, the company`s Business Travel manager uses direct airplane ticket booking tool and book regular airlines` airplane tickets via AeTM which is user friendly interface Amadeus global distribution system. As demand for business travel management online increases, Amadeus is also forced to become better and more work for its needs of clients. For example, during Spring 2018, their system also changed and become more attractive for users. One of the biggest changes was that Amadeus new global distribution system Symphony introduced their clients with possibility to build in business travel policy. Other great functionality that they added to the online system was hotels` bookings. Although, Amadeus offer sound the same way as for example Travelperks there is huge difference – Amadeus is global distribution system with direct booking system, but

Travelperks combine several online sites also with direct booking possibility but not showing the final price and fare rules in full amount.

5.2 The business travel request process in the test environment (March 24th, 2017)

The team responsible for development of the new tool for creating of business travel requests on March 2017 acquainted the new tool in test environment to the Business Travel manager. Due to the planned process management, the Business Travel manager will be the person who will work the most with the new tool of business travel management and for that, it is important for her to get familiar with the tool and evaluate it. The planned process of business travel management is shown in Figure 16.

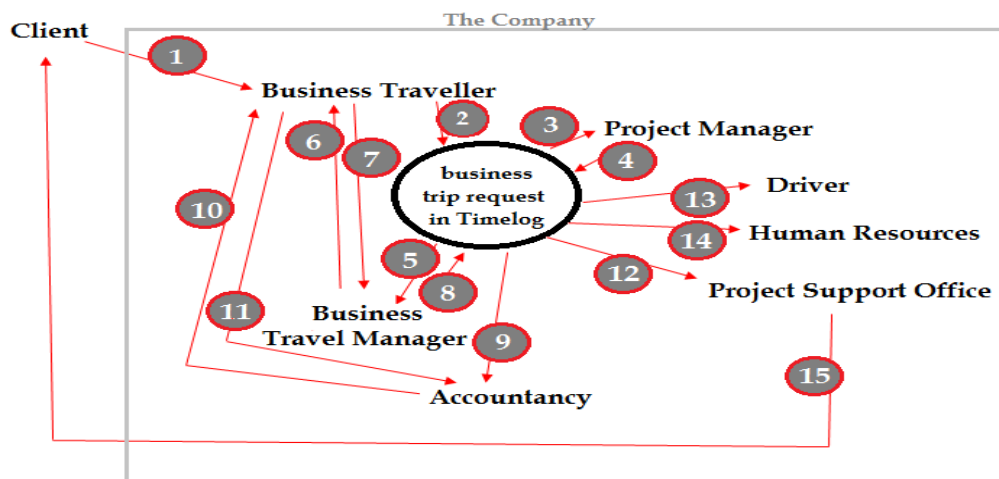


Figure 16 New business travel management process in the company in test environment

Comparing to the current process it is planned that the new system will allow only one way of approach for requesting a business trip. And all stakeholders that during the current process of business travel management create their own excel table will be able to get information directly from the system with necessary report. Even more, all travellers will see their planned business trip in the system as whole – information about flights, hotels and travel insurance. It is planned that Business Travel manager will be the responsible person to follow the data shown in the system.

The planned process` communication channels are explained in Table 6.

Table 6 The planned communications channels for business travel management in test environment

Number in the figure	Meaning/ way of the communication
1	Request for an employee to be in the premises of a client/ email, phone call, skype meeting
2	An employee creates Business Trip request in the system/ internal business travel management system
3	Business Travel management system sends request for the manager of an employee/ An email from the system
4	Project manager approves or declines the Business Travel request/ internal Business Travel management system
5	Business Travel management system informs Business Travel manager that an employee requested business trip organization and is/ her project manager approved it/ An email from the system
6	An employee receives information with available travel options/ An email to employee from Business Travel manager
7	An employee informs Business Travel manager about preferred transport options and other preferences/ An email
8	All information about arrangements for upcoming business trip of an employee collected in one place/ Business Travel management system
9	The accountancy receives information about upcoming business trips with all necessary calculations made by the internal system/ a report from Business Travel management system
10	Planned expenses for business trip check by the accountant/ Money transfer to an employee`s bank account
11	Information about real expenses during business trip covered by the company/ Travel expenses report and checks/ invoices
12	All information about expenses of business trips that need to be included in invoices for clients/ a report from Business Travel management system
13	Information about all business travellers` departure and arrival point and time/ a report from Business Travel management system
14	All internal documentations – orders for business trips/ automatically generated orders from Business Travel management system
15	Information about business travel expenses that need to covered by clients/ invoices

As planned the management of all business trips have embedded in the same system where employees report their working hours and request annual vacations. In the test environment, the new business trip request is planned to be as 3-steps action from an employee (Figure 17, Figure 18, Figure 19). All required information from employee is divided in three main blocks – information about the purpose of the business trip. All business trips are divided in four categories describing expenses category – business development, visiting colleagues in Minsk/ Riga, visiting clients` offices and going on conferences. During exploring the process of business travel management already in test environment become clear that originally planned purpose for travels to Minsk need to have the opposite as well as there are the company`s subsidiary company located and that the new business travel management system will be applied to them as well.

The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Add activity" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The dialog is labeled "Step 1 of 3" in the top right. It contains the following fields:

- Activity type:** A dropdown menu with "Business trip" selected.
- Approver:** A searchable dropdown menu with "Select" and a magnifying glass icon.
- Goal:** A dropdown menu with "Conference" selected.
- Conference name:** An empty text input field.

At the bottom of the dialog, there are two buttons: a blue "Next" button and a "Cancel" link.

Figure 17 Creation of business trip request, step 1 in test environment

It is planned that during creation process of new business travel request an employee will fill in all fields' information that is needed for other stakeholders (Figure 17, Figure 18, Figure 19). The information will reveal the purpose of business trip (business development, meeting the client, meeting Minsk/ Riga colleagues or conference/ training), travel dates including specification of timing when an employee can travel or need to be in the premises of client, direct manager who approves upcoming business trip and if an employee would like to stay longer. As all those fields are mandatory and for some purposes the additional information will be requested from the business travel management system. For example, if an employee will give the purpose of the business trip "meeting the client" additional field will request to choose from all actual projects for the project that he/ she if traveling. In addition, all mentioned actual projects in the drop down is linked to certain contract with clients. Another example is for conferences/ trainings – an employee will need to provide link to actual task from internal task system for him/ her allowing attending

conference or training. In the same moment, the purpose of the business trip will give a track for dividing expenses for stakeholders.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Add activity" with a close button (X) in the top right corner. The form is at "Step 2 of 3" and is titled "Full period of stay (provide dates for flight tickets)".

Destination 1: London

- City: London (with a search icon and dropdown arrow)
- Period: 20.03.17 (with a calendar icon) and 25.03.17 (with a calendar icon)
- Need to be at a place: Morning (dropdown) and Evening (dropdown)

Destination 2: New-York

- City #2: New-York (with a search icon and dropdown arrow) and a "Remove destination" link
- Period: 25.03.17 (with a calendar icon) and 28.03.17 (with a calendar icon)
- Need to be at a place: Morning (dropdown) and Evening (dropdown)

There is a link "Add one more destination" below the second destination.

Include days for my own time

Official business trip period

Select dates of your official business trip

22.03.17 (with a calendar icon) 26.03.17 (with a calendar icon)

i Please provide on the next screen, additional information about your trip. Like time when you want tickets to be bought

At the bottom, there are three buttons: "Next" (blue), "Back" (grey), and "Cancel" (blue text).

Figure 18 Creation of business trip request, step 2 in test environment

On the last step of the request of business trip creation an employee will also need to tick the box for data protection awareness form. The recommendation says that before ticking that box employees must also read it and by ticking, they sign that form. Because of this necessity, the business trip request can be created only by the employee and only for himself/ herself.

In case if an employee would like to add specific information for Business Travel manager like preferred hotel or airline company, he/ she can use comment section. However, the comment field the symbols are limited.

Add activity
✕

Additional information
Step 3 of 3

Need hotel
 Need visa

Comment

Please provide here some specific requests if needed...

Submit

Back

Cancel

Figure 19 Creation of business trip request, step 3 in test environment

After creation of business trip, an employee will see planned business trip in his/ her calendar in the system. In the calendar, all employees can see his/ hers plans for vacation and business trips. Before approval by project managers, business trips in calendar are in white colour. When approved the colour changes to blue (Figure 20).

logo MyEfforts MyCalendar
JA

✓ Well done, **Samir**

You don't have unreported hours.
Have a nice and productive day!

✓ Request sent to
approver

🏠 📅 ✈️ 👥

Calendar

List

Add activities

Your team

< Mar 2017 >

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 📅 Inna Kaslova	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px; font-size: 0.8em;">Arthur Rumpel</div> <div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px; font-size: 0.8em;">Inna Kaslova</div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 5px;"> <div style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px; font-size: 0.8em;">Inna Kaslova</div> <div style="background-color: #0070C0; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px; font-size: 0.8em;">Inna Kaslova</div> </div>						
29	30	31	3	4	5	6

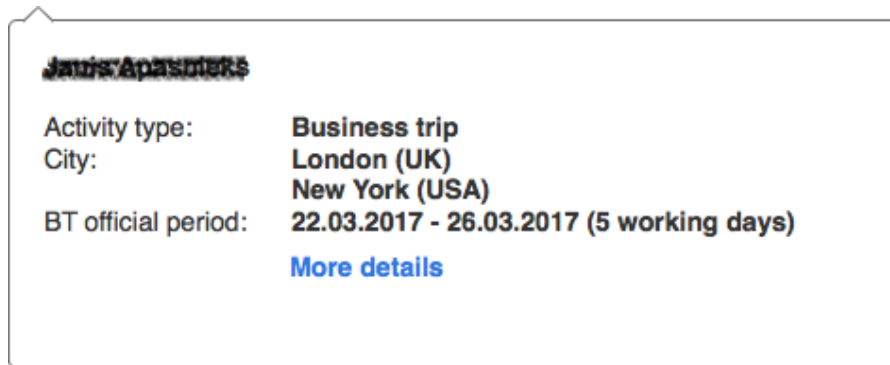
Available vacation days:

13

📅 [Days calculator](#)

Figure 20 The planned calendar view in internal system for activities

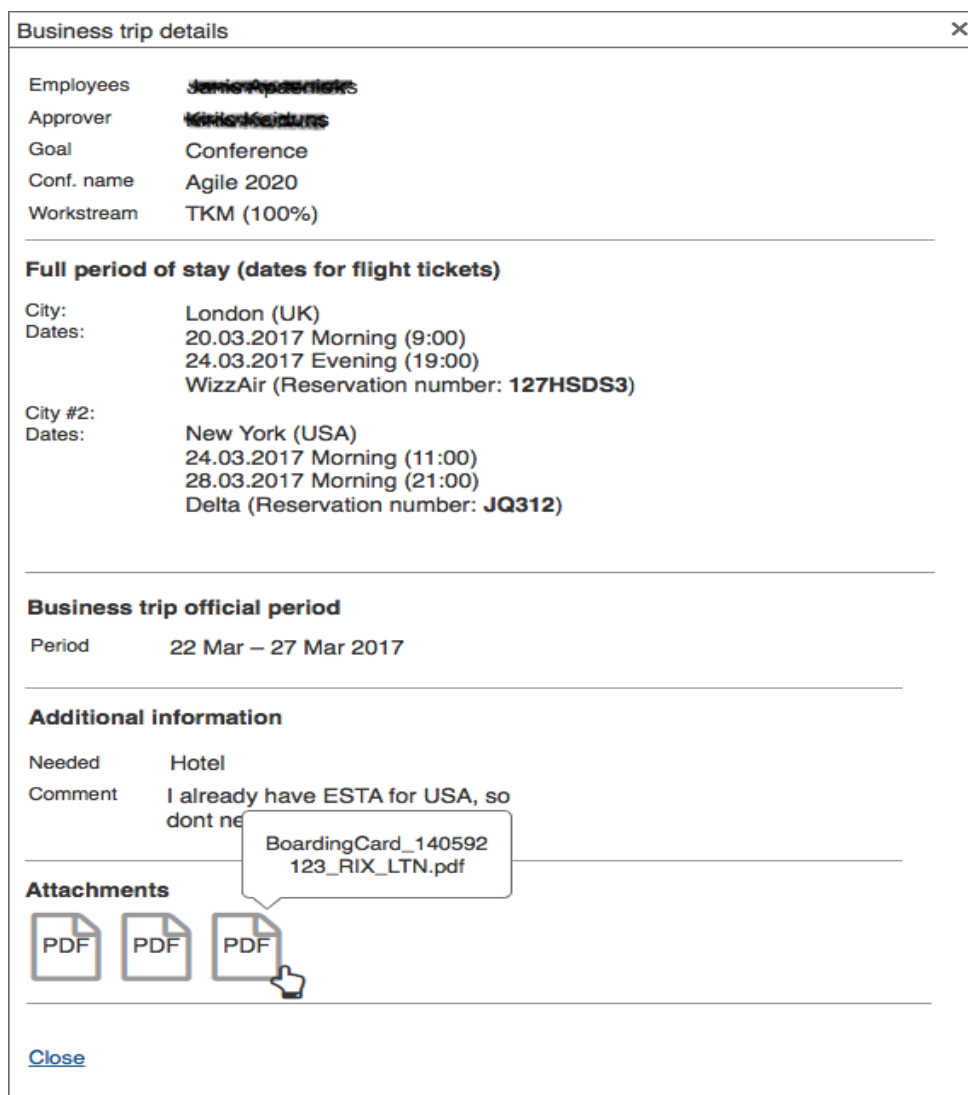
In the calendar view, an employee can click on business trip to see short overview of upcoming business trip (Figure 21). To see all information he/ she needs to press “More details” and then all information about upcoming business trip is show (Figure 22).



Janis Apasotars

Activity type: **Business trip**
City: **London (UK)**
New York (USA)
BT official period: **22.03.2017 - 26.03.2017 (5 working days)**
[More details](#)

Figure 21 Short overview of upcoming business trip in the calendar view



Business trip details

Employees: **Janis Apasotars**
Approver: **Walter Keitums**
Goal: Conference
Conf. name: Agile 2020
Workstream: TKM (100%)

Full period of stay (dates for flight tickets)

City: London (UK)
Dates: 20.03.2017 Morning (9:00)
24.03.2017 Evening (19:00)
WizzAir (Reservation number: **127HSDS3**)

City #2: New York (USA)
Dates: 24.03.2017 Morning (11:00)
28.03.2017 Morning (21:00)
Delta (Reservation number: **JQ312**)

Business trip official period

Period: 22 Mar – 27 Mar 2017

Additional information

Needed: Hotel
Comment: I already have ESTA for USA, so dont ne

Attachments: [BoardingCard_140592_123_RIX_LTN.pdf](#)

PDF PDF PDF

[Close](#)

Figure 22 The view of all information in the internal system for an employee

An employee will receive several emails from the system during all arrangements are made – when business trip is approved by his/ her project manager, when all arrangements are made (processed) and in the system all information can be seen in the system and if changes are made already in processed business trip. In addition, employees will receive emails in cases if project manager declines business trip. This information will also include the reason for business trip cancelation (Figure 23).

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Decline request". It contains the following fields and elements:

- Employee name:** Vitaly Black
- Destination:** UK, London
- Dates:** 10.08.2017-14.08.2017 (5 days)
- Reason:** A dropdown menu with "Select" as the current selection.
- Comment:** A large text area for entering a comment.
- Buttons:** A blue "Confirm" button and a blue "Cancel" link.

Figure 23 The project manager`s view for declining a business trip

When project managers approve business trip they will also need to include information about a work stream for an employee (Figure 24). This information will be transferred to working hours report for an employee in the same system`s other part.

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Request processing". It contains the following fields and elements:

- Instruction:** For proper budget management please assign workstream workload for time reporting
- Workstream:** A dropdown menu with "Select" as the current selection.
- % of workload:** A text input field.
- Link:** A blue link "+ Add one more workstream".
- Buttons:** A blue "Approve" button and a blue "Cancel" link.

Figure 24 The project manager`s view for assigning work stream for an employee

An employee in the system will be able to create requests of business trip, edit and delete/cancel it before project manager approves it. After business trip is approved, only Business Travel manager will be able to edit business trip dates or cancel the business trip. This should be in this way because after business trip is approved Business Travel manager might already have made some arrangements that cannot be cancelled free of charge and Business Travel manager need to adjust expenses for business trip.

In the management system of business travel, Business Travel manager will see all business trips (Figure 25). All business trips will be divided in three parts – Pending, Active and Processed. Pending business trips are all project managers` approved business trips for their team members but not fully arranged by Business Travel manager. When all arrangements for business trip are done, the business trip is categorised as Active. Business trip changes his status to Processed when information about it is sent to Accountancy with all calculations for money transfer to an employee.

The screenshot displays the Business Travel Manager's interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'MyEfforts', 'MyCalenda', and 'Requests' (with a red badge indicating 3 pending requests). Below the navigation bar, there are two notification boxes: 'Well done, [Employee Name]' and 'You got 3 pending business trip requests!'. The main content area is divided into three sections: 'Pending', 'Active', and 'Processed'. Each section contains a table of business trips with columns for Employee name, Status, Full period (calendar days), and City. The 'Pending' section shows three trips, 'Active' shows two, and 'Processed' shows six. A 'Show more' button is located at the bottom of the 'Processed' section.

Employee name	Status	Full period (calendar days)	City
Jens A. [Name]	[Icons]	20.03.2017 – 28.03.2017 (9 days)	London (UK), New York (USA)
Nikita [Name]	[Icons]	05.08.2016 – 10.08.2016 (3 days)	Zurich (SWI)
Andrey [Name]	[Icons]	05.08.2016 – 10.08.2016 (10 days)	London (UK)
Andrey [Name]	[Icons]	05.08.2016 – 10.08.2016 (5 days)	London (UK)
Andrey [Name]	[Icons]	05.08.2016 – 10.08.2016 (3 days)	Zurich (SWI)
Nikita [Name]	[Icons]	05.08.2016 – 10.08.2016 (2 days)	Minsk (BY)
Andrey [Name]	[Icons]	05.08.2016 – 10.08.2016 (2 days)	Zurich (SWI)
Andrey [Name]	[Icons]	05.08.2016 – 10.08.2016 (2 days)	Zurich (SWI)
Andrey [Name]	[Icons]	05.08.2016 – 10.08.2016 (2 days)	Zurich (SWI)
Andrey [Name]	[Icons]	05.08.2016 – 10.08.2016 (2 days)	Zurich (SWI)
Andrey [Name]	[Icons]	05.08.2016 – 10.08.2016 (2 days)	Zurich (SWI)

Figure 25 The business travel manager`s view for all business trips in the system

During development process it become clear that the system`s development team would not be able to add project manager`s approval functionality before other task is done within the system about projects and project managers. It was planned that Business Travel manager will not see by project managers unapproved business trips. For alternative function is was decided that until other task the development team solves, Business Travel manager will act as approver (Figure 26). However, this should be short-term solution and as soon as the development team will be able to add approvers` functionality to project managers, responsibility for approving business trips will be transferred to project managers.

Another change was made during the development process and system`s testing process. It was decided to change business travel dividing. Pending business trips will be all unapproved business trips. Active business trips will be approved but not arranged and Processed will be approved and fully arranged.

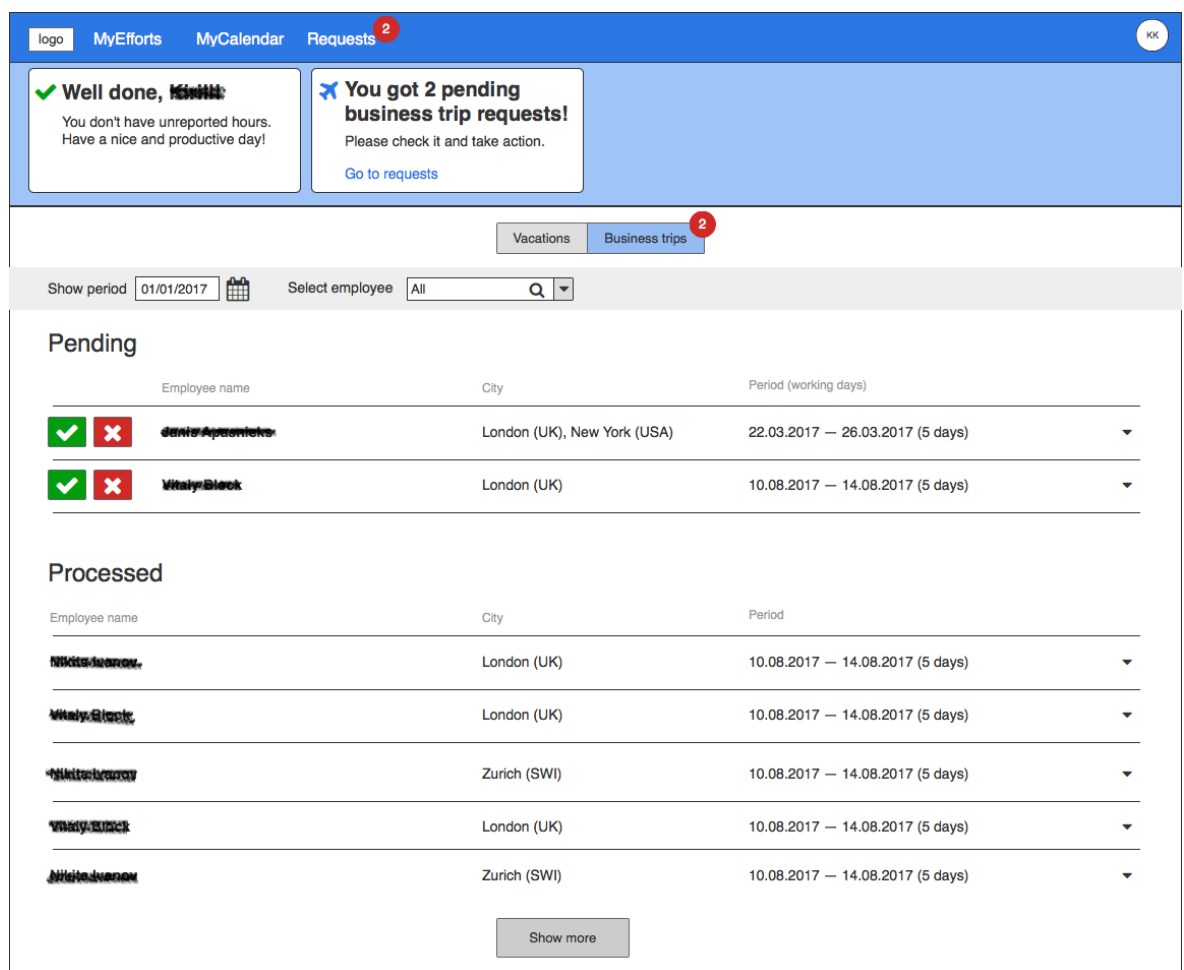


Figure 26 The changed Business Travel manager`s view of all business trips in the system

It is planned that the Accountancy will be able to request the information from the new tool only about those business trip requests that will be processed. The Accountancy requests this information every end of business week to know the amount of money that needs to be transferred to employee's bank account before the business trip.

The screenshot shows a web application interface for managing business trip requests. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'logo', 'MyEfforts', 'MyCalenda', and 'Requests' (with a red notification badge showing '3'). Below the navigation bar, there are two notification boxes: one with a green checkmark saying 'Well done, Eyal' and another with a blue 'X' saying 'You got 3 pending business trip requests!'. The main content area is titled 'Business trip cancellation' and has a 'Mark as complete' button. The form is divided into several sections: 'Destination #1' and 'Destination #2' (each with fields for City, Period, Need to be at a place, Airline, Reservation Nr., Ticket expenses, Hotel name, and Hotel expenses), 'Other information' (with fields for Visa expenses, Insurance company, and Insurance expenses), 'Request info' (with fields for Employees, Approver, Goal, Conf. name, Workstream, and Business trip official period), 'Process' (with checkboxes for Tickets, Insurance, Hotel, and Visa), 'Attachments' (with a PDF icon and the text 'Tickets...912'), and 'Notes' (with the text 'Need more details about airlines'). A 'Save' button is located at the bottom of the form.

Figure 27 The view of each business trip request for Business Travel manager

After business trip request is approved by traveller's manager Business Travel manager will be able to see the request and fill in all information in the system (Figure 27). The only thing that would not change from current process – employees will still receive an email with available flight options from Business Travel manager. Time to time there might be

chance that Business Travel manager will request an employee to choose the hotel. However, that might not be with every business trip as at the most popular destinations there are hotels that the company works with for years. After an employee will approve certain airplane ticket`s purchase Business Travel manager will manually enter all information that concerns business trip in the system. The information that will be included will be the booking reference for airplane ticket, information about airline company from which ticket is purchased, flights` dates and times, the name of the hotel, visa application expenses and information about travel insurance.

5.2.1 Feedback and issues during business travel management adaption

During the test period within the company were divided opinions for the need of new tool for business travel management and the project was stopped from June to August 2017. While the process was stopped the tool of current business travel request was tried to be improved. However, on August 2017 the project were renewed and the system`s development team could continue the work.

Project managers that participated on focus group meetings and tested the new business travel management tool added feedback that purposes of business trips “meeting the client” should be combined with clients` contracts.

On focus group`s meetings with stakeholders were discussed different possible situations that the new system should deal with and one of issue that took long discussions – can an employee take vacation between business trip days? After discussions and reviewing through legislation concerning business trips it was agreed that that kind of situations would not be allowed. As mentioned before the new system will allow for an employee to take days on own expense but discussion led to solutions that days on own expense can be taken only before or after official business trip.

With discussions about more complicated situations, stakeholders agreed that the whole process should be more standardize and created as simple as possible, but include all the necessary.

The current process of business trip requests have option to comment the business trip request`s process. Some of travellers suggested having this option also in the new tool. The idea was that on comment section an employee could request specific flights or hotel, or request changes in already arranged business trip. However, it led to Business Travel manager`s totally opposite view as unneeded and troublesome functionality. Already in

the created part, most of those possible travellers` requests were integrated as ticking the boxes or marking the time when person needs to be at the destination point. The discussion resulted in short description field with limited symbols where traveller at the moment of requesting a business trip can add some specific requests.

From august 2017 until the new system of business travel management was released the focus group`s meeting become more regular and were weekly. During two months, stakeholders agree that the most responsibility from beginning is going to be on Business Travel manager. The development team was not able to release the new tool with project managers approval from beginning as before that they needed to finish another part of the tool. All stakeholders agreed that until the moment when this functionality will be added to the tool, Business Travel manager would act as approver. Also for first release of the new tool, no attachment can be added to the system and Business Travel manager will continue to send all arrangement to emails as it was before.

One more thing that was cut off from planned tool was functionality to report working hours during the business trip. It also was connected with project managers` approval system that needed extra work on other part of the tool.

Although the testing period took long time and lot of stakeholders` focus group meeting during last couple weeks before planned release become clear that after release more feedback will be collected from all involved persons.

5.3 The beginning of final version and transitional period

On October 20th, 2017 the new tool of business travel management become available in the system. On the same day, current business trip requesting tool was closed (Figure 28).



Figure 28 Screenshot from informational video about changes in business trip requesting

On the same day as the new tool of business travel management was released, Business travel manager all upcoming and already arranged business trips manually moved to the new system.

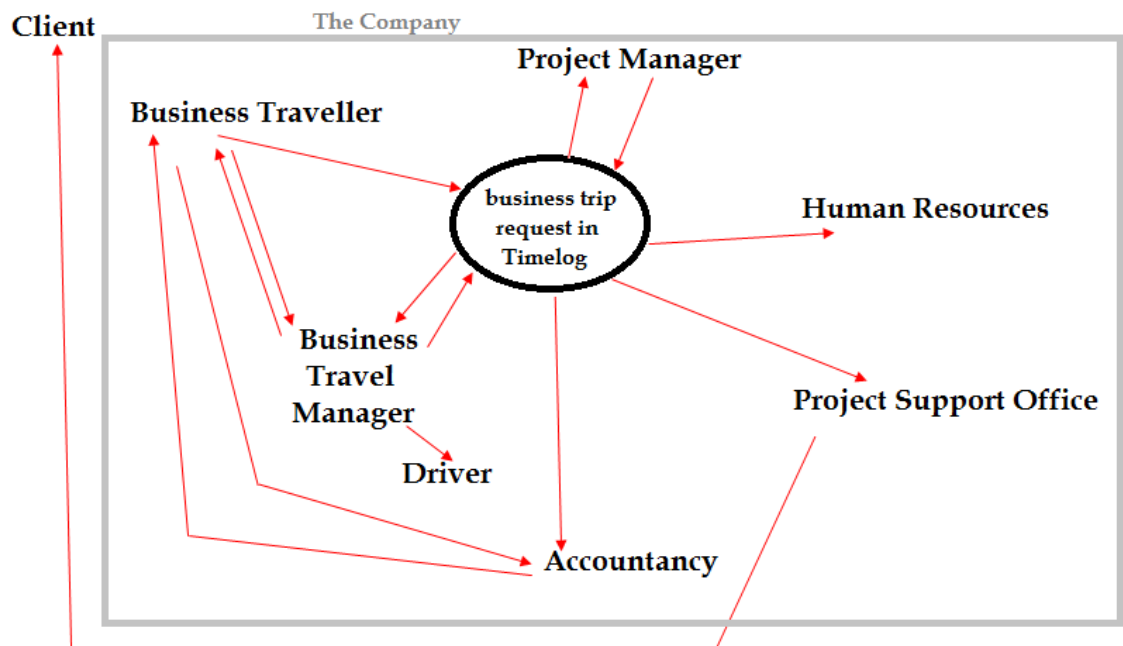


Figure 29 New business travel management system released on October 20th, 2017

To inform employees about the change informational campaign was shown on screens in the office building and made post on intranet with the same video that all screens showed. To encourage using the new form of business travel expenses report, already on first release of the tool, business travel expenses report was available in the system together with business trip details.




















On first release of the tool on October 2017 (Figure 29), the tool does not work with all possible functionality and it still needs improvements and updates. However, it already looks simpler to Business Travel manager. All business trips are easily shown in one page (Figure 30). Business Travel manager can easily overview all business trips and their statuses. As it was planned during the test period, all business trips are divided into following groups – Pending, Approved, Active and Processed.

Pending business trip means that business trip is requested by employee and it is sent for approval. During business trip request is still pending for approval (Figure 31), an employee can delete the request.






Pending

	Employee name	Trip period	Destination
 	...	14.06.2018 - 15.06.2018	Minsk (BY)

Approved

	Employee name	Progress	Trip period	Destination
 	...	+	13.06.2018 - 13.06.2018	London (GB)
 	...	  	19.06.2018 - 29.06.2018	Minsk (BY)
 	...	 	21.06.2018 - 30.06.2018	Hong Kong (HK)
 	...	 	02.07.2018 - 06.07.2018	Zurich (CH)
 	...	 	11.09.2018 - 11.09.2018	Cologne-Bonn (DE)

Active

Employee name	Progress	Trip period	Destination	Status	Processed date
...	 	18.06.2018 - 28.06.2018	New York (US)	Processed	06.06.2018
...	 	12.06.2018 - 15.06.2018	Zurich (CH)	Processed	06.06.2018
...	 	12.06.2018 - 15.06.2018	Zurich (CH)	Processed	06.06.2018
...	 	12.06.2018 - 15.06.2018	Zurich (CH)	Processed	06.06.2018
...	 	11.06.2018 - 13.06.2018	Dublin (IE)	Processed	04.06.2018
...	 	12.06.2018 - 14.06.2018	Zurich (CH)	Processed	04.06.2018
...	 	03.06.2018 - 08.06.2018	Hong Kong (HK)	Processed	01.06.2018
...	 	03.06.2018 - 09.06.2018	Jakarta (IDN)	Cancelled	01.06.2018
...	 	04.06.2018 - 09.06.2018	Tokyo (JPN)	Processed	01.06.2018
...	 	04.06.2018 - 09.06.2018	Tokyo (JPN)	Processed	01.06.2018
...	 	04.06.2018 - 09.06.2018	Tokyo (JPN)	Cancelled	31.05.2018
...	 	13.06.2018 - 15.06.2018	Minsk (BY)	Processed	29.05.2018
...	 	07.06.2018 - 09.06.2018	Gdansk (PL)	Processed	29.05.2018
...	 	04.06.2018 - 08.06.2018	London (GB)	Processed	24.05.2018
...	 	12.06.2018 - 14.06.2018	London (GB)	Processed	24.05.2018
...	 	12.06.2018 - 14.06.2018	London (GB)	Processed	24.05.2018
...	 	12.06.2018 - 14.06.2018	London (GB)	Processed	24.05.2018
...	 	07.06.2018 - 09.06.2018	Gdansk (PL)	Cancelled	23.05.2018
...	 	10.06.2018 - 13.06.2018	Dublin (IE)	Processed	16.05.2018
...	 	07.06.2018 - 09.06.2018	Gdansk (PL)	Processed	14.05.2018
...	 	11.06.2018 - 13.06.2018	Dublin (IE)	Cancelled	10.05.2018
...	 	19.06.2018 - 20.06.2018	Amsterdam (NL)	Processed	02.05.2018
...	 	19.06.2018 - 20.06.2018	Amsterdam (NL)	Processed	02.05.2018
...	 	18.06.2018 - 20.06.2018	Amsterdam (NL)	Processed	20.04.2018
...	 	12.06.2018 - 15.06.2018	Dalo (NG)	Processed	20.04.2018
...	 	11.06.2018 - 12.06.2018	Dalo (NG)	Processed	17.04.2018

Processed











Employee name	Progress	Trip period	Destination	Status	Processed date
...	 	05.06.2018 - 07.06.2018	Minsk (BY)	Cancelled	05.06.2018
...	 	27.05.2018 - 30.05.2018	Zurich (CH)	Processed	31.05.2018
...	 	27.05.2018 - 30.05.2018	Zurich (CH)	Processed	31.05.2018
...	 	05.06.2018 - 07.06.2018	Minsk (BY)	Processed	29.05.2018
...	 

Figure 30 Business Travel manager`s overview of all business trips.

Approved business trips in the overview already have small icons showing what need to be done for this particular business trip. For example, if an employee has requested air-plane tickets, hotel and travel insurance, in Business Travel manager`s overview there will be shown grey icons of airplane, umbrella and house. After arrangement are made by Business Travel manager and this information added to the system, icons will change colour to green.

Business trip details [X]

Employee: ~~Sergejs Matissans~~
 Approver: ~~Euro Eugene~~
 Purpose of my trip: Meet Minsk/Riga colleagues
 I will start trip from: Riga
 Status: **Pending**

Request info

I want to arrive to: Minsk Arrival date: 14 Jun 2018 (before 09:00)
 I want to travel back to: Riga Departure date: 15 Jun 2018 (after 14:00)

For the trip I need
 Tickets, Accommodation, Insurance

Figure 31 Employees view of pending business trip request in the system

When business trip request is approved but not proceed an employee cannot delete the request and his/ her Project manager cannot delete it. If business trip need to be cancelled, they need to contact Business Travel manager for that.

Business trip details [X]

Employee: ~~Ropar Vesitij~~
 Approver: ~~Euro Eugene~~
 Purpose of my trip: Business development
 I will start trip from: Riga
 Status: **Approved**

Request info

I want to arrive to: London Arrival date: 13 Jun 2018 (before 10:00)
 I want to travel back to: Riga Departure date: 13 Jun 2018 (after 18:00)

For the trip I need
 Tickets

Figure 32 Business Traveller` view of approved but not processed business trip

While Business Travel manager is making all arrangement manager employees would not see the progress of trips (Figure 32).

After all needed arrangements for business trips are made and all icons are green, Business Travel manager can Processed business trip request and business trip will be moved from Approved to Active business trip. Active business trips are all those where travellers have not travelled yet or are ongoing. After business trip have happened it is moved to group of Processed business trips.

Destination 1

Riga 12 Jun 2018 (07:50)	→	Zurich 12 Jun 2018 (09:20)	Reservation # V8MJLE
Zurich 15 Jun 2018 (10:00)	→	Riga 15 Jun 2018 (13:30)	Reservation # V8MJLE

🏨 Hotel Du Theatre

Business trip official period

Zurich 12 Jun 2018 - 15 Jun 2018

Request info

I want to arrive to:	Arrival date
Zurich	12 Jun 2018 (before 10:00)
I want to travel back to:	Departure date
Riga	14 Jun 2018 (after 17:00)

For the trip I need
Tickets, Accommodation, Insurance

[Download details as PDF](#) [Download Expense Report](#)

Figure 33 Employee`s view of processed business trip

When business trips is processed an employee`s view in the system will be changed (Figure 33) and he/ she will receive an email from the system inviting him/ her to see all the details about upcoming business trip.

From the beginning as not all functionality is available, all Pending business trips are sent to Business Travel manager for approval. However, as soon as development team will be

able to create technical solution and all requests of business trips will be forwarded to Project managers for approval, Business Travel manager would not see Pending business trips. Not to confuse employees that all approvals are via Business Travel manager in the form of Pending business trip, employees as approver see one of top managers (Figure 32).

From the view of Business Travel manager all the process consist of several steps. After first tool`s release first thing that should be done with a request of business trip`s status from Pending to Approved. Then Business Travel manager can see the needs of request and send email with available flight options to the traveller. After receiving the approval from the traveller about preferred flights and that the client have approved the expenses, Business Travel manager can start to fill in all the information in the system (Figure 34). Emails to agree about the flights are mainly all the communication regarding the business trip request between Business Travel manager and travellers during arranging business trips.

The screenshot displays a web-based form for creating a business trip request. The main form area is divided into several sections:

- Destination 1:** A dropdown menu set to "Minsk (BY)".
- Tickets:** A section with a checked checkbox. It contains two rows of flight information. Each row has fields for Departure (City, Date, Time) and Arrival (City, Date, Time), along with Company, Reservation, and Ticket expenses (with a currency dropdown set to EUR). The first row shows a flight from Riga (LV) to Minsk (BY) on 19.06.2018 at 09:00. The second row shows a return flight from Minsk (BY) to Riga (LV) on 29.06.2018 at 15:00. There is an "+ Add ticket" link below.
- Official business trip period:** Fields for "From" (19.06.2018 09:00) and "To" (29.06.2018 15:00).
- Accommodation:** A checked checkbox. Fields for "Accommodation name" and "Expenses" (with a currency dropdown set to EUR). There is an "+ Add accommodation" link below.
- Visa:** A checked checkbox. A field for "Expenses" (with a currency dropdown set to EUR).
- Insurance:** A checked checkbox. Fields for "Insurance company" (a dropdown menu), "Policy number", "Is valid in" (a dropdown menu set to "Europe"), "From" (19.06.2018), and "To" (29.06.2018). There is a currency dropdown set to EUR.

The right-hand sidebar contains:

- Request info:** Employee: **Sobolev Alexander**; Employee passport data: **Sobolev Aleksandr**; Approver: **Fors Eugene**; Purpose of my trip: **Meet Minsk/Riga colleagues**; I will start trip from: **Riga (LV)**; Status: **Approved**. It also shows arrival and departure dates and times, and a comment: "Hotel Garni is preferred, or renting a flat if this is a better option".
- Progress:** A list of checkboxes: Visa, Insurance, Transfer, Tickets, Accommodation. A green "Proceed business trip" button is at the bottom.
- Attachments:** A section with a plus icon and a dashed box containing the text "Drag and drop file here or click on plus icon to upload".

Figure 34 Business Travel manager`s view of each business trip

In the system Business Travel manager will fill in information about flights, hotel and travel insurance. When information is filled, Business travel manager will tick in the progress box the appropriate task as done.

To inform other employees in the company about colleagues' business trips in the same tool for working hours report, requesting business, there is available page for all Actual Business Trips (Figure 35). There all employees from the company from Riga and from the company from Minsk can see information about business trip period, destination and purpose of the trip (Figure 36). More details in the system can see only responsible Project managers, Business Travel manager and several stakeholders that are involved in business travel management.

[← Back to MyActivities](#)

Actual Business Trips

Below is the list of current and planned Business Trips.
 More information about Business Trip organization, required documents, etc. can be found here - [About Business trips](#)

Filter by employee Filter by destination

Employee name	Trip period	Destination	Status
Бодило Георгий	29.05.2018 - 08.06.2018	Riga (LV)	Processed
Борисевич Евгений	03.06.2018 - 08.06.2018	Hong Kong (HK)	Processed
Борисевич Евгений	04.06.2018 - 09.06.2018	Tokyo (JPN)	Processed
Борисевич Евгений	04.06.2018 - 09.06.2018	Tokyo (JPN)	Processed
Борисевич Евгений	04.06.2018 - 08.06.2018	London (GB)	Processed
Борисевич Евгений	07.06.2018 - 09.06.2018	Gdansk (PL)	Processed
Борисевич Евгений	07.06.2018 - 09.06.2018	Gdansk (PL)	Processed
Борисевич Евгений	10.06.2018 - 13.06.2018	Dublin (IE)	Processed
Борисевич Евгений	11.06.2018 - 12.06.2018	Oslo (NO)	Processed
Борисевич Евгений	11.06.2018 - 13.06.2018	Dublin (IE)	Processed
Борисевич Евгений	12.06.2018 - 14.06.2018	London (GB)	Processed
Борисевич Евгений	12.06.2018 - 15.06.2018	Zurich (CH)	Processed
Борисевич Евгений	12.06.2018 - 14.06.2018	Zurich (CH)	Processed

Figure 35 Information about all business trips for all employees

Business trip details

Employee: **Бодило Георгий**

Approver: **Борисевич Евгений**

Purpose of my trip: **Meet Minsk/Riga colleagues**

I will start trip from: **Minsk**

Status: **Processed**

Business trip official period

Riga 29 May 2018 - 08 Jun 2018

Figure 36 Information about business trip that is available for all employees
 Another way for employees to see plans about other colleagues in the system's calendar (Figure 37). The calendar view allows to view choose employees' who's plans person wants to see, for example, team leaders can choose project team people to see who

could be available for needed period. In the calendar view is shown chosen employees` plans for vacations and business trips. The calendar view is the place where employees create requests for business trips and vacations by “adding the activity”.

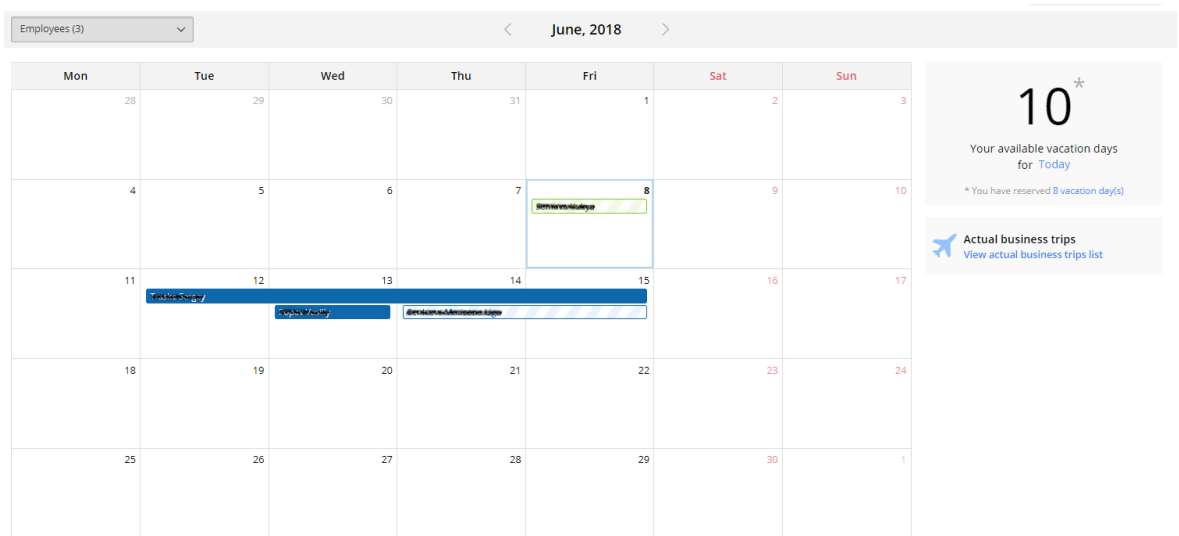


Figure 37 Calendar view within the system

Although some of employees did not use previous business trip request system and business travel expenses report was changed almost half year before the new tool of business trip request was introduced, some employees still managed to use old form of business travel expenses reports. Stakeholders on few focus group`s meetings after first release discussed question if all old forms in the internal communication channels were removed, but it seemed that some business travellers had saved on their computers some form of business travel expenses form and used it constantly. There was case when an employee brought business travel expenses report not on just previous form but business travel expenses form that was already several times changed.

To help to business travellers and to avoid situations when they use old forms of business trip expenses form, it was decided to attach business travel expenses form to business travel details to each trip (Figure 33). With the first release, employees could download actual empty business travel expenses report from the system.

5.3.1 Collected feedbacks since October 20th 2017

After release of the new tool employees were invited to send any feedbacks that they have about the new system and tool to the development team`s email. Despite the fact the development team and involved stakeholders understood that the first release of the

tool did not include all functionality that is planned for the tool and that missing functionality for the IT company's employees might be crucial, there were not so many feedbacks.

Comparing to the previous system for business trip request, employees were missing option to mark other employees that they are planning to travel together. On stakeholders', focus group meetings after release were discussed collected feedbacks and prioritized the tasks for additional functionalities. It was agreed that as this request for additional option to add other travellers were collected from several employees that this should be added in nearest future. By adding this functionality, it will make easier work for Business Travel manager to see who would like to have the same flights and approving any flights for employees would take less emailing.

Another request from the employee was to add more symbols at the moment of requesting business trip in the system. Some of employees found that less than 200 symbols are not enough for their comments.

Few months after new business trip request system were introduced to employees, Business Travel manager reported on stakeholders' group meeting on January 2018 that for that period she did not have any case when an employee would try to use old way of requesting business trip.

On stakeholders' focus groups meeting was discussed all received feedbacks and the fact that those were not that much as expected. One of the reasons why feedback collection on this part of the introduction of new tool was very limited is that for business travellers the process did not change so much. They needed to create business trip in the internal system almost the same way as before, just in the different internal tool. They notice the change that each person can create business trip request only for himself/ herself. Business travellers additionally needed to add purpose and particular project during the creation process. The system also requested more details, for example, during requesting business trip business traveller need to mark the time when they need to be at the destination and planned time when they can leave. However, everything else from previous system stayed the same and Business Travel manager still sent all airplane ticket and hotel information to emails of business travellers. If previous business travel process requested from employee to collect their travel insurance from Business Travel manager in person then after new tool release travel insurance was sent also to emails.

Another thought of small number of feedbacks from business travellers after first release of the new process of business travel management is that there was not organized certain feedback collection. Before the first release, it was known that there would be improvements and some of them just week or two after first release. During the preparation of process of releasing new tool, there was specific plan that need to be realized and for that development team needs more time. Because of that no feedback collection was organized.

5.3.2 Releases of additional functionality

After first release of the new business trip request system, there have been 14 updates for tool. Some of them were smaller with adding extra notifications for some stakeholders and business travellers might not even notice the difference. Others have been so important that after release and the post in the intranet have received business travellers' comments like "Great! I can't wait to use this on my next business trip".

Several releases in the end of 2017 mostly added to the tool such additional functionality as notification email sending to Business Travel manager after business trip request is created. On stakeholders' focus group meetings after release was discussion about all notifications that the system send to an employee during business trip is being arranged and was agreed that emails should not be sent about all changes made by Business Travel manager to business traveller. For example, while the approve process is Business Travel manager's responsibility, information about approved business trip request would not be sent to an employee not to confuse him/ her. Employees will receive emails from Business Travel manager during the process of making agreement on available flights. Then there will be notification from the system that his/ her business trip request is processed and all necessary reservations are made.

One of improvements was automatic generation of prepayments of upcoming business trips. If previous management process requested from Business Travel manager to send every week report to Accountant, Project Support Office manager and Human Resource's specialist about following week's business trips and expenses, then with the new system and generated reports this process consumes less time. Previously creating this report took around one hour for preparation. The new system and additional functionality allows doing that in few minutes. Within few week's as this functionality was introduced to stakeholders, Business Travel manager agreed with Accountant that this will be taken from Business Travel manager's responsibilities and Accountant will generate the report her-

self. Before that, already Human Recourse's specialist and Project Support Office manager generated their own reports. All generated reports the development team adjusted to each stakeholder's need and functions.

Human Resource's specialist admitted that with generated report about all business trips and additional work of development team, she spends much less effort and the total process does not take so much time.

Project Support Office manager's work previously included full report sending to senior manager and as she thought, not even all in report included information was needed. However, after adjusted report only for this need, senior manager requested more information.

Within the company is practise to simplify the names for clients to be easier to pronounce. For example, if person is named in passport "Jevgenijs" then his email within the company will be pronounced as "Eugene". Also in the company works employees from Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and their transcription in passport is different from the way the name is pronounced. However, Business Travel manager arranging airplane ticket, travel insurance and hotels need to use correct form of name and surname as they are in passport. This is also very important to assist with visa application processes. The additional functionality that was released during the Spring 2018. Within each separate request of business trip there is included separate line with employee's name and surname as it is in passport. Business Travel manager found this very useful as for previous process to solve this mystery separate file from HR were needed.

Another noticeable improvement in the system was printable summary of the upcoming business trip's details and important contact for emergency cases (Figure 38). Although after release of this additional functionality, the stakeholders' group together with the development team created video shown on screens in the office building and extra information was published on the intranet, business travellers did not recognized this as important improvement. The printable form is in process of development and not all planned things on May 2018 have been added to it.

Business trip details

Traveller's name Meet the client (project 2018)	Zurich 12 Jun 2018 - 15 Jun 2018
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Destination 1

Riga 12 Jun 2018 (07:50)	→	Zurich 12 Jun 2018 (09:20)	airBaltic	Reservation # V8MJLE
Zurich 15 Jun 2018 (10:00)	→	Riga 15 Jun 2018 (13:30)	airBaltic	Reservation # V8MJLE

Hotel Du Theatre

Contacts
In case if you have any questions or special requests, please use these contacts

Business Travel manager
+371 [redacted]
[redacted]@[redacted]

Driver
+371 [redacted]
[redacted]@c
[redacted]
[redacted]
+375 [redacted]
[redacted]@ctco.lv

Figure 38 Printable business trip summary for an employee

The additional functionality that created several confusions between business travellers was “I will travel with” functionality. That allows an employee to specify other travellers that need to take the same trip. After an employee creates business trip request and adds other colleagues as companions for this trip, other mentioned colleagues receives emails with invitation to create business trip request in the system for same dates and purpose as first traveller have created. However, some of employees who created business trip request for themselves decided that they have created for all travellers and some of employees receiving invitation to create business trip request decided similar. Business Travel manager needed to explain this process again and remind that the new request process

of business trip also includes employees' responsibilities for data protection during business trips.

Business travellers were more influenced to use new tool and its advantages after April 2018 when attachments were introduced. After the development team allowed for Business Travel manager to add attachments to each business trip's request, Business Travel manager stopped send to emails airplane tickets, hotel confirmations and travel insurance. Employees after business trips are processed in the system can see all attachments in one place (Figure 39). Despite the fact that information about functionality were also shown on screens and wrote about it on the intranet, business travellers noticed that they do not receive separate reservations over the emails. Business Travel manager received many emails from business travellers with requests to send to employees their reservations.

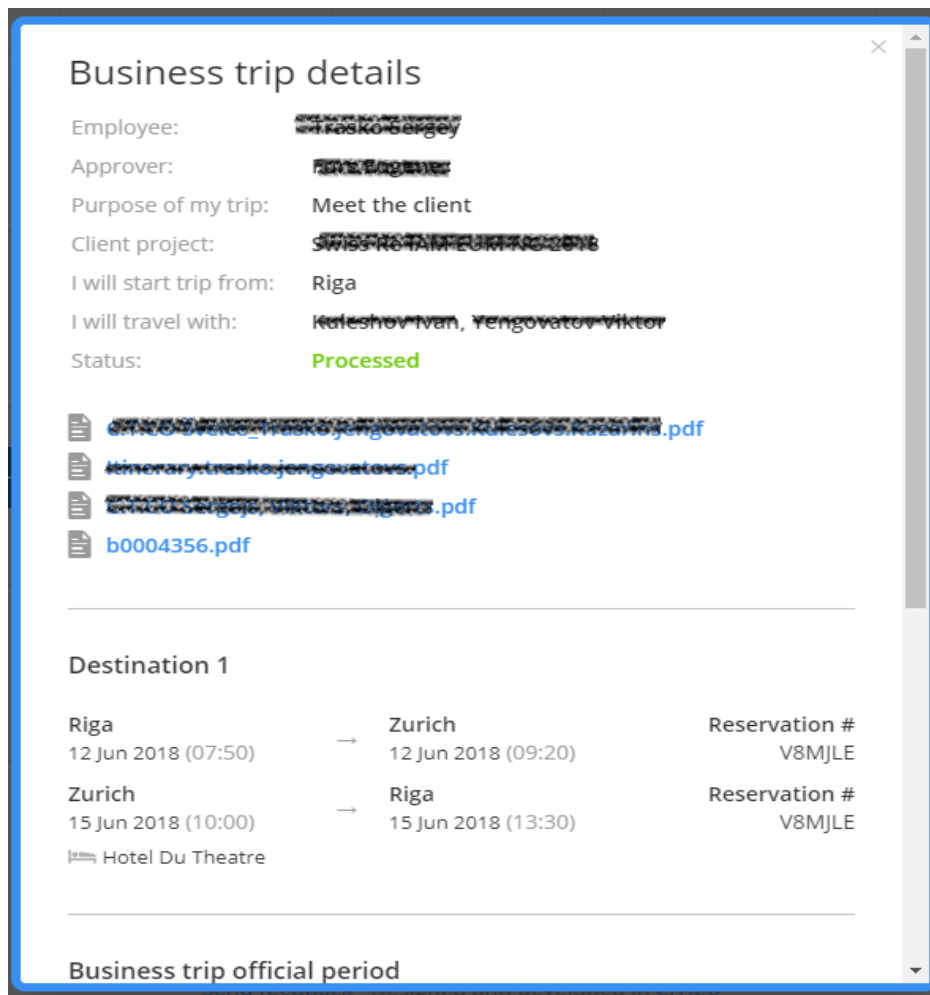


Figure 39 An employee's view of Processed business trip request with attachments

The attachments of each business trip were also sent by the system to employees' emails together with information about processed business trip. Although employees requested

to Business Travel manager send over emails separate reservations that was not done to force employees, mainly often-taking business trips, to get familiar with the new process for business travel management.

After attachments were introduced to business travellers and no Business Travel manager does not need to send separate bookings to emails, there were no arguments why employees need to avoid using the new system. Also the feedbacks from business travellers that requested send separately all bookings because they could not find those on emails were good as they acknowledge that having all in one place is more comfortable for them.

The best feedbacks from business travellers were collected when the development team were able to the business trip request in the system add partly filled in business travel expenses report (Figure 40).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X
1	The company x																							
2	Business trip expense report																							
3																								
4	General info																							
5	Name	Pjedor																						
6	Surname	Dronov																						
7	Goal	Meet the client																						
8	Client project	Swiss Re Ltd. Magnum Fee Sales and Coordination 2018																						
9																								
10	Destination and period of stay (official)																							
11	Country	China, Hong Kong SAR																						
12	City	Hong Kong																						
13	From	03.06.2018 17:55																						
14	To	08.06.2018 0:30																						
15	Number of days	5																						
16	Daily allowance rate	40																						
17	Daily allowance	200																						
18	Total daily allowance	200																						
19																								
20	Payments and expenses																							
21	Paid in advance to your bank account by OTC before trip																					0.00		
22																								
23		EUR	Select	Select	Select	Total EUR																		
24	Currency rate to EUR	1																						
25	Hotel expenses					0.00																		
26	Transport expenses					0.00																		
27	Mobile, Internet and etc.					0.00																		
28	Other					0.00																		
29	Total expenses:	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00																		
30	Total report:																				200.00			
31	Difference need to be paid by OTC :																					200.00		
32																								
33																								
34																								
35																								
36	Date:	10.06.2018										Employee signature:												
37																								
38																								
39																								
40	Notes (Filled by Accountant):																							

Figure 40 Partly filled-in business trip expense report

Partly filled-in report of business trip expense if downloaded from the business trip request from system, included information about the traveller, the purpose of the trip and period. With couple more improvements the report calculated days and daily allowances. That leaves to an employee only to fill in parts concerning money transfer from the company before business trip and actual spending for hotels and transportation. The latest updated report of business trip expense gives information about summary of the report in case if the company needs to transfer more money to an employee or if employee needs to return something if spending have been less than planned.

On Spring 2018 as additional functionality were add reminders to business travellers about filling and bringing report to Accountant. The notification is sent after business traveller returns from trip with information that he/ she needs to bring report to Accountant within five business days. If that is not done traveller will receive notification again.

5.4 Future plans for the company`s business travel management

Beginning of June 2018 the new tool for business travel management with the company is not finished as not all technical parts can be adjusted as quickly as stakeholders can wish. One of the main problem were the progress stopped was Project managers approvals for all business trip requests within the system. Before this can be fully developed in the system, the tool need to include hierarchy for each project. Within the company, changes happen fast and employees are transferred to other projects. To get approval from responsible manager the system need to have employee`s profiles with specific information.

The information that the system and the tool will have should relieve work for all stakeholders not only for business travel management but also for other departments that work with employees data.

For Business Travel manager`s need it is planned that employees` profiles will included information about employee`s nationality. That is important for Business Travel manager to know if visa might be required for certain destinations.

Another important thing that system should include about business travellers is their passport information, particularly passport number and expire date. This information is requested by airline companies for passengers traveling to USA, for Russia and Belarus, for Portugal and Asian destinations. Within the system this information should be actual for

passport expire date and number. The company`s employees not always have their passport with them airplane tickets being purchased. One more detail about passports – employees have use to previous request process of business trips and prefers that passport information Business Travel manager could request from Human Resources department. After May 25th 2018, the company does not have any passport copies and employees will need to get used to process and be responsible for their data.

Business travel management within the company have taken a lot of time already until now, however, it is not finished. Stakeholders together with development team plan to organize feedback collection after to the system will be add functionality of Project managers approval for business trip request. On focus group meeting all stakeholders agreed that without certain functionality, feedbacks might not be that good. Again, without these functionalities the system might not be that good and business travellers might not find it as useful. The previous experience shows that the project for creating new business travel management tool already couple of times were stopped by top management as some of business travellers do not find need for it and protested against.

During seven months, the development team could not be able to combine time spent on business trip with working hours report. This is planned for future, but there is no deadline set.

One functionality that during development process did not worked out was automatic transfer list for the Driver that can be downloaded from the new tool. The Business Travel manager in the previous process of business travel management created the list for the Driver with necessary transfers for the company`s business travellers and its clients arriving in Riga and departures from Riga. The feedbacks from Business Travel manager, some employees as from Riga, as employees from Minsk about previous process for transfers revealed that there were issues when Business Travel manager for some cases was distracted and forgot to add somebody to the list. That not happen often but time to time during busier periods of business trips.

Although, the development team of the new tool did create automatically generated list for the Driver, this list needed to be manually supplemented by the Business Travel manager too much with information about clients visiting Riga. It was decided to leave the previous approach to the issue. However, now the Business Travel manager has availability to double check the information about all employees from Riga and Minsk traveling to/ from Riga.

Beside employees' profiles and Project managers' approval, another challenging task is all business travel expenses in one system. That is planned to relieve the work for Accountant. Often happens that business traveller's actual spending does not converge with planned and transferred money before the trip. The current progress of the system holds only information about pre-business trip spending. That does not allow to overview all expenses for business travels. The following system's improvements leads to business trip expense report filled in the system. For Accountant it will mean that the report of business trip expenses need to be approved or declined already in the system.

In the beginning of June 2018 Business Travel Guidelines are not finished reviewed for the same reason as feedbacks from business travellers cannot be collected – the new tool for business travel management is not ready. The future plans includes review of the company's guidelines for business travel to standardize the whole process. The review process is in progress and it is renamed to "Business Travel Procedure" to describe better for employees what happens in each step of arranging a business trip, who is responsible person of each step and how need to act when the process does not follow the procedure (Figure 41). The new document will describe the exceptions based of collected feedbacks and the procedure for escalations of different situations.

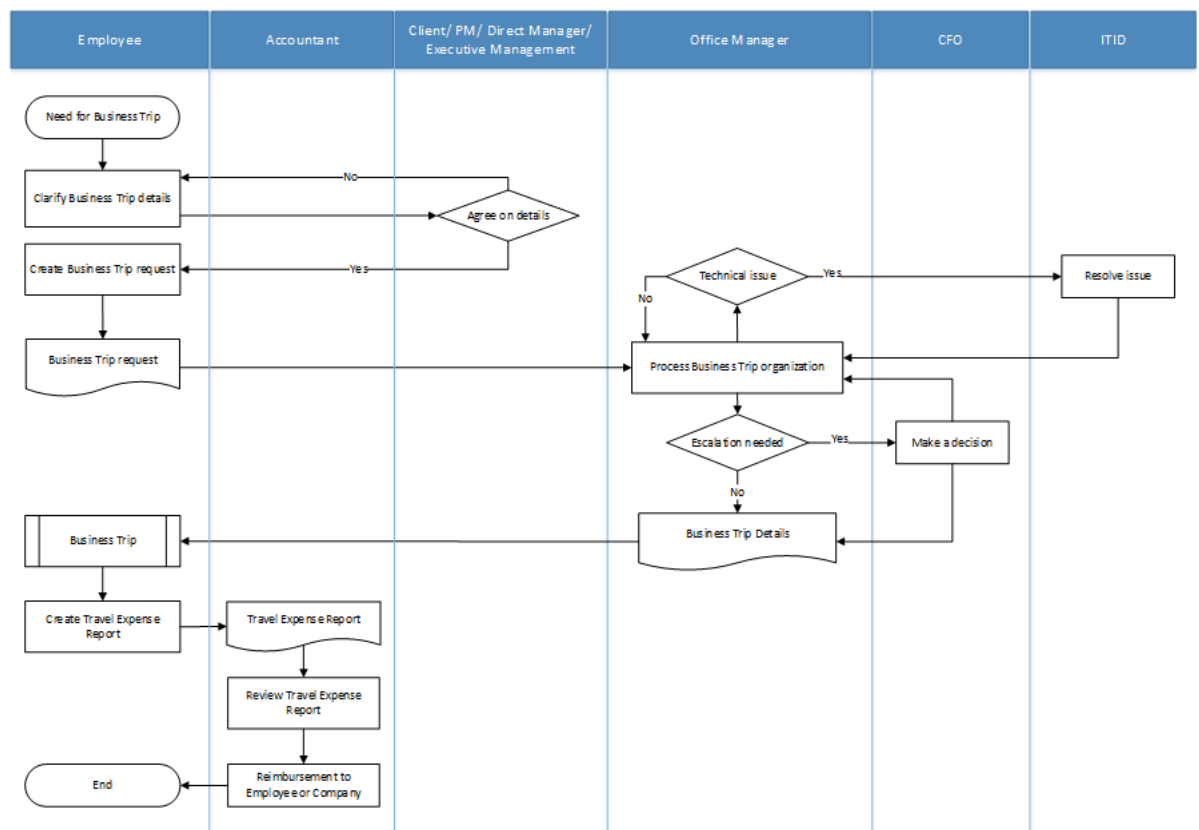


Figure 41 Business Travel Procedure and responsible person in each step after Business Travel Guidelines reviewing

6 Conclusion

For managing business travel within any company, there can be found enough reasonable solutions. Some of them would not request anything from a company. However, when it comes to specific needs of a company, the solution might take more resources.

The findings of this thesis shows that for companies who have up to 60 employees and the number of business trips do not exceed up to 10 business trips per months, already available online solutions for managing business travel could be enough. It is good to have standardize process for business travel management from the beginning. When numbers of employees and business trips increase, looking for additional solutions might be reasonable not to reach the point when the process for arranging the business trip have stayed in same level for many years but the company has grown impressively.

The part of standardize process for business travel management can be used corporate travel agencies that can assist to the company`s business travellers more efficient than to individual travellers. Another part of the business travel management could be tools for business travel management. For companies who have more than 150 employees and number of business trips per months exceeds 20 different business trips, the tool for managing business travel can noticeably relieve the daily routine.

The idea of this thesis project was to review the whole process of business travel management within the company, to improve it by having nowadays-compatible tool. However, the process takes more time than expected initially in the beginning of 2016. In June 2018, the process is still in progress after several postponed and interrupted actions. There are couple of reasons why the process of business travel management was interrupted and postponed. At first, there was a try to stop it due to high resistance within the company from some of managers, which did not see the need for new process. Then the expenses were considered too high for the new tool creation. In June 2018, the progress is again under magnifier to respond the question if expenses for creation of new functionality in the tool is reasonable.

Although the process have not been easy and it is not finished, the objectives of the thesis are reached. The process of the business travel management is more concrete and standardized for the company with more than 420 employees. The initiated changes for managing business travel are described in internal documents. The created tool for business

travel management relieved daily work for stakeholders with reduction of “copy – paste” paper work.

During the improvement of business travel guidelines, this document changed the name of it and become more description of the process. The description includes important systematic procedure to help for all stakeholders of business travel management understand what to do in different cases. Even more, during the process of update the internal document, the unclear details were improved.

For the company`s business travellers the new process solves previous problems with limited possibility to access the internal tools that could be accessed from the office only. The tool is created to help business travellers and ease their business trips. The good feedbacks from business travellers receive about partly automatically filled in report of business trip expenses. The travellers also appreciated the functionality of the new tool`s summary and included contacts in case of emergency.

The functionality that is expected to be added to the system of business travel management within next few months is Project managers` approval. That will allow Project managers to follow easier their team members` business trips and projects` development. It will give also benefit to Business Travel manager, Project Support Office manager and HR department.

At the moment of finishing the thesis, the projects within the company x is not finished and is still in progress. The plans include continuing to improve the process of business travel management by supplementing automatization processes. For example, automatic business trip expenses reports could be added to the system and travellers could fill in all the information and would need to bring to the Accountant only the original invoices and checks for inspection. After that the Accountant will approve, decline or do small editing of the report.

The process of business travel management is process that requires to constantly being open to development because it might be changing like business trip itself.

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