

CLOUD COMPUTING

Managing Travel Expenses In The Cloud

More often than not, companies invest up to ten percent of their annual budget in business trips - and this estimate is not even considering the corresponding processing costs. How can costs be optimized with cloud-based solutions?

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Virtual meetings are an important part of today's business world, which is not all that surprising considering the more and more internationally operating markets. However, especially in the initial phases of a collaboration with new clients and during labor-intensive periods, face-to-face discussions are essential for a company's success.

Manual processes in the digital age

For travel expense accounting, the majority of companies is still using Word documents and Excel spreadsheets. Consequently, piles upon piles of receipts and documents have to be collected, sorted, scanned, evaluated and processed. This is wasting time and money. Research suggests that an accountant needs 20 minutes, which translates to costs of 53 euros, to process a business trip with an overnight stay manually. And this does not include the effort of the traveler that had to come before that. Therefore, travel expense accounting is one of the most time-consuming tasks of an accountant.

Because of missing receipts, reversed numbers or false information, every fifth travel expense report is wrong and has to be reworked. This needs 18 minutes on average and amounts therefore roughly to the same effort as the original billing. Consequently, costs of 47 euros per process arise. But that's not all: If original receipts for hotels, gas or food are missing, internal receipts have to be issued. This mostly happens to employees who travel a lot. This is not a cheap mistake for companies, as internal receipts are not proper bills and an input tax deduction cannot be demanded.

The solution is integrated travel management via the cloud. For companies who want to make their travel management more professional and efficient, cloud solutions are the way to go. Because that way, direct and indirect costs become manageable again, improving the overall results.

For booking and settlements of business trips, the tools SAP Concur Travel and Concur Expense are recommendable. On the one hand, with Concur Travel, the organization of journeys can be regulated easily and quickly through a central settlement account. On the other hand, the software makes it possible to seamlessly register travel costs and assign cost centers. Additionally, settlements can be processed and the costs can be assigned to work orders with Concur Expense. These solutions are most valuable if used together, as they complement each other well.

Advantages

Which advantages does the use of systems like Concur Travel and Concur Expense have for companies? With the support of modern cloud tools, they create an overview of all information and processes: from requests to planning, reporting, and approval to the billing of business trips. The integration is simple: the cloud solutions are easily connected to existing ERP, HR, and accounting systems and collaborate seamlessly with each other. Another advantage are the savings in finance and accounting thanks to automated processes which do not require manual verification of bills and receipts, saving the company not only time, but also money.

Travel requests, bills, receipts, and expenses forms can be accessed online, either through the internet or mobile apps. Receipts can be transmitted, approved, and edited in real time. Mapped-out and pre-defined work flows and testing routines guarantee that all processing steps are handled in a timely manner and as smoothly and seamlessly as possible. A comprehensive overview of credit card bills, hotel costs, food expenses, and creditor data is therefore made possible. Easy-to-understand dashboards, reporting, and analytics tools help companies control their traveling costs even more. What is more, it is easy and quick to integrate cloud solutions and adapt them to specific company requirements if necessary.

Cloud Computing
is the practice of flexibly and dynamically providing IT resources, like hardware and software, to external service providers through networks.

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