



BookOTel checks out DK Software for client invoicing

Leading corporate travel agency utilises DK Software for consolidated invoicing for large clients

BookOTel is one of the UK's largest business travel agencies, with income of £12 million pa and over 45 employees, mostly based at its head office in Worcester.

Founded in 1990 by Simon Scott, who is also a founding member of the Hotel Booking Agents Association, the company offers a full suite of business travel services, and is at the forefront of technology in terms of online booking tools and in-house systems.

Timely billing

Large corporate clients such as Gala Coral, Land Rover Jaguar and Volvo have extensive and complex travel needs and rely on BookOTel to not only make their hotel arrangements, but also provide accurate and timely billing.

Nick Scott, BookOTel's Managing Director, takes up the story: "One of the main reasons clients utilise us is that we offer efficient bill-back services. When clients call us to book hotels, we make all the arrangements, ask the hotel to send the invoices to us, we reconcile them and send each client just one consolidated invoice."

"There's no doubt that the corporate travel market is very competitive. With the help of DK Software, we can maintain a competitive edge and continue to enhance the high quality services that we provide to all of our clients."

Simon Scott, Chief Executive, BookOTel



Corporate travel is competitive, so innovative technology and the accuracy of customer service are essential. BookOTel's booking system, Book-IT, was integrated by local IT reseller Hoge 100 with the Sage 50 accounting system, but this was largely manual and didn't meet the company's expanding needs.

Gavin Poole, Finance Manager, explained: "Our accounts team were spending a lot of time manually re-keying data – booking references, cost centres, etc. – into Sage from Book-IT and hard copy invoices from hotels. We then filed them away in clients' folders, then once a week produced a spreadsheet with all the information from the hotels, then produced an invoice to send to the client. We had five people just doing data entry."

BookOTel was typically handling around 300 hotel bills a day manually. According to Gavin Poole, "Sage50 was reaching its capacity and we were worried it might 'freeze'. We needed a system that would pull data automatically from Book-IT into an accounts package, and enable us to create new invoices for clients. In automating this process we also wanted, as an →



ISO 14001-compliant company, to cut down on paper usage and reduce our mailing costs.”

DK Software selected

After reviewing different options, including a Sage upgrade and a solution from Access Accounts, BookOTel selected DK Software for integrated accounting and reporting. “The other software was a lot more ‘packaged’, and we would have needed to make our processes fit in with it,” said Gavin Poole. “The DK solution was much more adaptable to the way we work.”

This adaptability was evident when DK reviewed how to transfer booking information from the Book-IT system into the DK suite. “The information had to be in the right format on the invoices,” said Gavin Poole. “DK created an import routine to pull in data directly from Book-IT. Hoge 100 combined three export files into one file, offering all the fields DK required.”

As well as consolidating invoice data from hotels to create a customer invoice, it was also necessary to make a journal in order to create a commission invoice to send to each vendor.

“That would have been very difficult with a larger software vendor,” said Gavin Poole, “whereas with DK is more straightforward and they were able to do this quickly and easily. With DK, we can just enter data from invoices straight into the software, create a consolidated invoice and then email it to the client.”

Benefits

Gavin Poole cited the key benefits:

- Integration with the Book-IT system – creation of sales, commission and purchase invoices
- Stronger capacity to handle volumes of data than the previous Sage solution
- Strong reporting and analysis tools, including MI reporting to major clients, without need to use other third-party software.

“We’re currently outputting around 500 client invoices a month and can provide clients with more detailed information than before. They can immediately see the breakdown of accommodation, dinners, beverages etc. on one emailed PDF invoice, and we don’t need the supporting paperwork,” added Gavin Poole. “Because invoices are stored, if there is a query, or if an invoice is lost, we can go straight into DK, find it and send it to the client. We no longer need to search filing cabinets.”

This efficiency is appreciated by one of BookOTel’s largest clients, Gala Coral. Gavin Poole explained: “We provide monthly consolidated invoices to each of Gala Coral’s five operating companies, each broken down into different cost centres, and we give them each a file out of DK to import into their own accounting system. It’s very streamlined.”

DK is also helping BookOTel to manage people costs. Nick Scott explained: “We have a finance team of 10, and whilst we have grown as



a company, effectively producing more invoices, with DK we haven’t needed to employ more people. We’re maximising our existing resources.”

Future plans

For the future, BookOTel is working closely with DK on the management information and reporting provided by the software. Nick Scott added: “Some customers have requested a detailed analysis of how much they are spending on accommodation, dining, etc., so we are looking at how we can do this with DK in order to provide added value to our clients. We believe this will enhance our customer retention.”

Simon Scott, BookOTel’s Chief Executive, concluded: “There’s no doubt that the corporate travel market is very competitive. With the help of DK Software, we can maintain a competitive edge and continue to enhance the high quality services we provide to our clients.”



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