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*Scott Dennis,  
Head of Corporate Services,  
Pfizer Australia*

*Benefits at a glance*

- Annual savings of \$5.3 million
- Comprehensive control and high level of policy compliance
- Employee satisfaction levels reach 90%
- Strategic partnership

## How Pfizer Australia's end-to-end travel solution delivered \$5.3 million in savings, comprehensive control and 90% customer satisfaction

### Summary

Pfizer Australia, a subsidiary of global healthcare giant Pfizer Inc, is the country's leading provider of prescription medicines and animal healthcare products, and a trusted partner for millions of Australians every day. With more than 1,000 employees travelling around the world each year and an annual travel budget of \$11 million, a robust and effective travel management program is critical.

In today's environment, companies face new and significant challenges in managing business travel. Steady increases in the cost and frequency of travel coupled with the growing complexity of international travel and heightened security risks to the traveller are a few of the challenges faced by travel managers today.

Over 10 years ago, Pfizer Australia appointed American Express Business Travel as their strategic partner to help develop and implement a travel program.

Supported by American Express Business Travel, Pfizer Australia was able to create an award-winning travel program delivering savings of more than \$5.3 million, comprehensive control, and up to 90% traveller satisfaction. To achieve these goals, Pfizer Australia focused on optimising every aspect of their travel program, including:

- A strategic travel policy
- A high level of policy compliance
- Maximum cost savings
- The highest levels of traveller safety and comfort
- Optimum levels of employee satisfaction

At the 2007 Business Travel and Travel Business (BttB)<sup>1</sup> Travel Management Awards, Pfizer Australia was recognised for its travel management after being named Travel Program of the Year.



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### Situation

Pfizer Australia’s goal was to develop a high performing end-to-end travel solution delivering cost savings, control and high levels of traveller satisfaction. Their strategy focused on streamlining their travel policy and increasing compliance.

Optimising their negotiated supplier deals to lead to reductions in the primary cost areas of airfares, accommodation and car hire were also important goals. With the guidance of American Express Business Travel, the company were able to identify that their essential enabling tools needed to be key reporting and insight centred around management and control.

The program also needed to reflect the significant shifts that have taken place in the world of travel, such as the dramatic heightening of security post 9/11 and the progressive escalation in an employer’s duty of care regarding traveller safety and whereabouts.

“We needed to ensure that, along with the safety of our employees, we recognised the increased frequency of travel, the short turnaround times, and to ensure that traveller comfort and convenience were not compromised despite the close scrutiny and control of travel costs,” says Scott Dennis.

### Solution

#### *A strategic travel policy*

The foundation of Pfizer Australia’s success with their travel program lay in the development of a comprehensive travel policy. Today, the policy covers all aspects of travel and entertainment spending (T&E), the Travel Management Company (TMC), expenses and reimbursement, payments, and the booking and approval processes. In addition, the policy is very easy for travellers to access via the Pfizer Australia intranet.

#### *High level of policy compliance*

Pfizer Australia achieves a high level of policy compliance by mandating that travellers always book with preferred suppliers via American Express Business Travel. All domestic travel is booked via their online booking tool, while their international travel is serviced through the American Express dedicated on-site team.

#### *Maximising cost savings*

In collaboration with colleagues in procurement and finance, Scott Dennis implemented a process of direct negotiation with service providers to obtain the best possible rates in terms of airlines, accommodation and car hire. The successful tenders lead to preferred supplier status in the respective categories, and this information is uploaded into the online booking tool.





Pfizer Australia also uses the American Express TicketTrax tool to aggressively target advance purchase strategies and the use of non-refundable tickets.

*Highest levels of traveller safety, comfort and satisfaction*

Respect for the well being of travellers and sensitivity to their needs for comfort and safety are effectively provided for within Pfizer Australia's travel solution. The company also uses traveller tracking tools to ensure their travellers could be accounted for in times of crisis.

**Benefits**

*Annual savings reach \$5.3 million*

The results of the Pfizer travel program are both tangible and impressive. According to Scott Dennis, a total of \$5.3m is saved annually due to:

- Advance purchases
- Use of non-refundable tickets
- International route deals
- Procurement negotiations and online booking savings

Through the online tool and fare visibility, Pfizer Australia has reduced full economy usage from 40% to 20% and increased use of the lowest fare category to 15% – a 100% increase from a year ago. Savings on the Average Ticket Price reduction for the top 10 destinations alone totalled \$130,000 in 2006.

*Control at the core pays off*

Having defined a strategic travel policy, and with preferred provider agreements negotiated and in place, the American Express on-site team administers the international travel program and watches over the domestic process, which is largely self-regulated by the travellers themselves. Dialogue with management is continuous, and the on-site team is the gatekeeper of the program as a whole.

*Employee satisfaction levels approach 90%*

In the search for the balance between control and savings for the company and the comfort and safety of travellers, Pfizer Australia is definitely getting it right. The respect for travellers and the flexibility and tolerance inherent in the Pfizer travel policy have proved to be key enablers of the high level of traveller compliance, despite the volume of travel booked on internal systems by travellers themselves. Commendably, overall traveller satisfaction levels now consistently reach 85% to 90%.





*Strategic partnership*

Many of the innovations and improvements in the Pfizer Australia program have resulted from the ongoing interaction and input from American Express Business Travel, via daily contact between the on-site team and the account manager. According to Scott Dennis, the success of Pfizer Australia's travel program at the BttB Awards is truly a result of the culmination of continuous improvement over many years.

When asked to describe the relationship between Pfizer Australia and American Express Business Travel, Scott Dennis says, "We enjoy a relationship characterised by openness, a genuine 'listening' in terms of our needs, a 'can do' approach to what we want, and flexibility in terms of making it happen. American Express doesn't simply pay lip service to our needs. Their staff know their product and are passionate about getting it right for their customers."

*For more information on American Express Business Travel services and offerings please contact your American Express Business Travel Representative on 1300 666 083. Visit us at [www.americanexpress.com.au/businesstravel](http://www.americanexpress.com.au/businesstravel)*



<sup>1</sup> Business Travel Monthly (BttB) magazine is a leading provider of business travel management information in the Australasian region providing information, analysis and opinion for buyers and managers of corporate travel.

The BttB travel manager awards in 2007 were sponsored by Qantas and the Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE). The awards were decided in a judging process that required nominees to complete a comprehensive BTTB/Butler Caroye Travel Management Index survey, which looked at key aspects such as the rigour of the travel policy, currency of contracts, processes and procedures and compliance levels. The survey also included questions about duty of care and the environment.

