Case Study

ClickTravel

WHITBREAD

Whitbread
Client since: 2011

COMPANY TYPE

UK's largest hotel, restaurant and coffee shop operator with 43,000 employees

PAIN POINTS

Needed tighter controls on expenses and travel policies

THE COMPANY

Whitbread PLC is the UK's largest hospitality company, owning Costa Coffee, Premier Inn, Beefeater Grill, Brewers Fayre and Table Table with over 2,800 hotels restaurants and coffee shops in the UK. Established in 1742 and now with 43,000 employees it is one of the UK's oldest and well-respected companies.

THE CHALLENGE

When Whitbread launched a cross functional project to review their expenses policy across all divisions of its business, it called on Click Travel to assist. As Sharon Quinn, one of the project members, explains, "We had the challenge of controlling expenses across the business but at the same time also delivering something which was fair to employees. We asked Click Travel to advise us on how to develop our travel policy, which could then be enforced and reported on in their online booking system".

51%
REALISED AIR SAVINGS ON TRAVEL SPEND

12%
REALISED RAIL SAVINGS ON TRAVEL SPEND

Gemma Jones, Click Travel's Account Manager for Whitbread, explains, "We believe that part of our role as Account Managers is to present a wide range of ideas and options for cost savings to our clients. Our role is to challenge clients about what they could really achieve with simple changes in policy and behaviour. When Whitbread asked us to work with them on their expenses changes we were able to present them with dozens of options for saving money through policy change and enforcement. We then worked with the team at Whitbread to agree which options to adopt and set a roadmap for implementation."

WINNING PARTNERSHIP

Click Travel has been the appointed travel management supplier for Whitbread since 2011. As Barry Edwards procurement category manager states, "We appointed Click Travel because of their easy to use booking tool, clear reporting and great customer service. They demonstrated all this again to us when we retendered and have delivered against all measures."

Before the contract was awarded to Click Travel, Whitbread had a very low online adoption rate - less than 3%. There was no objective to increase this and Whitbread were considering removing the facility to book online altogether. Throughout the bid and implementation process, Click Travel recommended that Whitbread implement their online booking tool anyway because thanks to its ease of use, adoption levels would probably rise with minimum effort from Whitbread.
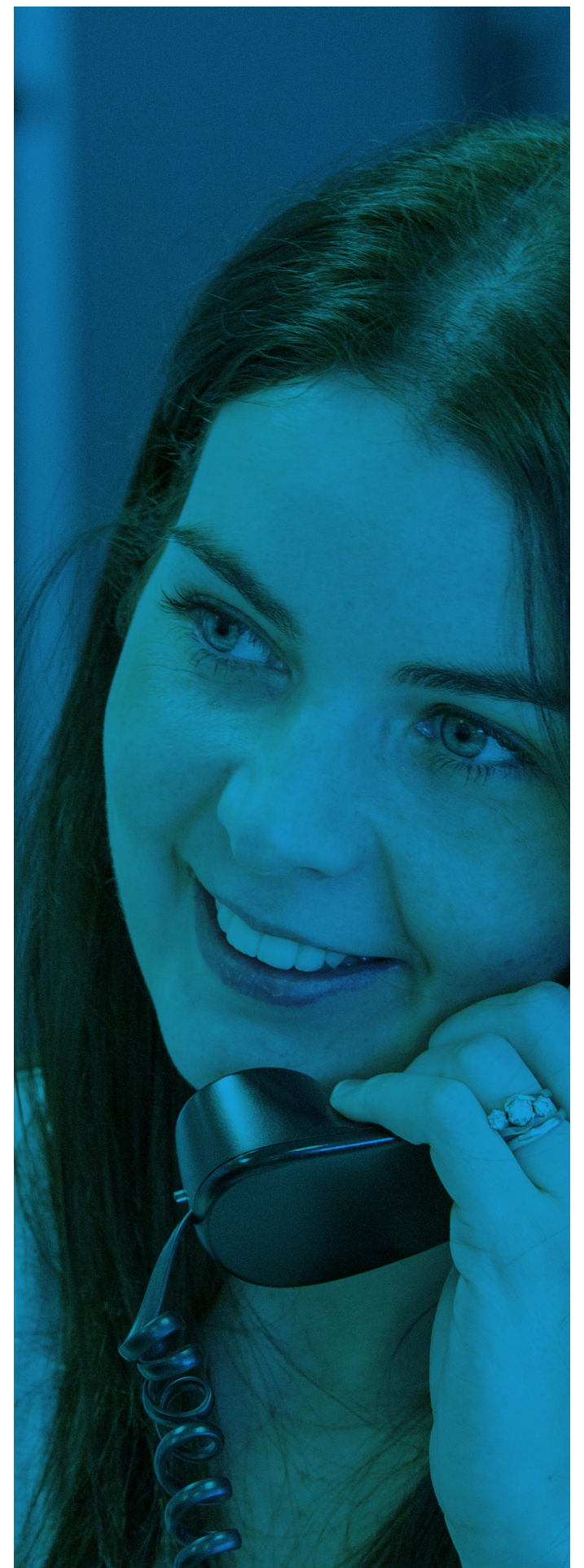
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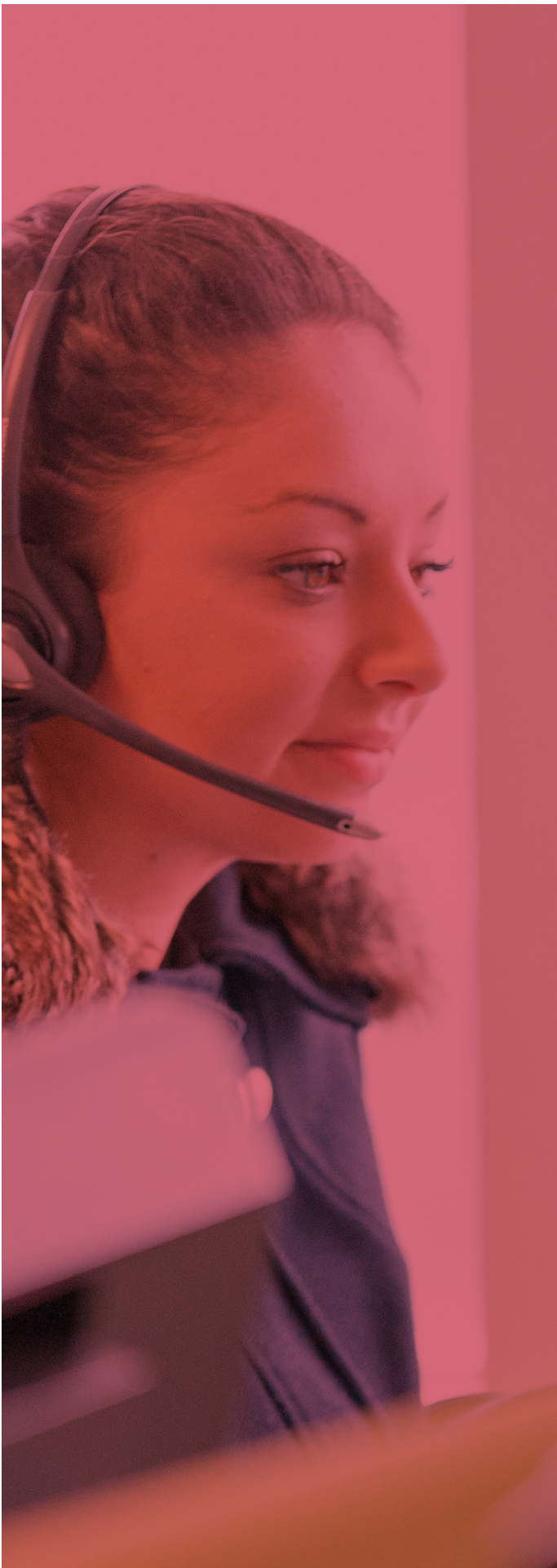
Whilst there was no mandate to use the online booking tool, in quarter 1 Whitbread achieved an online adoption rate of 64% and by quarter 4 they were hitting 80%. In 2014, the overall online adoption rate was at an impressive 88%. "Working with Click Travel on policy changes has been a pleasure, they have provided us with a consistent team of experts to advise on best practice in travel policy and then implemented it through their technology" Barry explains. "It was a big change at Whitbread but Click Travel were with us every step of the way"

THE FUTURE

The Account Management team at Click Travel never rest on their laurels. "Despite the outstanding results achieved in just a few months we still believe there is more we can do to save money for Whitbread. At the last review meeting we presented 6 more ideas that together would save another £84K. Whitbread is internally reviewing these and some will be adopted in the next quarter," explains Gemma Jones.

DELIVERING THE CHANGE

Another key change that Whitbread implemented under the guidance of Click was to set up automated pre-trip approval for flights to ensure that flight bookings had to go through an approval process in advance. Click Travel's pre trip approval process made the approval simple to execute for managers.

Click Travel also worked on Whitbread's rail policy to exclude first class rail and encourage the booking of advance tickets.

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BARRY EDWARDS PROCUREMENT CATEGORY MANAGER

"This was a big change management exercise for Whitbread," Eleanor Skinner, Senior Employee Relations Manager explained. "With 43,000 employees across 9 brands we needed to find ways to communicate the change in simple terms and in a positive way across the whole business. Click Travel worked with us to develop a communication plan which included pre-trip approval documentation and demonstrations held via WebEx so we could see the proposal in a test environment. This really helped user understanding and acceptance of the changes internally."

OUTSTANDING RESULTS

The results from the changes on travel spend have been outstanding explains Eleanor Skinner. "In the first quarter alone we saved 51% on airfares and 12% on rail fares as a direct result of the measures and controls implemented. Whitbread is growing at a staggering rate and our spend on travel is increasing. The partnership with Click Travel has enabled travel spend to flat line despite bookings increasing by 44%".

"I enjoy our meetings with the team at Click Travel," explains Eleanor. "They are lovely to deal with, come up with loads of ideas to save us money and it's a great team effort. We will enjoy working with them into the future."

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