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ABB takes an innovative approach to mitigating travel risks

How technology can help keep employees safe when travelling.

ABB, winner of the International SOS Foundation's 2017 Duty of Care award for Innovation, worked with an external supplier to revise its travel risk management processes by integrating its existing system with the latest technology. The result was a more efficient and user-friendly system.

With 30,000 international travellers and 200,000 trips per year, ABB (Asea Brown Boveri Ltd) is a highly mobile organisation. Safety and security of mobile employees is a key element of ABB's Duty of Care approach. In 2016, ABB carried out a major review and revision of its existing system.

The new system merged ABB's current set-up with a platform powered by International SOS' technology. This reduced operating costs, improved process compliance, delivered higher data quality and enhanced user acceptance.

Regular Reviews

Christoph Bleiker, Group Security Manager, ABB, states:

“The wellbeing of employees and contractors on international travel or work assignments is of highest importance to ABB. Our ambition has always been to go well beyond the minimum legal requirements and fulfil the company's moral Duty of Care. We want to enable business in challenging environments in a responsible way.”

ABB seeks to fulfill its Duty of Care by informing travellers and line managers about risks, helping them to adequately prepare for and mitigate travel-related threats and establishing procedures to support travellers when they need assistance, in both non-emergency or emergency situations.

Several disruptive incidents in the early 2000's led ABB to develop a travel security process, including traveler tracking. The process underwent a number of improvements.

The 2016 review found that the existing system was sophisticated but complex. It required the manual entry of travel data and was very time-consuming to administer. ABB decided to replace that tool with the help of an external provider (International SOS), to integrate and simplify its existing set-up.

Innovative and Intuitive

The outcome was a fully innovative and integrated Travel Approval Process, built around new Travel Risk Ratings and Travel Tracking. After a seven-month pilot phase, the Travel Risk Management and Security Approval Program went live in November 2016.

The new Travel Approval process has the following features:

- The process starts with a highly customized automated Pre-trip advisory sent via email. The advisory contains a link to the ABB TravelReady Form.
- TravelReady notifications and reminders are sent to travellers and approving managers throughout the process. Depending on the destination risk rating a first level (line manager) or additional second level (ABB security) approval is required.
- The workflow is automated. Travellers receive notification once the trip is approved. The approval may require additional actions, such as Travel Security Briefings or special training.
- The traveller is given access to 24/7 routine and emergency assistance from International SOS. Travel risk information is provided 24/7 via a customized Travel Risk Information Portal and a security/medical Assistance App for Smartphones.



Benefits

The new setup integrates ABB's existing processes with those of International SOS to create an integrated technology platform. This ensures that consistent, reliable information is delivered at each point in the process (Pre-trip -advisories, travel risk information, alerts, e-learning, etc). In turn, this leads to greater efficiency and cost effectiveness. Compared with the previous system the risk ratings are more standardized.

User acceptance has been positive. Within five months of launch, more than 12,000 approval processes were initiated and more than 18,000 notifications sent to travellers, line managers and security managers. Portal access rates, Assistance App downloads and Assistance Center calls for security briefings all indicate very positive progress.

Marc Vink, Group Head of Security, is pleased with progress:

“The new process is innovative. Through the use of technology, ABB successfully fulfils all key elements of its Duty of Care towards the many employees and contractors who travel in order to drive our business forward. The new Travel Risk Management process is a prime example how Group Security contributes to the company’s values like safety, innovation and speed.”

KEY ELEMENTS

Combining existing processes with new technology to create an integrated approach.

Close co-operation between all relevant internal and external stakeholders.

Using automated systems to ensure consistency of information.

Ensuring travel approvals take account of risk ratings.

Making the most of the latest tools and smartphone technology.

For information on the 2017 Duty of Care Awards winners in all categories, [click here](#).