



Ensure your business keeps within budget

When it comes to a mobile workforce, it can be tricky to keep tabs on your employees' spending. To ensure your business keeps within budget, a new range of solutions have been designed to reduce the risk of excessive expenditures, helping you control your employees' on-the-road spending from the office.





The costs of managing a mobile workforce are legion – from petrol and travel expenses to hotels and sustenance. However, firms can find a way to save both time and money by focusing on how they manage expenses when those on the road were actually standing still.

As much as the costs of on-the-road employees are a concern to employers, the costs of parking – and being off the road – can soon mount up for a business that relies on a staff who spends time out of the office.

Finding free on-street parking at a destination that the driver is not familiar with can often be a nightmare, as every motorist knows. It's more likely that the employee will have to pay for parking to get the best location for that all-important meeting, on or off street. So, then the problem of how to pay, and who pays for that parking cost comes into focus.

One solution to this problem is to find an efficient and easy-to-use method of paying for on-street parking, which, more often than not, will be controlled by the relevant local authority.

And here the main solution appears to be paying for parking using a mobile phone. The RingGo app, for example, is being introduced in more and more local authorities in the UK, Warwickshire being the most recent.

RingGo allows users to pay for parking using a credit or debit card linked to a mobile phone, which has several benefits. The most obvious of these is the simple fact that the driver doesn't have to worry about having the correct change. Equally significant, however, is the ability of a driver to extend her stay at a particular parking place without having to return to their vehicle – which is obviously ideal if that all-important meeting overruns.

On-street parking, however, tends to be prohibitively expensive for any significant length of time in most of the country, meaning off-street parking is the obviously preferred solution for longer or overnight stays.

Enter the professional parking firms, which are numerous. Many offer a range of incentives to persuade business users to use their facilities as the 'default' option.

It is a simple fact that they all offer rather a lot of 'big name' car parks in the country, meaning that even if you are driving around just randomly looking for parking there is every chance that the first thing you will see is the logo of a major operator, and hopefully one that you have established a relationship with. However, you can pre-book parking at facilities run by some of the parking big boys, and most offer membership schemes that entitle drivers to significant discounts and other perks at their facilities, and this is the real incentive to use them.



But that doesn't solve the tricky problem of who exactly is going to pay for a company's business parking, when and how.

In addition to the time lag between an employee paying out their own money and getting it back from their employer in the case of those who submit expenses, and to the timely process of going through statements for those who use company credit cards, there is also the question of card security; if an employee has a company credit card stolen then the thief can, until the theft is detected, use it to pay for pretty much anything.



The use of mobile phones to pay for parking obviates this problem to a certain degree but they are by no means an ideal solution – the mobile phone could be stolen or lost, of course, and most mobile phone payment systems are linked with specific debit or credit cards, which brings us back to the pros and cons of company credit cards.

But there is another option available to those looking to manage the costs of a mobile workforce in an effective way, and that is to move all travel expenses to one ‘restricted’ spending card, enabling staff to make payments for essential travel related items only through authorised partners i.e. parking, hotel rooms, petrol and maybe train travel.

This would mean that there is one very simple way of knowing where and when a company’s staff are billing the firm for travel, removing the need for any awkward conversations with employees about any of them being a bit liberal in their interpretation of what legitimate ‘business use’ of a company credit card involves.

Furthermore, such a scheme should simplify the book-keeping process by reducing the number of invoices requiring processing – all spending being on the one account. And they could also give company management detailed data on where their employees have been too, should they decide that they want this.

Gateway is an integrated credit card based payment solution, helping businesses of all sizes save time and money on employee travel related costs.

Benefits include:

- single monthly invoicing – so you can save admin time
- multiple user cards per account – with spend detailed per card user and captured in single invoice
- a range of official partners who accept Gateway for rail, hotel, fuel and parking purchases

Find out how ‘Gateway’ can help your business save time and money.

Contact us for more information on our products and services.

