

# Case Study - 'Whereabouts' Traveller And A Remote Working Tracking Solution For Groupon

**Many companies dealing with the challenge of 'work from anywhere' policies are facing similar issues. On the surface, at least it's a simple policy, however, from an HR and People Management perspective, the outlook isn't as rosy.**

Firstly, not everyone can work from anywhere; some roles need to be based in a specific location or require access to corporate infrastructure that might not exist in a remote location. So, one of the first issues HR needs to address is internal communications. Communicating the messaging around policies that not everyone can take advantage of runs the risk of declining staff morale and grumbles. Explaining the reasoning behind the decisions early in the process is essential.

Secondly, there are numerous tax and compliance issues presented by a WFA policy. This affects payroll, HR and internal tax specialists. The USA alone has over 50,000 individual taxation policies that vary from state to state. So how do you ensure that the individual worker understands the potential impact of this decision, and then how do payroll unpick some of this complex legislation?

These were some of the issues facing Groupon. The case study below is an example of insight, foresight and best practice. The rollout has been incredibly successful and gives a clear roadmap on progressing policy into implementation and the tools and technology that can support this.

## The Problem

Groupon is an American global e-commerce marketplace connecting subscribers with local merchants by offering activities, travel, goods and services in 15 countries. The nature of Groupon's business model and company structure means that they have faced some challenges around remote worker compliance due to the size of the remote worker population, monitoring worker locations and right to work legislation.

The Covid-19 pandemic increased this displaced worker issue for Groupon. The company's management realised the time

and energy that stakeholders were spending on manually managing this issue.

Groupon asked GTN to implement a solution that would reduce the time spent by key stakeholders in managing the remote worker approval process and allow for increased automation for tracking and managing remote worker remote working events.

## Requirements

Groupon had a clear set of requirements:

- A risk-based approval process mapped against their internal processes
- Integration with Workday HRCIS as a source of employee data
- Remote working opportunities open to all employees
- Ability to track days of presence versus days of work
- Incorporate the remote worker policies developed by Groupon
- Ability for any tool to process over 4000 traveller profiles.

After an extensive due diligence and investigation process, Groupon decided to take the GTN Whereabouts tool, and the integration process began.

## Implementation

The implementation process faced several challenges from a technological standpoint.

- 1) A complex approval process.
- 2) Policy on days of presence v days of work.
- 3) Covid provisions.
- 4) A day-one recording policy. Historical displaced workers were managed gradually through the system.

The TST tool was enabled to be mapped around the layered internal approval process. Stakeholders could quickly see the approvals in the system and those requests that had been approved or declined. In addition, all remote requests had to demonstrate a legal right to work in the remote location, which is also handled within the system.

The initial requirement was for a Days of Presence recording policy. Still, following concerns from the German Works Council on data recording and non working days, Groupon decided to implement a Days of Work recording policy. The Tool's default setting is to record 'days of presence'; however, an additional step was added for

Groupon that captures 'days of work' also. The remote worker policy that Groupon rolled out included an allowance of 30 days of remote work during a twelve-month rolling period.

As highlighted earlier, Groupon required the TST Tool to integrate with the Workday HRIS. As a result of this integration, future integrations with Workday are easy to set up. As part of the unique onboarding policy of TST, clients are only billed for new integration work. This approach maximises the TST experience saving time and budget for the client. Employees use an SSO to gain access to the Groupon version of the tool.

## What Does The Employee Have To Do?

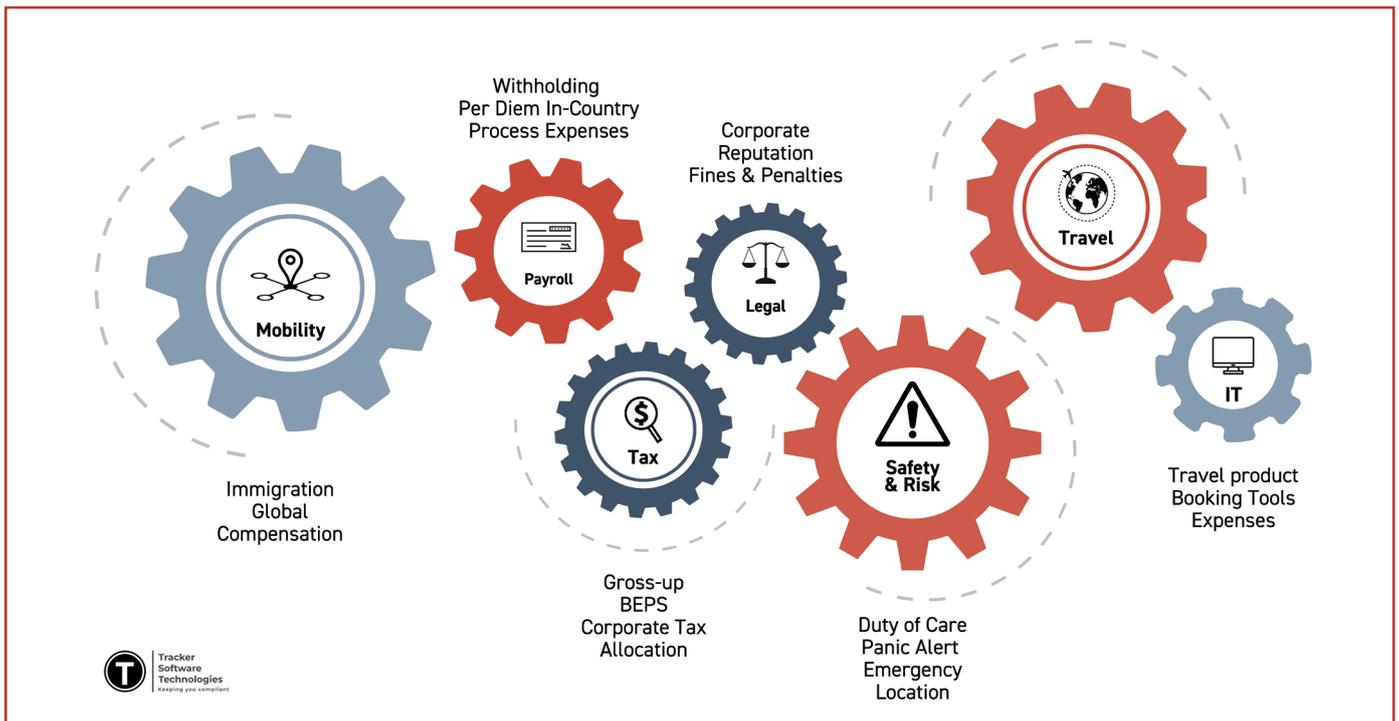
Employees log into the Groupon-specific instance of the tool, as required by Groupon Info Security requirements, and complete a short 'Remote Work Request' questionnaire. The questionnaire asks the location of the remote working event, the intended dates and some location-specific elements, with the questionnaire changing depending on the location chosen.

The employee submits the questionnaire, which runs an instant compliance assessment, offering an 'approval', 'pend' or 'denial' for the event. This is based on Groupon's risk appetite, compliance documentation, and the employee's personal travel history. The traveller may have already utilised their allocated remote working allowance, for example.

If necessary, the Tool begins an approval process, mapped to appropriate stakeholders and managers of the employee to allow stakeholders to assess and approve the remote working event, whereupon approval, the employee will receive notification via the tool and email.

## A Solid And Unified Core Stakeholder Group

Having a central stakeholder steering group is essential for a smooth implementation. By having this group in place, communications, technical questions and feedback during testing were easier to manage and led to a prompt and effective process. Groupon had the core stakeholder group in place before the project started.



This is one of the key takeaways that any company looking at this solution needs to consider. We see many HR and Mobility Teams who fail to make a case for a software-based solution because they failed to assemble the stakeholders from the outset.

One point that should be noted is the role of the Travel Manager. In cases where remote workers are the focus of the project, then the Travel Manager is likely to have less involvement. Travel Managers are a vital part of the travel infrastructure within any organisation. The Travel Manager can provide critical data and information essential within the process. Of course, where the project is focused on business travel, then the Travel Manager will be a vital component of the team.

It's commonly thought that the larger the company the more significant the compliance and taxation risk. It's the trip purpose that defines the risk attached to your travelling population, not the number of travellers. We are seeing employee tracking and trip purpose capture being explored by more Fortune 500 companies, but the same level of risk can be attributed to smaller companies.

The illustration above outlines the ideal working structure. In our experience, these are the business areas that will be involved in the process and can be used as an initial route map when building the project team, depending of course, on the objectives and risk appetite behind the policy and implementation process.

### Lessons Learned From The Process

#### A clear and developed policy:

For an implementation to be successful, the policy needed to support the implementation should be agreed upon and clear from the

outset. Our driving fundamental at TST is that the technology should support the policy. Developing policy around the technology is an inefficient and more costly process. In addition, when communicating the reason for a new platform, a clear policy is critical to achieving widespread adoption of the tool and successful roll-out.

#### Clean and accurate core data set:

Any technology is only as good as the data it holds. Groupon identified this from the outset, and ensured that the traveller profile data provided to TST was as complete as possible. This enabled the team to focus on the implementation and roll-out. As a result, the tool performed according to the agreed objectives from the outset. Implementing the tool is very much a team effort, and in this case, both teams understood the importance of the relationships during implementation.

#### The importance of user testing:

The user testing component was a vital element of this successful implementation. It was imperative as the approvals process was complex, and this element was crucial to ensure accurate mapping across the tool. It also provided a valuable part of generating buy-in from key stakeholders involved in using and rolling out the tool across the business.

#### Conclusion

This was a complex and challenging implementation for the TST team; an effective working relationship allowed for successful implementation and a policy that is working and helping Groupon compete in the global race for talent. The lessons we learned are helping us develop successful implementation pathways in the future.



**TOM CROSBY**

To learn more about how TST can support your HR Teams in addressing similar issues, please e-mail [Tom.Crosby@gtglobaltracker.com](mailto:Tom.Crosby@gtglobaltracker.com) or visit [www.globaltracker.com](http://www.globaltracker.com).



**DAVID LIVITT**

Managing Director  
Global Practice Leader, Business Traveller & Remote Worker Solutions  
E: [dlivitt@gt.com](mailto:dlivitt@gt.com) [www.gt.com](http://www.gt.com)