



Travel & Expense Management

Leveraging Automation to Optimize Expense Management Processes

ExpenseAnywhere

Outlook

Industries Served

Public Sector
Publishing
Manufacturing
Healthcare
Real Estate
Financial Services
Engineering
Grocery Chains
Food processing

Key Clients

New York State
Department of
Transportation
New York State
Department of Health
New York State Office
of General Services
New York State Public
Service Commission
Giant Eagle
SRI Surgical
Hanley Wood
NFI Industries
Topcon Medical
Services
University of Pittsburgh
Medical Center
(UPMC)
Agrana Fruit
Sembler
Helix

ExpenseAnywhere Overview

Virtual Communications (VCOM), a privately held company, located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is a provider of corporate spend management solutions and delivers robust, scalable and secure Web-based applications in this area.

The company's core product line includes the global Expense Management Automation System, ExpenseAnywhere®, as well as a procurement-card reconciliation application, The PcardSystem. VCOM introduced ExpenseAnywhere in 2001 and releases new versions every 12 to 18 months, with upgrades and patches as needed in between major releases.

VCOM has been growing organically since inception and company representatives stated that the company has increased its customer base by 50 percent over the last three years. Company representatives stated that customers choose ExpenseAnywhere for its clean interface, configuration flexibility, simplicity in design, expansive reporting features, global travel support, scalability for companies with 100 users or 10,000+ users, and an intuitive process, which extends to easy adoption with end users.

ExpenseAnywhere

VCOM's modular solution, ExpenseAnywhere can be deployed both as a hosted and a licensed solution based on client needs. The modules provide clients the flexibility to choose specific functionality such as built in per diem rules, cash advances, pre-travel authorization, credit card integration, integration with most ERP packages, etc. VCOM integrates easily with major ERP vendors as well as smaller and even one off solutions. The company offers a variety of integration options, ranging from simple API integrations to more advanced Web services integrations for the real time exchange of data to ERP modules including, but not limited to GL, AP or HR.

Pre-Trip Approval

The ExpenseAnywhere solution delivers considerable flexibility around the pre-travel authorization process. Users can log into the system and create an authorization by providing information like dates of travel, purpose of trip and input details around flights, hotel reservations, car rentals etc. Once this is complete, the authorization can be forwarded to an outside travel agent or internal travel administrator, who then makes the required reservations and forwards to a manager for approval. The system allows travel administrators to manage their own travel as well as travel requests for other employees.

ExpenseAnywhere's flexible template driven framework allows clients to pre-define policies against any type of expense category or individual line item in a sub category. When travelers are creating their pre-trip authorizations, they will be informed of company policy and out of compliance transactions through a variety of means. Travelers can then either modify their entry or provide justifications that will be forwarded to managers for approval.

Online Booking Integration

While Virtual Communications does not currently offer integrated online travel booking with a GDS system, the ExpenseAnywhere work flow can be configured to send pre-travel authorizations to either an internal travel desk or a company's travel agency for booking.

Report Submission

The expense report creation and submission process is simple. If a pre-travel authorization exists for a trip, users can use that document to pre-populate expenses into the report, to reduce the amount of data entry and associated errors.

If there is no pre-travel request, users can create an expense report from scratch by simply filling in a few details about the trip, adding credit card charges and out-of-pocket expenses. While default costs centers are assigned to different expense types to make the expense allocation process simpler, users can opt to change the costs centers and even assign each expense to multiple cost centers or project codes, splitting the amount by dollar or percentage.

At the time of expense report submission, the system validates the line items against corporate travel policy and flags hard and soft exceptions. Hard exceptions prevent the user from submitting the expense report till the exception has been corrected, while soft expenses require a justification. ExpenseAnywhere supports the submittal of receipts through either scanning or faxing. Faxed receipts (or any required pre-travel documentation) are easily submitted through a bar-coded cover page. After the cover sheet and receipts/documents are submitted, they are instantly attached to the appropriate expense report.

Approval Workflow

ExpenseAnywhere provides a lot of flexibility when it comes to both pre-travel and expense related workflow. The company performs an extensive review of core processes with each client to make sure that the workflow fits the needs of the client, while conforming to industry best-practices. The system workflow is set up prior to implementation to make sure that routing of tasks conforms to clients' current corporate travel and expense policies. The solution can also easily handle various situations, which may require the routing workflow to be altered based on client needs.

E-mail notifications which include comments and a link to the expense report within the application are sent to appropriate users at every step of the process. When a manager logs into the system to review expense reports submitted, the system identifies transactions that are in violation of travel policy. If there are no flags associated with an expense report, it can be approved automatically, but the system forces managers to review any reports that have flags.

Expense Reimbursement

ExpenseAnywhere integrates with any system that clients choose to utilize for payment to their employees. Records can be held for review prior to posting to GL or automatically posted depending on the requests and requirements of the client.

Reporting & Analysis

ExpenseAnywhere has extensive built-in reporting capabilities that allow the analysis of spend at various levels including employee, department, category, cost center, client, status, vendor, project, small dollar spend, task or billable type. Reports can be generated for individuals or groups, and the system supports reporting against compliance, aging, reconciliation, and tax reports. Additional reports can be generated for analysis with corporate cards or cash advances. ExpenseAnywhere includes a dynamic reporting engine that provides quick and easy support to generate any report type not currently found in the system.

Implementation & Pricing

Since the solution is modular in design, it can be implemented in phases or in one seamless effort. Implementation time is assessed based on an understanding of

the modules chosen as well as additional variables such as complexity of workflow, corporate policies and GL structure. Typical ranges for implementations run from a few weeks to a few months for the most complex requested setup. Pricing can be user based or per expense report.

Outlook

Virtual Communications' ExpenseAnywhere solution delivers strong functionality from pre-trip authorization to expense reporting and post-trip analysis. The company has a large number of government agencies as clients, hence the solution is well configured to meet the needs of public sector companies, including the ability to manage federal and state government policies and built in GSA rules and procedures. Government agencies and other public sector firms will find that the solution delivers virtually everything they need off-the-shelf. ExpenseAnywhere is also well positioned as a player in the global travel arena with multi-currency abilities, support for GST/PST/VAT taxes as well as reporting features for reclamation of those taxes.

In terms of new functionality, ExpenseAnywhere has recently announced the addition of offline functionality for travelers. Expenses may be filled out while offline and the new entries or changes will be automatically synced the next time the traveler connects to the online system. The system now supports Blackberry approval functionality for road warriors. Company representatives stated that VCOM will continue to expand its line of spend management applications in 2008 and will introduce a new system for online purchase orders and then roll out a CFO Dashboard in 2009.

Overall, ExpenseAnywhere is a sound solution for most companies seeking to automate the travel and expense management cycle.