

Jo Lilford is a business writer and communications strategist. Here, she talks to Sue Darlaston about how HRG is combining tech with personal service to create the ultimate travel booking experience for SMEs.

# HRG's latest travel booking services: High tech, high spec & highly personal.



**Sue Darlaston wears many hats at travel management heavyweight HRG, but one of the most exciting is her role heading up sales for the company's SME offerings. In recent years, her team has been focused on how to add real value to the SME travel booking experience. What they quickly realised was that a 'one size fits all' approach is never the answer: cue two distinct offerings to market, the one year old upmarket boutique service, HRG Travel London and the tech focused eWings.com, which launches in the UK later this month. Sue talks to us about how both offerings are set to revolutionise travel bookings for SMEs, in entirely different ways.**

## HRG Travel London

Travel London offers City firms a boutique corporate travel booking experience that combines a highly personal service with HRG's technology suite. Sue explains, "When we developed HRG Travel London, it was in response to demand from City firms who wanted a high-quality travel booking service that would cater to diverse and unique needs. Our clients are busy international organisations with a lot of travel requirements who need support in getting the best possible value combined with a service that shows we understand them."

HRG Travel London uses the established online tools we're familiar with, from HRG online and HRG's app, combined with a reporting suite that's tailored to each client's requirements. This online dashboard harnesses all that is good about technology – speed, efficiency, data – and applies it. It means that not only is the whole experience gloriously intuitive to use, but it also enables businesses to keep an eye on exactly what's going on, managing costs, monitoring booking trends, travel patterns and even employee wellbeing. Wondering who's travelling more than is strictly healthy and where your risks may

lie? The system will produce a report telling you precisely what you need to know.

***"A dedicated, London based team of consultants get to know you, your organisation and your travel requirements inside out..."***

But the icing on the cake? Real people at Travel London handling your account. A dedicated, London based team of consultants get to know you, your organisation and your travel requirements inside out, so they can offer tailored advice and support.

The service is a step ahead of the pack for several reasons. Sue summarises: "It's underpinned by HRG's experience, which means it's unquestionably reliable - clients will know they're in good hands for managing and controlling organisational spend. Then there is the additional bonus of HRG's purchasing power – we're established and credible, which means we get great rates that drive cost effectiveness for corporates. Finally, it's accessible from the desktop or via a smart phone app, so it's super flexible."

## eWings.com

Launching in the UK this month, eWings.com has already blazed a trail in its native Germany, offering SMEs a completely different travel booking experience which is unique, due in no small part, to its simplicity. eWings.com was launched in Germany in 2013, by Thilo Hardt, now its managing director. Thilo spotted an opportunity to streamline and simplify the way travel bookings were handled within his company and decided to develop a digital offering that would address this. Five years on, the service has taken German businesses by storm.

The site is a slick, monthly subscription, aggregator service for SMEs. It offers travel bookers the kind of online experience we're more used to when purchasing, say, our home insurance: a way to access flights and hotels – and shortly, rail - with breath-taking simplicity.

Sue explains the beauty of the system for users: "As the system has direct connect capabilities to travel providers, it is developing and evolving daily to benefit our customers with the latest offerings from HRG's travel partners. Ultimately, what this means is a system that's fast to use, offers the best prices and enables reporting at your fingertips." Even if you're unfamiliar with your destination, eWings.com takes care of lots of the legwork, sorting flights into the timeslots that are convenient to you and listing accommodation using algorithms based on price, rating and location to make sure you stay in the best possible location for your needs on each trip. It allows the user to choose the detail: luggage, seat preference, leg room, parking, to name but a few.

There is more: when clients asked if there could be an approvals level built



into the site, the team developed it. So whilst you can purchase user seats for any number of people from a sole administrator right up to your entire workforce, HRG can also offer this extra level to keep a handle on costs and conflicts. The site will also house – and develop, if required – your corporate travel policy, so it's at every user's fingertips.

Sue concludes: "It's a really exciting time for HRG – being able to offer not one but two truly pioneering services that have the potential to transform bookings for SMEs is pretty special."

Even more so is the rate at which these offerings are developing and growing to mirror our customer's changing demands, as their own businesses evolve. It feels special to be able play a part in that."

All in all, it's good news for SMEs who require rigour, reporting, governance, cost control, speed and efficiency, all manageable and all just a mouse click – or a conversation – away.

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