



University of Aberdeen

Going Higher In Education

The Case: The successful implementation of Voyage Manager’s travel tracking system by the International Office at the University of Aberdeen in 2014, after receiving a positive recommendation from Glasgow University.

The University of Aberdeen felt the need to have tools in place to ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff and students when travelling abroad.

The need arose with members of the International Office department having themselves experienced volatile situations out in the field, as well as having been informed of third party encounters with dangerous situations overseas, including hearing from academics that had been shot at.

With the risk that high, they could not afford to rely on traditional communication avenues to keep track of faculty and university attendees, and decided to raise their levels of security to be less passive and more continually in touch with their whereabouts.

“What is fascinating to me is that our perceptions of risk are often unconsciously very biased...we would think nothing would happen.”

The Transformation: Having seen a number of incidents occur that could easily have escalated, the university felt compelled to question both its duty of care and the protocols it had put in place.

Alongside accepting its own responsibilities, it required measures that were more robust than human nature, removing the need to rely on people remembering to keep the university informed via a text message, Whatsapp group or email whenever they were able to.

Thanks to features such as daily automated requests for status updates and consensual location tracking, the university felt that Voyage Manager addressed the fundamental problem of being able to proactively check on a person's safety through simple-to-use, live notification software.

“Voyage Manager offered something totally different, yet was so in tune with our needs and concerns.”

From the University of Aberdeen's perspective, they had a consolidated and secure source of information, aggregating updates on members of the university who were travelling abroad from multiple data sources. They were also pleased with being able to configure the Voyage Manager system to suit their needs and help them navigate multiple time zones.

They found Voyage Manager easy to implement and intuitive to use.

“The system is efficient and useful to our organisation. It was a nice reassurance to offer to our team and their next of kin. We feel empowered having the Voyage Manager system in place because we have access to a lot of security information. The more armed we are with flashpoints, in theory, the better prepared we should always be.”

A Real-Time Difference

Voyage Manager opens a fundamental discussion about the nature of risk and who ultimately manages the risk. It poses difficult questions. “If a grave situation occurs when I am on a work trip, whose fault is it? Is it my boss's fault, is it mine, or my attackers?”

The looming question remains - what have *we* done to mitigate risk?

Establishments may not be able to bullet-proof themselves, but this case illuminates how much things can improve when each party accepts their role in mitigating risk to the best of their ability.

“We want to be the absolute industry leaders by having the system in place to maintain and monitor the safety and security of our staff, and Voyage Manager allows us to do that with tools that we did not have access to before.”

Key system outcomes for The University of Aberdeen:

- Mitigates risk and liability to the best of their ability
- Ensures teams’ and students’ safety and wellbeing
- Automates interactions, reducing reliance on human nature
- Saves time for travellers and operations team
- Removes unnecessary worries

“Working with John is brilliant. Fundamentally he understands the nature of our job and because he understands what we do and the places we go to, he understands the benefits of the system to us, and that makes a massive difference.”