

Location: Midlands
Size: 1-9 employees
Industry: Agriculture automotive
Type of travel: Mix of local and long distance

Purpose: Client meetings and tradeshow
Modes used: Default to car, occasional rail
Interviewees: Managing director, marketing director

Description:

- The two directors have to be very reactive to their clients' needs, and will typically book in a meeting last minute, jump in the car, punch the destination into the sat nav, and drive – with no planning.
- If a destination is over 3 hours away or in London, they will look into train options. They will firstly look at how far it is from the station to the end point and how they will get there. If the client's office isn't in the city centre they may need a taxi which can make it a very expensive option. They will then look at the total price that route will cost and time it will take and compare that to the option of driving. Driving is usually the preferred option, as it gives them the 'door to door' solution they are after.
- The company's image is also very important to them. Being on time is essential and the managing director thinks that driving is more reliable and looks more professional. It also means they can use the car as a 'mini-office' – to store documentation and make calls on the go using hands-free.

"It's not a car, it's a mobile office" – Managing Director

"The most important thing to me is the least effort possible, the less 'faff' the better" – Marketing Director

Location: Midlands, plus offices nationwide
Size: 300+ employees
Industry: Engineering
Type of travel: Mix of local and long distance

Purpose: Site management, client meetings, between offices
Modes used: Default to car (company cars), occasional rail
Interviewees: Human resources manager, 2 x managing engineers, PA to managing director

Description:

- Travel is part of what they do, with engineer managers often needing to be working on site. When a project is on they may work up to 4 days a week on site. If the location is over 2 hours away the policy is that they have to lodge.
- Most staff have company cars and driving is the default, although the decision is up to the individual and rail can be used if there is a specific reason, such as needing the time to finish writing a report (on a laptop) or avoiding rush hour traffic.
- Travel time is a burden for many, as it takes up time out of their personal time, resulting in a longer working day. The company has been facing challenges with staff retention, the main reason being the amount of travel involved impacting staff wellbeing and family life.
- The staff are aware of the time travelling is costing them; saving time is very important to them and they are constantly look for ways of reducing that. However, they have the impression the time cost is not recognised by senior management.

"Direct costs are accounted for but indirect costs of man hours is not accounted for and is HUGE" – HR Manager

"When planning a route I look at saving time over saving money every time" – Managing Engineer

Location: Midlands

Size: 50-249 employees

Industry: Window glazing

Type of travel: Local trips, and to London

Purpose: Sales and marketing, surveying, business meetings

Modes used: Car, rail

Interviewees: Managing director, PA, operations manager

Description:

- Most employees use their own cars for local trips and claim back mileage.
- Mileage expenses get signed off by management but are rarely questioned.
- Recently expanded to further afield (Sheffield, Derby, Leicester) so have purchased shared company cars.
- Occasionally the train will be used to get to London.
- The managing director is concerned with productivity, to him reducing travel time is a way of increasing productivity and is more valuable than saving costs.
- They have a company policy that no phone calls can be made while driving as a safety precaution.

“Masses of time is wasted travelling, I cant even contemplate it. But it’s a must – it’s part of what we do. I keep an eye on financial costs but the biggest cost to us is productivity” – Managing Director

Location: Scotland

Size: 300+ employees

Industry: Social care

Type of travel: Short distance local trips

Purpose: Between care homes, patients’ homes, errands

Modes used: Car

Interviewees: Manager, carer, handy man

Description:

- Journeys are made to visit patients at home, travel between the 3 local care homes, or to run errands for patients such as collecting prescriptions.
- Trips made are typically within 20 minutes of the care home and always travelled by car. Staff use their own cars and claim back mileage via a pay claim form.
- Some staff don’t claim mileage back if they aren’t travelling much, or it can be forgotten.
- Staff will consider traffic when planning trips and avoid peak time if possible.
- Time out of the home travelling increases employees workload for the day. Less time travelling would ultimately mean more time they could spend with their patients.

“It is frustrating when we have lots of trips out of the home because that time travel time is wasted and replaces valuable time we could be spending with our patients” – Carer

“I am constantly driving doing errands and between the homes. For years I didn’t claim any mileage until someone pointed it out to me, and now it has made a big difference!” – Handy man

Location: Scotland
Size: 10-49 employees
Industry: Production and sales
Type of travel: Regional across the country

Purpose: Sales
Modes used: Car
Interviewees: Sales manager, office manager

Description:

- A wide spread sales team mean that management need to keep a close eye on travel movements and expenses. All sales reps have company cars and claim back mileage through expense sheets. They also have to submit a travel schedule showing where they travelled when. This gets signed off by the sales manager.
- The office team travel to meetings with clients and suppliers occasionally in the local Glasgow area. For this they will use their own cars and log mileage used to claim back.
- Reduction of travel time to them means managing to fit more sales meetings into a day and increase efficiency.

“Quicker journeys would allow us to visit more customers in a day and get us more new business” – Sales manager

Location: Scotland
Size: 1-9 employees
Industry: Events
Type of travel: Long distance, nationwide to event locations

Purpose: Venue scouting, delivery
Modes used: Car/van
Interviewees: Managing director, operations manager, technician

Description:

- Employees drive large amounts of equipment so the company has a van as well as a company car.
- Because they work in the events industry, being on time is essential. They have to factor in a big time buffer to account for any delays or traffic. This can be as large as 5 hours – or sometimes they will travel the day before.
- Time spent on the road will often be spent discussing other jobs or planning the future direction of the company.
- They will look up the best route before starting their journey, using Google Maps. They will be looking for the quickest and easiest route possible. When planning the trip they will also factor in time of the day and traffic.
- As a small group of them travel together, they will often change drivers throughout the journey to prevent fatigue.

“If journey times could be more reliable that would be best. We have to factor in so much time to mitigate against any risks that small time savings don’t benefit us much” – Managing Director

Location: Scotland
Size: Micro business
Industry: Car hire
Type of travel: Long distance nationwide, and short distance local

Purpose: To look at new car purchases, meet with clients
Modes used: Car, rail
Interviewees: Director / founder

Description:

- The director travels long distances across the UK to visit and purchase new vehicles.
- He enjoys travelling and often combines the trip with pleasure – taking his wife along and adding a few days holiday.
- Cost is a concern when it comes to travel, he is very conscious of keeping costs down when planning trips.
- Local trips are always undertaken by car as it is thought to be easier, more time and cost efficient.

“I love travelling, especially down to London. I like to make a day of it, or sometimes stay for longer – take my wife and see the sites around my business meetings” – Director / Founder

Location: North-West
Size: 250+ employees
Industry: Legal-Medical Services
Type of travel: UK-Wide

Purpose: Sales and customer service
Modes used: Car
Interviewees: Senior manager, IT manager, technician

Description:

- Sales and Systems teams are on the road daily to meet new businesses and set them up with their products/ services.
- Given the high sensitivity of information being handled (medical records) there are strict company policies regarding information security and this has an impact on approach to travel too with formal policies in place.
- Policies dictate protocol around company cars and travel expense claims and each is signed off by a team manager.

Location: North-West
Size: 10-49 employees
Industry: Property
Type of travel: Local

Purpose: Viewings and management of properties
Modes used: Car
Interviewees: Owner, support staff

Description:

- All trips made are local, within a 15 minute radius of both office and home.
- Travel an essential part of the job and quieter routes are known and chosen to save time and limit traffic.
- Reduced travel times would mean more meetings could be held in a day and there would be more time to chase up new business from the office.
- *"I know that about every 10 meetings will lead to a sale, so if I had time for a few more meetings each day, along with some time to call up new clients from the office we would be a much more successful business" – Owner*

Location: North-West
Size: 1-9 employees
Industry: Management training
Type of travel: UK-Wide

Purpose: Training sessions, client meetings
Modes used: Car, Rail, Air (occasionally)
Interviewees: Owner, Head of administration

Description:

- Travel is relentless: we are training almost daily across the country along with client meetings.
- Wear and tear is a key consideration for such a stamina-intensive job with frequent travel – car is often the chosen mode as it allows for more flexibility and less 'hassle' for trainers.
- Travel time gained would free up more time to develop new training products and see family in the evenings.
- *"Less travel time on the road would mean less wear and tear for me personally along with shorter days" – Owner/Trainer*

Location: South-West
Size: 1-9 employees
Industry: Car sales
Type of travel: UK-Wide

Purpose: Buying / selling cars
Modes used: Car(using cars they will sell), Rail
Interviewees: Director, sales executive

Description:

- Staff travel largely to buy cars to sell from their base in Bristol; the company's approach to business is very much driven by the Director's personality and relaxed approach to life in general.
- Travel is dictated by where cars are available, but how they travel is highly changeable, depending as much on individual whims as business demands.
- Time and cost of travel are important, but the main focus is ultimately getting cars back to base so they can sell them on.
- *"If it's a nice sunny day we might fancy a drive, but we'd get on the train if it was raining."*

Location: South-West
Size: 10-49 employees
Industry: Exhibition Displays
Type of travel: UK-wide and international

Purpose: Sales, client meetings, conferences
Modes used: Car, rail, air
Interviewees: Director, manager, company secretary

Description:

- This is an extremely busy business with a heavy workload and demanding turnaround times
- Briefcase travel forms only a proportion of total business travel (much of which is also related to manufacturing and delivery).
- Yet travel is a hugely important aspect of the business and the logistics of both briefcase and 'toolbox' travel is at the forefront of the director's mind; logistics and travel form the heart of a permanent conversation among the management team.
- Rail is the most common form of travel due to convenience and the long distances travelled, though there are no hard and fast rules.

Location: South-West
Size: 50-249 employees
Industry: Estate agents
Type of travel: Local

Purpose: Sales, visits to other branches, conferences/training
Modes used: Car
Interviewees: Managing director, financial director, negotiator

Description:

- This is an expanding agency, with a large number of branches; most key decisions are still made by the directors.
- Travel is hugely important to the business, but the vast majority of trips are 15-20 minute car journeys.
- All sales/negotiation staff have a car allowance, putting them in control of the efficiency of their travel arrangements; the more efficient they are, the better off they are which works well for both time management and personal costs.
- Delays on the road are a major concern, extending travel time and thus reducing sales potential.

Location: South-West
Size: 250+ employees
Industry: Private healthcare
Type of travel: UK-Wide but largely to London

Purpose: Meetings, conferences, training
Modes used: Rail, company car (occasionally)
Interviewees: National director; healthcare director; personal assistant

Description:

- Regular travel largely is limited to managerial staff, who need to travel to other branches/hospitals or to meet centrally; they control their own travel.
- Other staff travel is far more controlled as it impacts on day-to-day patient care and has a knock-on effect on staff costs; other staff, unlike their managers, are less likely to have any means of working en route; all travel is coordinated centrally.
- The company has a relatively strict hierarchy, with all travel decisions approved by managers and most travellers subject to strict policies about when/where/how they travel; yet the says they are very flexible nonetheless.

Location: South-West
Size: 1-9 employees
Industry: Glaziers
Type of travel: UK-wide

Purpose: Sales, client meetings, preliminary visits
Modes used: Road, car
Interviewees: Director, manager, fitter

Description:

- This is a small business with a geographically diverse client base, running from the South West to Yorkshire.
- The briefcase travel element of work tends to mirror the 'toolkit' travel element; it is typically carried out by van and with the same willingness to travel.
- Distance is seen largely as a logistical issue, rather than anything incurring business costs; there was little evidence that extra travel costs are taken into account when costing work or planning travel.

Location: South Wales
Size: 250+ employees
Industry: Construction
Type of travel: Local travel and London

Purpose: Meetings with clients and contractors
Modes used: Predominantly car
Interviewees: Depot Manager, contracts manager, project manager

Description:

- Travel is often made to London for larger contract meetings and regular client meetings.
- Formal travel policy in place passed down from head office, which is located abroad. Policy is followed relatively strictly with all travel forms passing through the international human resources office.
- The travel policy is built around reducing costs while ensuring the safety of employees.

"Things used to be a little more flexible around here, but after we were bought out by [an international company] things have been more formal. The HR department are abroad and everything needs to be sent back there, it's all very black and white on travel, if you don't follow the procedures they might challenge you on it" – Depot Manager

Location: South Wales
Size: 50 - 250 employees
Industry: Accountancy
Type of travel: Regional/ UK-wide

Purpose: Client meetings, training
Modes used: Company car, rail
Interviewees: Director/ partner, senior manager, junior manager

Description:

- Auditors regularly spend time in client offices; senior staff travel for client meetings; and all staff attend conferences/ training events. Senior staff are generally the only ones to make longer journeys e.g. to London or Manchester, for client meetings. More junior staff tend to stay in the local area.
- Travel costs are not a major focus for the firm. They are estimated in advance and built into the charge to clients. Performance against this budget is reviewed annually.
- There is an informal travel policy, focused on minimising unnecessary travel costs. The emphasis within the firm is on time spent, which needs to be accounted for in 6 minute segments. Travel costs are controlled by getting staff to pay for their own travel and then reimbursing them, once approved, by their manager.

Location: South Wales
Size: Sole trader
Industry: Jewellery
Type of travel: Local/ UK-wide

Purpose: Sales, client servicing
Modes used: Coach, van
Interviewees: Proprietor

Description:

- This company produces and sells stained glass products (manufacturing sector). The sole trader lives and works in urban Cardiff.
- Travel is divided into local travel visiting shops/ hotels to refresh product displays/ replenish stock, plus long-distance travel to craft fairs/ industry shows – which constitutes the main source of income.
- Margins are tight so travel costs are kept as low as possible, but there is a distinct blurring between work and personal life, with trade-offs being made between for example, costs and greater comfort on a journey as a ‘treat’ for an early start.
- Longer distance travel is carried out by coach so the costs involved remain quite small.

Location: South Wales
Size: 10-49 employees
Industry: Sports
Type of travel: Local travel and London

Purpose: Local sports events and board meetings in London
Modes used: Car, Rail
Interviewees: Chief operating officer, field events co-ordinator, personal assistant

Description:

- Two main types of journey are made: travelling to local swim meets to encourage uptake of sport and higher level partnership or board meetings, typically in London.
- Cars are used for local trips as local train routes do not provide convenient options (car is door-to-door); train is used to go to London trips as it is more direct and there is less traffic.
- Time out of the office is a necessity but adds to working hours and stretches out the day (especially for field based staff). Less travelling time would mean more time spent with families and better work/life balance.

“I’m out two / three evenings a week at local events, sometimes even on the weekends. It means my working hours are really difficult sometimes” – Field Events Co-ordinator

Location: London
Size: 250 employees +
Industry: Local Authority/Education
Type of travel: London travel and the North

Purpose: Visiting schools and attending training seminars
Modes used: Rail, Tube (London)
Interviewees: Deputy Head of human resources, human resources adviser, business support officer

Description:

- Staff travel to visit schools to provide support services relating to human resources; schools are based within the borough and across the country.
- Attempts are made to be as efficient with travel as possible by making multiple school visits within a single trip.
- Travel has an impact on the amount of work in the team – when one member is out office the others must cover the load. Ultimately less travel would mean more time in office to complete work and shorter working days.

Location: London
Size: 1-9 employees
Industry: Chartered surveyors
Type of travel: Across England

Purpose: Meeting clients, handling disputes
Modes used: Car
Interviewees: Chief executive / founder, surveyor

Description:

- The chief executive demands that all employees keep timesheets on projects and have to report to him by email at the end of each day.
- The company charges by the hour so needs to make best use of time – productivity is the main focus and they try to maximise appointments and meetings across the day.
- The goal is to take the quickest route possible within reason and considering comfort.
- Travel time saved would allow for more meetings and greater revenue.
- *“Time and efficiency are a paramount, coupled with that is comfort as well, the tube is efficient, but not putting up with that!” Chief executive / Founder*

Location: London
Size: 250+ employees
Industry: Veterinary care
Type of travel: Regional / UK-wide

Purpose: Sales, client meetings
Modes used: Car
Interviewees: Fleet manager, office manager, finance director

Description:

- This is a nationwide veterinary firm, operating a hub and spoke system of regional and local practices. Vets have company vans and head office staff have company cars.
- Travel is generally local, although the fleet manager travels throughout UK and staff visit the Head Office for training and meetings. Senior staff also travel widely for meetings.
- Briefcase travel is focused on using the company fleet, but there is freedom to travel however best makes sense for the business. Travel costs are closely monitored and controlled by the fleet manager , who has responsibility for overall travel costs.

Location: London
Size: 10-49 employees
Industry: Pharmaceutical research
Type of travel: Often long distance

Purpose: Meet clients; conduct research
Modes used: Rail, car
Interviewees: Managing director and operations manager

Description:

- Most of the staff travel frequently across the country, often to multiple locations in one journey.
- The managing director always drives and feels a policy is unnecessary. He has a relatively laissez-faire approach to travel decisions, trusting his employees to make the right decisions.
- His deputy, who oversees staff, feels that in reality they have a relatively strict, if unwritten, policy: choose the cheapest option that seems reasonable in terms of time.
- While this still leaves employees to make the final decision, receipts are reviewed and time-efficiency monitored to ensure this is taking place.

"I trust my employees to make the right decisions and take the best route possible for them" – Managing Director

Location: London
Size: 50-249 employees
Industry: Exhibitions, events, videoing
Type of travel: Mix of local and long distance

Purpose: Client meetings, videoing events, arranging exhibitions
Modes used: Largely rail; occasionally car
Interviewees: Business administrator, producer, video co-ordinator

Description:

- Most of this company's work is event based, which means that not only do they have to visit very specific locations, but also timing is absolutely critical. Their videography work demonstrates this clearly: the event will take place regardless of their presence, but they only get paid if they are there to record it.
- With multiple events and a wide number of full and part time employees to coordinate, all in different roles, the business administrator's role is pivotal to ensuring the smooth running of the business; she ensures that she knows where everyone needs to be, how they will get there and how they will get to the next appointment.
- To a certain extent, travel time is less relevant simply because they overcompensate to mitigate against potential travel problems, often arriving several hours or even the night before an event.
- Mode choice is not only affected by the often more complex nature of destinations (weddings etc. are often in remote locations). It is also affected by the practicalities of transporting bulky, fragile and very expensive equipment from place to place.

Location: London
Size: Sole trader
Industry: Management consultancy
Type of travel: UK-wide long and short stay

Purpose: Client meetings, networking, training seminars
Modes used: Car, rail, plane (infrequent)
Interviewees: Owner

Description:

- The sole trader travels to meet with new and existing clients, this activity peaks when seeking new contracts.
- He travels by car when he is making a multi-location visit, or if the site he is visiting is far from stations. He also uses car for greater flexibility.
- He travels by rail when it is a single location visit, that is close to station, or when the travel is long distance.