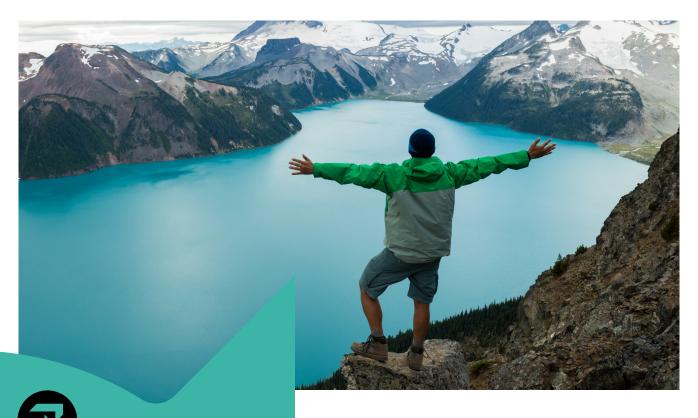**Case study**

Defying the odds to drive better people experiences

The customer

Travelport is an innovative technology platform that supports exceptional travel retail experiences. The company is headquartered in the UK, employs +2,500 people worldwide, and has a global customer base made up of travel agencies, hotels and transport providers.

In March 2020, Covid sparked an unprecedented industry crisis and Travelport was forced to make 800 redundancies. Many of these people had been with the company for more than 20 or 30 years and it was an emotional time for the entire Travelport community.

People-first: forging ahead in a crisis

Despite this challenging backdrop, Travelport's HR team decided to push on with (and even accelerate) its pre-existing plan to "radicalise performance" – a move that would involve significant cultural change as well as a shift towards coaching and feedback conversations.

Travelport's approach to performance management had until that point been characterised by annual appraisals that were heavily focused on objective-setting and ratings. **The new goal was to de-governise performance management and move in a direction that would strengthen connections, support wellbeing, and drive sustained performance.**

Describing OpenBlend as "the only solution on the market that aligned perfectly with what we wanted to achieve", Travelport's Erin Watkins, VP Transformation – People, explains that the partnership was formalised in 2020 and the platform rolled out to all employees by early 2021. Fast forward to today, and Travelport cites OpenBlend as a critical part of its formula for people and performance success.

> ## "I have to admit I'm usually the first to wince at new HR tools but I'm a big fan of OpenBlend's life/blend discussions!"
>
> VP Legal, Travelport

"Thriving, not just surviving"

What is most remarkable about this story is that Travelport has managed to achieve the seemingly impossible: **the company has actually improved people experiences despite being in the throes of a major industry crisis.** They've defied the odds – and the benefits speak for themselves:

Strong (and rising) engagement

During the first year of the partnership, 77% of Travelport employees actively engaged with the OpenBlend platform – a figure that has since risen to 95% (2022 figure to date). In addition, all of those 77% of employees used OpenBlend to facilitate a conversation (or conversations) with their manager in 2021 – and in 2022, that figure has risen to 92% of employees.

Over the past three months, almost two-thirds of employees (64%) have logged into OpenBlend, demonstrating that the platform is being used regularly by the majority of Travelport's workforce.

Better wellbeing

While Travelport's HR team might have expected to see a drop in wellbeing due to the challenges posed by Covid, Travelport's latest company pulse survey tells a different story: the number of employees who say they are able to look after their wellbeing has actually increased by 10% over the past three years (63% in 2019 vs 73% in 2022). Once again, the team credits OpenBlend – and the human conversations it supports – as a key contributor in this achievement.

9 out of 10 are proud to work for Travelport

The same pulse survey showed that a massive 91% of employees are proud to work for Travelport – a significant increase on the 69% that was reported in 2019. Given the circumstances, the Travelport team could be forgiven for having expected this number to decrease. But instead of falling backwards, they saw an increase of 22%.

Improved clarity of strategic goals

In 2019, 67% of Travelport employees said they clearly understood the company's strategic objectives. Today that number sits at a much higher 91%. That's a jump equal to one quarter of the entire workforce: an extra ~625 employees who have now come to understand these strategic business goals.

95% of Travelport employees actively engage with the OpenBlend platform

Lower than average attrition

Travelport has also seen lower than average voluntary attrition for the tech industry. During the pandemic, average attrition rates were predicted to be anywhere between 20% and 35%. Like other organisations, Travelport lost some amazing individuals due to Covid yet churn was significantly lower than the predicted average, ending 2020 at just over 8% and 2021 just over 10%.

Considering that Travelport not only operates in tech, but travel tech, this is a huge achievement that can be attributed to the company's people-centricity, as well as its partnership with OpenBlend.

"Context is everything in this story. OpenBlend has played a critical role in helping us to introduce coaching for performance as a staple of our culture. We've been able to shift performance to an ongoing conversation and connect wellbeing to high performance.

We also have amazing people with incredible capabilities and endless commitment but despite that, we could have easily fallen backwards given the challenges we've faced over the past two to three years.

OpenBlend has been an important part of our success in people terms, enabling us to keep them front and centre and drive tangible results"

Erin Watkins, VP Transformation, People at Travelport

To learn more about the OpenBlend platform and how it can support conversations in your organisation, get in touch.

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