



Workday and TripAdvisor

Traveling to the Cloud on a Unified Suite of Applications

A genuine game-changer in the world of travel planning, TripAdvisor believes in moving fast.

“We’re really interested in delivering the best we can for our visitors to the web site, as quickly as possible,” according to Stephen Kaufer, president and CEO of TripAdvisor. They call their philosophy “speed wins.” And that’s why they chose Workday.

A Legacy System Like ‘Churning Butter’

Launched in 2000, TripAdvisor is now the largest travel web site in the world.

“TripAdvisor helps travelers, but it’s not TripAdvisor the company helping travelers plan their trip,” says Kaufer. “It’s the community of other travelers who have contributed all their advice, all their tips, their unique perspective, to help the next traveler. And when you think of the 50 or 60 million visitors a month that are coming by, and the 75 million reviews and opinions that we have on the site, that’s a ton of people who have taken a moment out of their own day to help their fellow travelers down the road have a better trip.”

In December 2011, the company spun out from the travel site Expedia, where it used a legacy, on-premise ERP system. According to TripAdvisor CFO Julie Bradley, using the old system was very challenging. “It’s like churning butter,” she says. “You put the information in and wait a while to get it back out. Reporting would take a while. Analytics would take a while. And waiting was a hindrance to helping us move our business forward.”

As the company prepared to go public, it was clear that a traditional ERP system would not match their “speed wins” philosophy. And they wanted to provide their employees with the best tools.

“At our core, we’re a technology company,” Bradley says. “Our engineers are the best and the brightest. And if it doesn’t work for them, they’ll just go build it themselves. So it’s important for us to provide them with tools that are cutting edge, that scale, that have a great user experience, and that empower them to do their jobs better.”



Business Case at a Glance

1,400 Employees in the U.S. and China

Traded on NASDAQ under the symbol TRIP

\$637 Million in Revenue (2011)

Headquartered in Newton, Massachusetts

Workday Solutions

Human Capital Management

Financial Management

Payroll

Expenses

Procurement

Summary of Business Benefits

Rapid deployment of a unified human resources and financial management system, on time and on budget

Business-process, reporting, and organizational changes are instantly pervasive, and data is inherently more accurate

Richer analytics provide improved business-decision support and finance response time

Global and mobile capabilities to match a complex, rapidly growing business

Accelerated quarterly close process

Continuously updated software without costly upgrades

Stronger controls and an always-on audit trail

Improved employee engagement and reduced training and support costs

The Perfect Match for Innovation

For Kaufer, it was important to find a partner whose philosophy matched his company's bold, out-of-the-box approach. "I thought back to how we started TripAdvisor, and we distinctly did things differently than what had traditionally been done," he says. "In our case, the world was guidebooks, and now we went to user-generated content. We looked at the options for ERP systems and thought, that's one way to do things, but what's the innovation? Give me the web interface. Give me the simple-to-use. Give me the customized home page."

And that partner was Workday.

The global capabilities of Workday immediately caught the company's attention. "TripAdvisor is an incredibly international company," Kaufer continues. "We've got sites in over 20 languages and we conduct business all around the globe. We really needed an enterprise-level system that could handle all the different subsidiaries, all the different payments, all the different pieces that come with running a pretty big company. And we're very pleased with what Workday has been able to provide for us."

Flawless Integration with a Unified Suite

Right from the start, Workday's unified suite of applications helped TripAdvisor keep up its rapid pace. The deployment for Human Capital Management (HCM) took five months, while Financial Management took seven months—on time, on budget, and just as predicted.

Says CFO Bradley, "Our payroll is now processed out of our HR department. And all of that is seamlessly added to the financial system. So there are no messy integrations from having disparate systems. It's consistent reporting." It also provides a consistent user interface that managers can use to perform multiple tasks, from tracking time off to approving expense reports and vendor payments. "They don't have to log onto multiple systems. From a user experience, it's a home run," she says.

"We went live on Workday April 1 and closed second quarter as a public company on the Workday system, financials integrated with HR," she continues. "We exceeded everyone's expectations. We were able to get an early flash of the numbers. We were able to do deeper analytics—less wait time and more thinking time. My team was really able to understand the numbers. And we could give that information back to Wall Street and our business."

She concludes, "Workday has helped us evolve from just reporting the numbers to being able to analyze the numbers and provide value back to the business."

Meeting the Requirements of a Public Company

Noel Watson, TripAdvisor's controller, appreciates how Workday is able to support TripAdvisor as a public company, including Sarbanes-Oxley compliance and rigorous audit requirements. "Workday allows me to look at data in the moment as opposed to waiting a day or possibly longer for a process to run and then revisiting the question you are trying to get answered," he says.

Equally impressive to Watson (under the "speed wins" philosophy) was Workday's ability to get the company up and running quickly, following the spin-out from Expedia. TripAdvisor had to build everything their parent company had offered before: a treasury organization, a tax organization, and SEC reporting capabilities. "So it was very surprising that we were able to build those simultaneously with implementing and using Workday, meeting all these requirements in a single system, easily and quickly," he says.

Similarly, Watson sees how Workday helped the company achieve a much faster close. "It's really important as a public company to be able to shorten the close, to finalize your results for the period, as quickly as possible," he says. "Then you can get those results in the hands of management, so they can analyze and be prepared to discuss the business with investors, analysts, and the outside world."

How much faster for the close? “Prior to Workday, finalizing close took over a week,” he says. “Now our goal is to shorten the close to a few days. The only reasons we’re able to even consider that is because we have a tool we can leverage to get us there.”

Mobile Capabilities for a Global Workforce

Eric Lombardo, TripAdvisor’s senior director of human resources, echoes the same sentiment. “In the ‘speed wins’ culture that we have, Workday helps us go as fast as we can,” says Lombardo. “Workday helps us maintain our winning culture by giving us the technology to understand our workforce talent.”

In particular, Lombardo appreciates Workday’s mobile capabilities. Under the legacy system, “it was always hard to pull reports. Now we can see an employee’s talent profile. Do they want to relocate? Do they want to be a vice president? Do they want to be an individual contributor? And I can get that data at home on my iPad. Or I may be going into a meeting in Singapore. And I want to understand who this employee is that I’m meeting with, what motivates them, what their development opportunities are. I can just tap right into Workday from my iPad.”

The legacy system also made it difficult to keep up with the latest technology. “We had to wait for technology, or we had to license things. It made my job really difficult,” he says. Rather than expensive, time-consuming upgrades, Workday offers regular updates to its suite of applications. “With Workday, you have the platform and it’s ready. You’re keeping up with the dynamics of the changing workforce.

It allows you to move fast. It gives you the latest trends that you need to do your job successfully.” The pace of updates matches the pace of the TripAdvisor business. “It doesn’t make HR look old school. We’re keeping up in real time,” Lombardo says.

An Easy Decision

Although the business will get more complicated in the future, Workday can grow with it. “I’m quite confident that Workday will be able to keep pace,” says CEO Kaufer. “Their broad customer base anticipates some of the functionality that I might not even know I need yet. But I’ll be delighted when I open the next update and see it there.”

He continues, “Workday has a great management team, a great web-based product. It’s got all the capabilities we’re looking for. It’s easy to use. I use it and I have not received any training and I don’t have a user manual. So it was an easy decision for us—Workday HCM, Workday Financial Management, Workday Payroll.”



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