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- Henrik Ahtela

Success Story: Proximus

Learn how MobileXpense has become an “invisible system” for Proximus, improving the expense process and letting employees enjoy additional efficiency.

About Proximus

Proximus is a Belgian provider of digital services and communication solutions, operating also abroad. They provide customer-centric solutions and products with a focus on innovation to create sustainable growth.

Some facts

- Proximus was **founded in 1992 as Belgacom S.A.**
- Operates as **Proximus since 2014**
- Holds about **45% of the Belgian telecom market**
- Had over **12.000 employees in 2019**
- MobileXpense **customer since 2008**



Expense management at Proximus prior to MobileXpense

Before implementing MobileXpense in 2008, Proximus used a self-developed application to manage business expenses. Receipt and payment reconciliation were performed manually and, overall, expense management **was not centralised**.

There was no department responsible for the control of expenses. **Managers** in charge of approval **were often too busy or unaware of the policies to carry out effective controls**, leading to errors being discovered only late in the process.

In parallel, most supplier invoices were already automatically processed without human intervention.

This was achieved using matching between order forms, delivery notes and invoices.

In this context, Proximus wanted to handle travel expenses just as easily and reduce the manual work involved in travel and expense management (TEM).

The company was interested in formalising the control process to reduce workloads and improve outcomes, leading to the collaboration with MobileXpense.

Challenges

With its own T&E solution, **Proximus lacked a mobile app**. This made it challenging for employees to enter and approve expenses quickly and to obtain up to date expense reporting.

Furthermore, the time-consuming nature of creating and maintaining a TEM tool in-house was monopolising valuable resources away from Proximus' core business. In parallel, **frequent legal and fiscal updates, compliance and evolving technologies finally made Proximus look to the outside**

for a partner whose business it was to manage expenses. Automation played a significant part in pushing the company towards integrating a travel and expense management partner. It allowed employees to reclaim their time away from expenses and spend it on higher added-value tasks.

Ultimately, the company was on a path to digital transformation, and MobileXpense became the partner of choice for expense digitisation.



Objectives

According to Laurence Kervyn de Meerendre, Director of Corporate Accounting, Proximus was looking for a **solution to manage expense reports for business travel and other expenses in the context of the overall standardisation, optimisation, and automation** of its operations.

MobileXpense was initially implemented with the main goal of **reducing the workload** in the accounting department. With the 2019 contract renewal, Proximus was interested in upgrading its MobileXpense solution and integrating the SpendCatcher mobile app to further simplify processes. Part of this simplification effort hinged on import-

ing credit card transactions into the solution, thus streamlining the matching process.

Lastly, an important requirement for Proximus was the ability to create different user profiles, including a reduced scope for technicians to expense only certain types of costs. User profiles are a key component of MobileXpense, making it an effective solution for large companies with multiple levels of hierarchy or scopes of work.

Solution implementation

Proximus has been a MobileXpense **customer since 2008** and recently renewed its contract. The renewal process started in December 2019 with information and scoping sessions around the upgrade to our latest solution and was concluded in early 2020.

During these sessions, Proximus' pain points were reviewed, as was the expense process from both a conceptual and a practical point of view. MobileXpense shared some best practices to help improve

Proximus' use of the solution based on the needs and requirements and an appropriate solution was crafted in response.

The upgrade and the implementation of our SpendCatcher Mobile app were concluded in a few weeks between February and early May with no issues, and the **stakeholders were all very satisfied**. Test users have responded positively to the new layout and mentioned finding it **very intuitive from a user experience point of view**.



How MobileXpense works for Proximus

MobileXpense processes **17.000 expense reports per year from around 3.600 Proximus employees**. This represents an annual expenditure of about **3,5 million euros**.

MobileXpense is integrated with Proximus' SAP application, allowing employee spend to be automatically booked into the ERP system.

According to Henrik Ahtela, a Proximus finance systems and process manager responsible for the functioning of the application, "MobileXpense has almost become an invisible system for us. We hardly need to pay attention to it and yet it works to everyone's satisfaction".

Users enter expenses into a **cloud app**, either via a computer or via the mobile app. After securely logging in, they enter the country, type of expense and payment method for the expenditure and attach a photo of the invoice or receipt.

Human enhanced optical character recognition then accurately recognises the important data (amount, VAT, merchant, etc.) and pre-populates the appropriate fields.

With the **secure mobile app**, users quickly take a photo and submit their expense for processing, making for faster reimbursements and more up to

date G/L accounts.

In line with Proximus' extremely high security standards, numerous tests such as penetration tests were performed to assure the safety and consistency of the SpendCatcher mobile app. With these tests completed successfully, Proximus users are now very happy to be able to use the mobile app to **enter and approve expenses on the go**.

The user friendliness of the app is enhanced by the credit card matching functionality. This feature and the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) populate and check most fields against the card transaction information for optimal accuracy.



Benefits

Continuous improvement is important to both Proximus and MobileXpense. Which is why we always strive to make the solution more user-friendly and less requiring of manual intervention.

The solution is in line with Proximus' vision of paperless, digital processes, as well as the evolution of its own service offering towards more digital services.

The integration of OCR technology frees up valuable time for employees, both travellers and approvers, allowing them to focus on higher added value tasks. Data is automatically extracted and pre-controlled, meaning approvers and controllers check expenses only when needed rather than doing so systematically.

Our sampling offering was implemented in order to further decrease the need to control expenses. With sampling, rules are put in place to automatically select a certain number or proportion of expenses for manual verification. This keeps the control requirements in line with the company's policies and the available controllers.

The highly secure mobile and desktop app can be used anywhere, at any time, making for much faster processing times and more accurate reporting.

Employees who travel a lot and their assistants now enjoy **additional efficiency**, according to Laurence Kervyn de Meerendre.

Curious about how your business can benefit from MobileXpense?

Talk to our advisor:



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