

4 FEATURES



TERRADOTTA

OVERVIEW

The travel management system you choose can impact how efficiently you manage risk and documentation.

Learn about these four features you need to look for in your travel management system:

1. Detailed Travel Records and Communication
2. Centralized Reporting of Incidents
3. Automated Notifications and Responses
4. Paperless Record Keeping

Four Features to Look for in a Travel Management System

"American colleges were struggling to extract—and, in some cases, even reach—students, and faculty and staff members studying and traveling in Haiti in the wake of a deadly earthquake there Tuesday, a task made more difficult by the extent of the devastation and by already poor infrastructure in the Caribbean nation."

That was the lead of an article (<http://chronicle.com/article/American-Colleges-Scramble-to/63518/>) in the Chronicle of Higher Education shortly after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. Maybe you experienced the repercussions of that disaster firsthand—or maybe you were among the lucky ones who were able to heave a sigh of relief that their students and staff were elsewhere during that time period. Looking back, if it had been you, what would you have done to contact students, faculty, and staff? How would you have made sure you knew about every traveler in the country? **More importantly, would you be prepared if the same thing should happen tomorrow?**

Dealing with potential disasters is your job. When an emergency happens and those affiliated with your institution are in danger, others will look to you to take care of the situation, keep travelers safe and limit damage—physical and reputational—to your university.

If you wait for an emergency to consider if you have the right tools at your disposal to do everything you need to, you've waited too long. Making the right choice when buying a travel management system could be the difference between keeping

travelers safe in an emergency and those travelers becoming part of the emergency.

Read on to learn about four features you need to look for in your travel management system that will help you manage risk and documentation more efficiently.

1 DETAILED TRAVEL RECORDS AND COMMUNICATION

Should an emergency occur, it is critical that you have quick access to the contact and background information of all students, faculty and staff currently in that vicinity. You need to know who may be in danger, how to contact them, and who to notify if something goes wrong.

An effective risk management software system will not only facilitate the process of getting that information through integration with your other university data sources/information systems, it will make it easier to disseminate when necessary. This includes identifying the at-risk travelers and communicating with them directly through the system. Look for a system that offers SMS text messaging and email. These are both excellent ways to contact these travelers because the

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communication is instant and simple. Your system should also be able to log confirmations from travelers so you can account for each of those for which you have responsibility.

2 CENTRALIZED REPORTING OF INCIDENTS

Keeping detailed records isn't just a good idea: It's the law. The Clery Act, a federal law passed in 1991, requires your university to keep documentation of crimes that occur in properties your university owns or leases, including those properties associated with study abroad programs. This may include hotels and sometimes even host family houses. If you don't keep careful documentation, your university could risk losing federal funding.

Your travel management system should be able to store all information and reports related to incidents that happen on campus or off. It is important to have a system that can hold and index information from incident reports, giving you easy access to the data.

When an emergency happens—whether or not it is a crime, and required to be reported under the Clery Act, or not—you'll need to carefully document everything about the incident. Since you may be mainly thinking about the safety of your travelers, it can be easy to forget to diligently document everything. However, that documentation can save you and your university from unnecessary damage and can help you find out what you can do to improve and keep future travelers safer. Your travel management system should facilitate that documentation, ensure it gets collected in a comprehensive fashion and use it to trigger additional actions or follow-up by the institution.

3 AUTOMATED NOTIFICATIONS AND RESPONSES

Find a travel management system that can send automated notifications and

responses to students, administrators, and faculty members as travelers work their way through the application and approval process to travel. These automated reminders can make your life easier and protect your university from potential litigation.

With automated reminder emails, you will be chasing fewer people down to remind them to fill out the necessary paperwork before deadlines. Instead of reminding people about these deadlines, you can spend more time on worrying about managing risk.

In addition to saving you time, these automated emails can help guard your university against litigation. If someone is attempting to bring a lawsuit against your university, it will be important for your department to prove that the proper processes were followed. These emails will reduce the possibility of members of the approval process failing to submit the correct paperwork on time.

4 PAPERLESS RECORD KEEPING

Going paperless is about much more than literally getting rid of paper. Sure, not having to keep around stacks of paper records is great, but the real benefit is quick access to information. You should find a travel management system that makes it easy to enter data, allowing you to search and find that information quickly and efficiently.

If you have all your records on paper, trying to retrieve a specific piece of information might take a few minutes—or you might not be able to find it all, depending on how well the last person who accessed the information filed it away. Storing all of your travelers' documents and information electronically will make the task of pulling up a specific piece of information take only a few seconds. Your system should also track the time and date of every action taken by a user. This



information can be important to prove that a user was provided a piece of information on a specific date. The time you need to invest up-front to go paperless will pay dividends for your office, freeing your staff to spend more time managing risk and less time filing paper.

Updating information in an electronic database is much easier than updating and filing away information in a paper

database. Not only do you not need to worry about physically filing records, but if you use an electronic database tool you can update whole batches of records at once, again saving everyone in your office time.

CHOOSE YOUR SYSTEM CAREFULLY

You need to carefully choose the tools that will help you manage risk. The travel management system you use is practically a member of your team. You will spend time with it every day, and it will be your go-to resource in case of an emergency. Making the right choice when buying a travel management system could be the difference between keeping travelers safe in an emergency and those travelers becoming part of the emergency.



TERRADOTTA

ABOUT TERRA DOTTA

Terra Dotta is committed to effective process automation and the secure management of data. The flexibility and robust features have made our software essential to all types of organizations. Terra Dotta's international education roots and innovative software capabilities serve the complex needs of many educational and business offices.

Terra Dotta software simplifies your everyday processes from the way you access information to the way you gather data and create reports. Risk management capabilities are an integral aspect of the software, providing the ability to locate and communicate with your applicants and travelers worldwide. Simply put, Terra Dotta software allows you to realize the full potential of your data and use the software your way at your institution.

