# **Case Study - Whitbread Group Plc**

## Profile

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| Company Name: | Whitbread Group Plc |
| Business Sector: | Leisure |
| Postal Address: | Whitbread Court, Houghton Hall Business Park, Porz Avenue, Dunstable, Beds |
| Postcode: | LU5 5XE |
| Fleet Size Overall: | 516 |
| HGV: | 0 |
| LGV: | 2 |
| Company Cars: | 514 |
| Private vehicles used for business purposes: | 37 cash takers, number of others unknown. |

## Company Overview

Whitbread is the UK’s leading leisure business, with market leading brands in budget hotels (Premier Inn), coffee shops (Costa) and eating out (Beefeater and Brewers Fayre). It is principally a UK business, with a growing international presence.

## Nature of Operation and Driving Activities

The company operates a fleet of just over 500 company cars to support the business. These are driven by area and regional management, technical specialists and general management. On average, a Whitbread company car covers 24,000 miles in a year, just over 60% of which is business mileage. The fleet is managed centrally, and Car Policy has a strong environmental bias.

## Organisational Structure

The Work-Related Road Safety programme forms part of the Company Car Policy. The fleet is managed centrally within the Human Resources Reward Team at Whitbread Head Office. All company cars are provided by GE Capital Solutions on a contract hire basis. The driver community does not have any formal forums, but is communicated with and surveyed on a regular basis by both Whitbread and GE.

## Occupational Road Risk Guidance

The Company Car Policy document contains detailed advice on managing road risk, as well as an outline of the Work-Related Road Safety Policy (see below). There are separate sections covering checks before and advice during driving and areas such as mobile phone policy. All drivers are required to read the Policy document and sign a form to confirm that they have done so before they can take delivery of a company car. The Policy document was reviewed during the implementation of the Work-Related Road safety Policy, and fully revised early in 2007.

## Road Safety Procedures

All company car drivers are required to follow the Company Policy on Work-Related Road Safety. This comprises the following:

* Regular Licence Checking with DVLA
* On-Line Risk Assessment
* Follow-Up Training as determined by risk profile (In-car or on-line as appropriate)
* Follow-Up calls following any accident, which may lead to review of risk status and appropriate action.

This programme began in December 2006, and is operated on our behalf by RAC Risk Management.

## Specific examples of procedures

### Licence Checks

All new drivers are required to sign a mandate allowing independent checks with DVLA. Results are reported to Whitbread on a monthly basis. “At risk” drivers, i.e. those with more than 6 points on their licence or with a poor driving history are re-checked quarterly. All others are re-checked annually.

### On-Line Risk Assessment

All drivers undertake an online risk assessment, aimed at identifying the level of individual risk. Factors taken into account include age, annual mileage, accident/conviction history, etc.. Drivers are categorised as High, Medium or Low Risk.

### Follow-Up Training

High Risk drivers all undertake a half-day in-car training session with a qualified instructor. The focus is very much on increasing driver awareness, providing the driver with the skills to identify hazards early and thus avoid potential incidents. Medium Risk drivers undertake an on-line E-Learning package, consisting of a number of modules also aimed at improving driver awareness.

### Accident Follow-Up

On-Line assessment does not always identify High Risk drivers accurately. Whitbread has therefore introduced an accident follow-up process, whereby the driver receives a call shortly after reporting an incident. This uses an agreed script to establish the facts of the incident and whether it was avoidable. In some cases, this call identifies a need for further action – usually in-car training.

### Driver Review

On a quarterly basis, our provider brings together all the information held on individual drivers with the aim of identifying any particularly high risk drivers who may need further action. These include the following factors:

* Outputs from the Risk Assessment process (including any discrepancies between facts declared in assessment and actual records held).
* Results of Licence checks.
* Follow-up on any accidents/incidents.
* Condition reports on any returned vehicle.
* Maintenance spend and types of work on current vehicle.
* Any Notices of Intended Prosecution issued.

## Auditing and review

The first full review of this Policy is due early in 2008.

## Performance measures

Detailed accident records for this driver group were collected prior to introduction of the programme. These include accident frequency, average damage costs, own-fault percentages, etc.. These will be used to measure the effects of the programme during the review. Initial indications however do show a reduction in accident frequency when comparing 2007 to the previous year.

## Cost and benefits

The initial costs of creating and implementing the programme were estimated at around £120 - £150 per driver in terms of direct costs. There were additional indirect costs in terms of the time spent by staff undertaking the various elements of the programme. The potential benefits however were significant:

* Reduced accident frequency and damage costs, including replacement cars where required.
* Reduced potential personal liability costs arising from accidents
* Reduced consequential time and other losses arising from staff being injured or without their company car.

## Lessons learned

A few key lessons:

* Making the programme part of the overall Car Policy has helped with compliance.
* Senior Management buy-in is vital.
* Once drivers engage with the programme, they are positive – it created quite a buzz.
* Some drivers are very reluctant to engage – some will require compulsion.
* It is vital to get the full picture – as well as risk assessment, areas such as accident follow-up, awareness of Notices of Intended Prosecution and condition of returned cars will all enable a full picture of the driver to be established.

## Current and future developments

The Policy is currently being extended to regular users of short-term rental cars and cash takers (there are a relatively small number of each). Our approach in dealing with other drivers required to use either rental or their own vehicles for business mileage will be defined during 2008.

## Additional information

Whitbread is proud to be a Business Champion under the “Driving For Better Business” programme.