



The Most Important Factors of your Travel Policy in 2021

And how to have them all

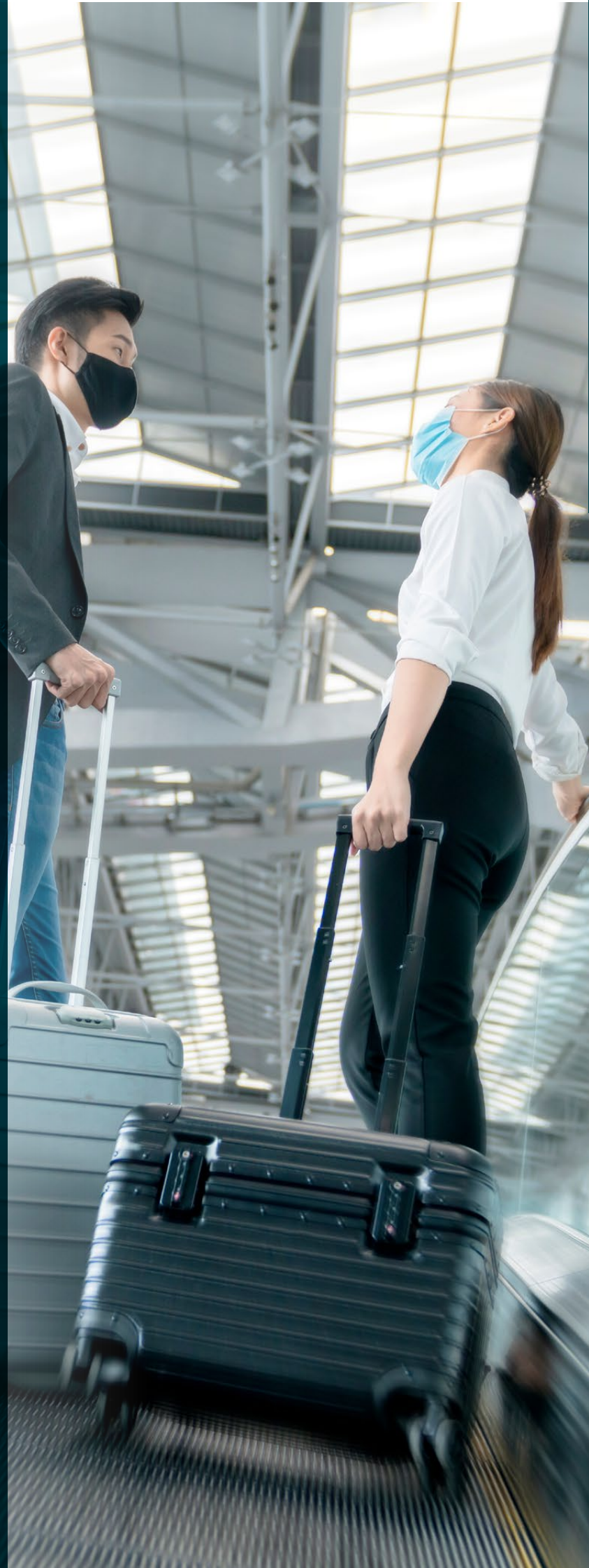
A travel policy is THE how-to for business travel at your company. Can just anyone book business class flights, or only in certain circumstances? Stick it in the policy. Would you prefer your colleagues book a certain hotel company? Put that in too. Do they need a reason to travel, or approval? Let your travellers know.

You might think that your company doesn't need a travel policy. But if you don't know the ins and outs of money spent on business travel then you are missing out and leaving your company exposed to all kinds of complications.

It's a different world now. One that requires us to think more about the health of travellers and to have more protocols and processes in place. A travel environment where things can change very quickly, which means a higher possibility of people getting stuck. Flexibility, facts and communication are vital. Travellers want to know that you care about them when they travel. Your travel policy needs to reflect this new world of agility, health and safety.

"Anyone managing a travel programme should always have their travel procedures at the front of their mind," explains Corporate Traveller's Head of Account Management James McIlvenna. "There will come a time when your policies are outdated because so much has changed. It's at that point that you should amend the rules, or get the authority to do so."

So, what should you consider for a travel policy in 2021?



The important factors of a travel policy in 2021

Working life

COVID-19 has changed where and how people work. Hopefully your company culture hasn't changed but the reasons for travel may have. Among the challenges that comes with travel post-COVID, travellers will need clarity on what has changed and what hasn't. You may need an interim, flexible policy. It's important to answer any questions your travellers might have such as:

- Do I need to get approval from anyone before I book?
- Do I need a vaccine certificate or have to take a test to travel to this destination?
- Where can I find up to date information about traveling to this country?
- Am I still expected to book through the online tool?
- Has the expense policy changed?

Health and safety due to COVID-19

This is a potential minefield. Medical history is not something that many people will be happy to share with their employer or travel companies. But the possible introduction of vaccination certificates or passports means that health does play a factor in the future of travel. Will you prevent people from travelling if they can't prove they've had the vaccine or a test? Is that something you're even allowed to do?

The other major adjustment to come out of COVID-19 is the increased level of cleanliness. It's crazy it wasn't like this before. But now travellers can expect a different level of spotlessness. If you are particularly impressed by a certain air, hotel or ground provider, they could become a preferred supplier. Direct your travellers to the businesses that match your standards.

Trip approval workflow

Before COVID-19, there might not have been a need for approvals. It's different now. We've heard many companies talking about approval processes now that health is in the picture. Think about the trusty five Ws and one H.

- **Who** says yes and no to approvals?
- **What** do travelers need to submit?
- **Where** does the approval process apply to – destinations and trip type?
- **Why** is this approval process important?
- **When** do they have to submit an approval and how long will it take to get an answer?
- **How** do travellers submit their approval?

Travel inventory

At the height of the pandemic, fewer flights were available and lots of hotels temporarily closed. The effects of those closures are still being felt now. Our travel managers are creative and incredibly knowledgeable and can get your travellers where they need to be -- but it will take some time for inventory to reach the levels it was in early 2020.



Access to technology

Technology can simplify everything. It doesn't just make things easier for those managing spend, but for bookers and travellers as well. Technology can feature in your travel policy in several ways including:

- How to create and manage traveller profiles. Saved in one place, including all those little things they love, like their loyalty club numbers, whether they like the window seat and that they're a vegan. No need to enter everything for every trip.
- How to define and operate a flexible travel policy that considers certain flexibility for employees. After all, a hotel in London will cost more than in Geneva and you need your travellers to feel confident they are upholding the policy.
- How you and your TMC help in a risky situation. Safety dashboards accessible to you show where your colleagues have travelled to and can alert them if there is a risk to them. For example, if a snowstorm is affecting New York City, you might want to get a broad view of how many travellers you have in New York, New Jersey, or Pennsylvania.
- Details of how to pay for trips, which may include central billing so it's all done for them.
- Your approval process, if you have any, and who needs which level of access.
- Whether you have a mobile app for travellers, likely provided by your TMC, and what features it has.

As the decision maker with access to the travel portal, you can ensure your technology matches your travel policy. And you have access to all that data for the next time you need it.

Personalised service

It can be daunting to be "the travel person" at your company. But you don't have to handle everything on your own. Sometimes it's just easier to speak to someone and talk through the problems and options. You're not the only one who needs support; your travellers also need someone to talk to in an emergency or when their trip is complicated.

Let your travellers know there are experts to help, anytime, anywhere. Experts that will know what flights and hotel they are booked on in a flash, and can recommend what to do next. By including contact details in your policy and tools, travellers can have peace of mind. It will also save anyone at your company getting phone calls from distressed travellers late at night.

Risk management

Imagine your sales team is at a workshop in Mexico. Their Twitter feeds are filled with news about a hurricane and they're worried. They try to call the airline but the lines are busy. Where do they turn next? Well, either someone at your company, or your TMC.

Once they've spoken to someone, the sales team is feeling way more confident about their options. Whatever is needed is sorted. Flights are rebooked, extra hotel nights arranged, airport transfers secured. If there's problems along the way, they can just call again to rearrange plans and ask questions.

24/7 customer support

Scenarios like the above are never in our diaries. That's why 24/7 assistance is important. No matter what day or time, travellers need to know they can pick up the phone and will get the help they need. Now that's peace of mind.

Accurate travel and spend reporting

Your CFO asks for a report about how much your company spent on flights in the last six months. Or your security colleagues want to know how many people are currently in the USA. By having all travel booked through one company, you can create a report like that at the click of a button.

Travel policies have always been a unique cocktail for every travel company. A blend of company procedures and traveller expectations with a dash of preparing for the unexpected. The ingredients of your travel policy are hand-picked with what you crave – from personalised service to technology. All customised to your taste. Just don't forget that creating this new cocktail is only half the job – you've got to shout about it after.

You aren't alone!

Business travel has always been complex, but it doesn't have to be difficult. In this new world of business travel, let us take on the strain for you by preparing your business for your time to fly. We help thousands of businesses across the globe and we're also preparing for an exciting digital experience launch later this year. If you're open to understanding how we work a bit further, we'd love to talk.

Get in touch today

