Overcoming decision roadblocks:

Smarter business travel strategies for regional challenges

CORPORATE TRAVELLER™

Introduction

After the rise of remote work in 2020, companies quickly rediscovered the value of face-to-face connections. Now, return-to-office mandates and corporate travel have rebounded, with global business travel spending projected to reach $2 trillion USD by 2028 – up from $1.43 trillion in 2019.[1]

The return on investment (ROI) of corporate travel is measurable — it helps businesses secure new deals, strengthen relationships, and engage employees in meaningful ways. However, as companies resume travel, they face new challenges that can complicate the decision-making process. Increasing flight disruptions, economic shifts, and political uncertainties have made travel planning more complex. On top of that, stretched resources and competing priorities within businesses can make it difficult to make sure trips are both cost-effective and impactful.

Corporate travel plays such a crucial role, and businesses need smart strategies to maximise benefits. Without the right approach, companies risk overspending, delaying decisions, and missing opportunities that could drive growth and engagement. However, equipped with careful planning, the right tools, and a proactive mindset, organisations can turn these challenges into opportunities — ensuring every trip delivers real value.

This report explores the trends shaping business travel around the world and how businesses can tackle these challenges head-on. From navigating budget constraints to harnessing AI to balancing employee satisfaction with cost control, we'll show you how a proactive approach maximises ROI and unlocks business travel's full potential. Whether you're making travel decisions or trying to stretch your budget further, this guide is designed to help you create a travel programme that delivers real value for your business.

Tom Walley
Global Managing Director Corporate Traveller

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Methodology

Over the past year, Corporate Traveller has gathered data-driven insights from a variety of reliable sources, combining our own data with global surveys, interviews, and industry reports. By looking at trends across some of the world's biggest travel markets, we've built a well-rounded picture of where corporate travel stands today. Our goal is simple: to share these insights with you, so you have the knowledge and confidence to navigate business travel successfully in 2025 and beyond.

Business travel ROI

The return of in-person meetings changed the game for corporate travel. With 90% of global companies expected to be back in the office this year[2], face-to-face interactions are seen as key to building relationships and closing deals.

Case in point: three in five buyers (**59%**) say their company's employees are attending more in-person meetings and conferences today than they did a year ago[3], and in-person field sales teams performed better against their target sales goals than remote teams.[4] This reflects just how effective in-person interactions are when it comes to building trust and rapport, ultimately, driving tangible business results.

Other key ways corporate travel delivers long-term ROI include:

- Client engagement
- Networking opportunities
- Team collaboration
- Market expansion
- Training and development
- Brand presence and reputation
- Employee engagement and retention

Travel as a strategic business driver

Corporate travel is no longer just a logistical need — it's seen as a strategic business move tied to increased success and ROI. Nearly half of companies (**49%**) cite productivity and ROI from travel as a top priority in the coming year, and **52%** expect their company's travel spending will increase in 2025.[5]

52% expect their company's travel spending will increase in 2025.

[2] Resume Builder: https://www.resumebuilder.com/90-of-companies-will-return-to-office-by-the-end-of-2024/
[3] Corporate Traveller & GBTA. (2024). Navigating the future of business travel: Key trends and insights for 2024.
[4] Spotio: https://spotio.com/blog/sales-statistics/
[5] Corporate Traveller & GBTA. (2024). Navigating the future of business travel: Key trends and insights for 2024.

Internal factors leading to decision-making challenges

As corporate travel continues to grow as a strategic priority, it remains the largest controllable expense for businesses. Yet, with so many options and competing priorities, organisations are facing decision paralysis — getting stuck in an endless cycle of evaluation while losing sight of why they needed a solution in the first place. Whether selecting a travel partner for the first time or switching providers, delays in decision-making can lead to missed savings, inefficiencies, and the very challenges they set out to solve.

Balancing company values

Business travel is a balancing act—keeping employees happy, controlling costs, and maximising ROI while addressing priorities like DEI and sustainability. The right choices aren't always clear. Should companies invest in carbon offsets or cut costs with budget airlines?

Many hesitate to switch travel providers, fearing disruptions, a steep learning curve, or integration issues. Security is also a concern, with data protection a top priority.

For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the stakes are even higher. With tightening budgets, every pound needs to deliver value. While costs matter, the right travel solution saves time, cuts expenses, and boosts efficiency — outweighing the upfront investment.

Multiple stakeholders slow down processes

With input often required from multiple teams such as finance, HR, operations, and leadership, the decision-making process can slow down significantly. While collaboration is key, too many voices can make it harder to reach decisions quickly, especially when priorities don't always align. This is where having clear data, insights, and expert advice becomes crucial to speed up the process and build consensus.

Internal factors leading to decision-making challenges

What is decision paralysis?

Decision paralysis occurs when the sheer volume of choices and competing priorities overwhelms travel buyers, making it difficult to move forward with confidence. In travel, this paralysis can stall opportunities to drive growth, enhance productivity, and strengthen company culture.

Amanda Vining,
Global Chief Sales & Customer Officer,
Corporate Traveller

Overwhelming responsibilities

Travel booking is often an additional responsibility for employees whose primary role lies elsewhere, such as executive assistants or finance teams. This leaves them without the expertise or time to effectively manage multiple choices like selecting preferred vendors, negotiating discounts, or ensuring compliance with company travel policies.

A lack of travel tech solutions can make the process even more cumbersome and lengthy for these time-strapped teams. By investing in the professional services of a TMC or outsourcing to a travel provider, organisations can access a wider range of flight and hotel options, streamline booking, easily track spending, and more.

Budget challenges

One of the biggest barriers to smarter travel management is budget. Leadership may not immediately see the value of having a dedicated team or platform in place for travel, especially when budgets are tight. But what's often overlooked is how these upfront investments can drive long-term ROI.

While it may seem more cost-effective to handle travel booking in-house, for example, partnering with a management company (TMC) can provide long-term benefits, like better deals with vendors and faster decision-making – not to mention freeing up employees from tedious booking tasks so they can focus on higher-level responsibilities.

External factors leading to decision-making challenges

Internal priorities aside, external macroeconomic factors fuel decision paralysis—making a strong TMC more essential than ever.

Rising prices

Inflation and economic shifts have driven airline prices up, with ticket costs rising **25%** in the past year—the biggest jump since 1989.[6] With tightened budgets, these rising costs add complexity to corporate travel decision-making, leaving organisations to answer difficult questions such as:

- Should we reduce travel "luxuries" such as business-class seating or airport lounges?
- How can we prioritise certain teams for travel opportunities?
- Should we explore alternative transportation to save costs?

Political and economic uncertainty

Businesses are reassessing the necessity and security of international travel amid global instability. Political shifts, economic uncertainty, and conflicts are adding new layers of complexity to travel planning. Questions that may arise include:

- Is travel to unstable regions essential?
- Can we keep up with shifting safety protocols and travel restrictions?
- Will new administrations in the U.S., Canada, and beyond impact travel access and cost?

Travel disruptions

Flight disruptions are on the rise: over **20%** of all flights were delayed in 2024, totalling 1,926,287 delayed flights.[7] Organisations need to prepare for these setbacks and determine who will manage rebookings or cancellations for hotels, airlines and other vendors, adding pressure to decision-making and raising questions such as:

- How do we support travellers facing disruptions?
- How can we keep productivity moving despite frequent delays?
- Who will be handling rebookings and cancellations with airlines, hotels, and other vendors?

> "From a business perspective, travel is essentially a commodity. Travel and Expenses (T&E) are the second-largest cost for most businesses, right after employee salaries. But it's not until a disruption occurs that people truly understand the value of effective travel and expense management.

John Morhous,
Chief Experience Officer
Flight Centre Travel Group

[6] Federal Reserve of St. Louis: https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/CUSR0000SETG01
[7] FlightAware: https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/flightaware/viz/AirlineCancellationDelayUpdate/USAirlineCancellationsDelays

The cost of inaction

When companies stall on choosing a travel management solution — whether it's their first time or they're considering switching providers — they end up dealing with unnecessary headaches

Without a clear plan, booking becomes a hassle, costs rise, and businesses miss out on in-person opportunities to close sales. This is what we call the cost of inaction (COI), leading to:

- **Missed revenue opportunities:** Delayed in-person meetings extend sales cycles, reducing the likelihood of closing deals.

- **Customer retention challenges:** Inconsistent travel planning can harm client relationships, erode trust, and risk of losing key accounts.

- **Employee dissatisfaction:** Poorly managed travel experiences and unmanaged policies can increase staff turnover.

- **Wasted resources:** Unused travel credits and missed rate negotiations can compound financial losses.

Outdated or unmanaged travel strategies, such as relying on do-it-yourself booking, rigid travel policies, or disconnected systems, can lead to inefficiencies that ripple across your organisation. Manual processes or a lack of centralised data might seem cost-effective but often lead to bigger headaches for your employees and managers.

The good news is that businesses don't have to make these choices alone. By gathering a team of stakeholders or consulting with a travel expert, teams can collaborate on decisions that bring value to the entire organisation.

DEPARTURES

11:40	BERLIN	B0	082B	CANCELLED
12:00	AUCKLAND	K8	005K	CANCELLED
12:05	HONG KONG	H5	087H	CANCELLED
13:00	DAKAR	D3	009D	CANCELLED
13:30	NAIROBI	N8	072N	CANCELLED
14:00	NEW YORK	N1	006N	CANCELLED

I always encourage buyers to think about: What is the cost of inaction if you don't make a decision on managing your corporate travel? Are you seeing higher turnover because employees are unhappy with their travel experience? Are you losing unused travel credits or missing opportunities to negotiate better deals? The cost of inaction can compound quickly.

Amanda Vining,
Global Chief Sales & Customer Officer
Corporate Traveler

Understanding and quantifying the cost of inaction: practical steps

Delaying a decision is still a decision, and inaction can lead to significant cost. Here are some practical steps you can take to effectively measure and communicate COI at your organisation:

1. Identify areas of impact

Pinpoint where your current travel strategy is falling short. Are employees wasting time booking travel? Is poor communication during disruptions lowering morale? Are outdated systems exposing your team to risks like fraud or non-compliance? Mapping out these pain points provides a clear starting point.

2. Use data and benchmarks

Data is your best friend in understanding the scope of the problem. For example, compare your organisation's travel costs, time spent on manual processes, or frequency of disruptions with industry benchmarks. Are your competitors using booking platforms while your team struggles with inefficiency in-house? Having concrete data makes the case for change much stronger.

3. Calculate key metrics

Quantify the tangible impacts of inaction, such as:

- **Lost productivity:** How many hours are wasted on manual booking or waiting on hold with airlines?
- **Increased expenses:** What's the additional cost of last-minute bookings or lack of negotiated rates?
- **Higher turnover:** How much is it costing to replace employees who leave due to dissatisfaction with outdated or overly restrictive travel policies?

4. Consider intangible costs

Beyond financial losses, inefficiencies impact employee morale, engagement, and retention? Could overly rigid travel policies deter top talent from accepting or staying in roles requiring frequent travel? These intangible costs are often overlooked but have a significant long-term impact.

5. Present scenarios

Use scenario planning to illustrate the potential outcomes of both action and inaction. For example:

- **Scenario A:** Implement a centralised booking system, leading to a **30%** reduction in manual tasks and a boost in employee satisfaction.
- **Scenario B:** Maintain the status quo, resulting in ongoing inefficiencies, higher turnover, and lost opportunities for savings.

6. Highlight opportunity costs

What's your organisation missing out on by not taking action? This could include better-negotiated rates, improved compliance, or the ability to reinvest saved time and money into strategic initiatives. Understanding the COI reveals the true cost of staying stagnant in an evolving travel landscape.

By following these steps, organisations can move beyond short-term savings and focus on the broader, long-term benefits of modernising their travel strategies.

Regional Insights

We understand each market has its own unique challenges and opportunities when it comes to managing business travel. This section explores the evolving regional challenges businesses face globally, emphasising the importance of streamlined decision-making processes for managing business travel effectively and key areas to consider. We'll look into specific regions where we have a strong presence and a proven track record of delivering measurable results.

CANADA

UNITED KINGDOM

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SOUTH AFRICA

AUSTRALIA

NEW ZEALAND

United Kingdom

Despite rising costs, business travel in the United Kingdom remains essential to achieving key organisational objectives. Client and prospect meetings continue to drive both domestic and international travel.

Regional considerations:

1. Travel as a sales driver

Over the past year, **91%** of domestic and **50%** of international business travellers cited client meetings as their primary motivation.[10] This aligns with findings from the Business Travel Association (BTA),[11] which reported that **51%** of business travel specialists say face-to-face interaction is the single most important factor in winning new clients.

A separate study by American Express[12] reinforced this perspective, finding that **82%** of firms see business travel as essential to revenue, profitability, and growth. In the same study, in-person interactions were described as indispensable for achieving business objectives by **70%** of business travellers. The value of these interactions was further highlighted by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC),[13] which found business travellers estimate they would lose a staggering **37%** of their annual sales without the ability to meet clients in person.

This underscores why UK sales teams are prioritising the ROI of business travel, using it as a key tool to drive revenue and growth.

2. Innovation and in-person collaboration

Business travel drives more than just revenue – it fosters innovation, skill-sharing, and problem solving. A recent survey reported that **82%** of firms believe travel facilitates idea generation highlighting its impact beyond financial gains.[14]

3. Cost considerations

Rising costs are shaping travel decisions for UK companies, particularly for international trips. While 65% of international travellers cited cost as a significant deterrent, this concern was less pronounced among domestic travellers, with only **48%** identifying it as a limiting factor.[15] The escalating expenses of air travel and overall business operations present a growing challenge for organisations striving to balance travel needs with financial constraints.

A key solution? The strategic use of travel management companies, which help businesses optimise travel programmes to achieve significant cost savings.

[10] Business Travel Association. (2023). Understanding the Benefits: Business Travel and In-Person Meetings. [11] Business Travel Association. (2021). The Future of Business Travel.
[12] Opinium and American Express: https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/newsroom/articles/travel-and-dining/two-thirds-of-uk-businesses-plan-to-boost-business-travel-sp.html
[13] World Travel & Tourism Council. (2022). A World in Motion: Shifting Consumer Travel Trends in 2022 and Beyond. [14] Treasure Island: https://treasureisland.com/uploads/prod/public/
pdf/56df17fe78f6b_23917.pdf [15] Business Travel Association. (2023). Understanding the Benefits: Business Travel and In-Person Meetings.

United States

KEY STATS

$19m

= the amount Corporate Traveller delivered in savings to customers in 2024.

$1.31

= the ROI savings recognised for every $1 spent.

These results highlight how strategic partnerships and tailored travel programmes can help businesses tackle rising costs while ensuring their travel programmes deliver real value.

In the U.S., the rising cost of travel has become the top challenge for businesses, making it harder to balance budgets and employee satisfaction. With tighter financial constraints, the demand for cost-efficient — yet high-quality — travel solutions has never been greater.

Regional considerations:

1. Controlling costs with strategic adjustments

Sixty-three per cent[9] of U.S. travellers cite rising costs and difficulty in obtaining discounts as a key pain point with employee business travel. This challenge is even greater in high-cost destinations like London, Paris, and Dubai, as well as remote, hard-to-reach areas. In fact, **57%** of businesses say location is a key barrier when implementing budget-friendly travel options.

Hidden fees and ancillary charges, such as seat selection, baggage fees, Wi-Fi access, and late checkout fees add to the burden, and are reported by **40%** of businesses as a frequent issue.

These added budget considerations are certainly complicating the decision-making process – driving businesses to rethink their travel management strategies. For example, **52%** of respondents say tighter budgets have forced them to adopt stricter approval processes, while **43%** place a greater focus on data analytics to justify travel expenses. Companies are also enhancing risk management and compliance practices (**45%**) to protect both employees and budgets amid economic uncertainty.

2. Technology + AI

Leveraging travel management tech that is enhanced with innovations in generative AI can help improve online booking choices, expense reporting and filing, building and implementing a robust travel policy, and so much more. Several trends are emerging in the business travel landscape that are influenced by generative AI and it's important to find partners who are identifying solutions that can enhance the travel experience whilst maintaining excellent personal service levels.

3. Finding the balance between behaviour and efficiency

Balancing cost control with the need for efficient travel is no easy feat. Employee behaviour, such as last-minute bookings and upgrades, are cited by **45%** of companies as cost drivers, while **37%** say manual processes hinder efficiency.

Centralised tools can help cut costs and enhance the travel experience. Online booking platforms that allow employees to quickly compare options while staying within policy guidelines, automated expense management systems that simplify tracking and reporting, and real-time dashboards improve spending and compliance visibility. Streamlining pre-trip approvals and negotiated vendor agreements allows more time to secure the best rates and reduce unnecessary expenses.

Canada

As corporate travel rebounds, Canadian business travellers have more opportunities than ever to drive growth through in-person meetings and networking. While rising costs and occasional disruptions present challenges, they also create opportunities to rethink travel strategies. With the right approach, such as leveraging smarter booking tools, optimising budgets, and prioritising traveller well-being, businesses can turn these hurdles into advantages. Innovation and efficiency will help companies strengthen ROI, boost productivity, and ensure their teams travel with confidence.

Regional considerations:

1. Travel disruptions

A recent YouGov study found that,[8] **78%** of Canadian business travellers say travel negatively impacts their personal well-being–highlighting how frequent delays, cancellations, and long hours spent in airports are taking a toll. A staggering **70%** of Canadian business travellers have experienced travel disruptions, with **63%** citing flight delays and **32%** pointing to cancellations as their primary frustrations. These disruptions carry a significant financial impact, resulting in missed opportunities, wasted time, and increased costs as businesses scramble to adjust.

By adopting smarter travel solutions, businesses can enhance employee satisfaction, boost retention, and create a more seamless travel experience. The right approach reduces stress, protects productivity, and ensures teams stay engaged and focused while on the road.

2. Customer service woes

Adding to Canadian travellers' woes is the time spent navigating customer service. Fifty-nine per cent of business travellers report hold times of over an hour when contacting airlines, while **14%** have endured hold times exceeding four hours. Beyond the frustration, these delays prevent employees from focusing on higher-value work, costing companies time and money. The impact is even greater for the **33%** of Canadian businesses without proper travel protocols, leaving them vulnerable to costly inefficiencies, especially in emergencies.

3. Rising travel costs

Rising travel costs add to the strain, with **46%** of businesses citing escalating expenses as a major source of stress. Delays and inefficiencies only inflate costs further, cutting into ROI. With tighter budgets, it's critical for organisations to invest in travel management tools and services that can mitigate these risks and optimise costs over time. Tackling these challenges head-on not only delivers measurable ROI but also builds resilience in a rapidly shifting landscape.

> The challenge travellers face today is that while capacity and demand are back, disruption has surpassed pre-pandemic levels. To tackle these hurdles, businesses must adopt robust, technology-driven solutions to enable self-service, minimise delays, and ensure smoother experiences for their employees.
>
> John Morhous,
> Chief Experience Officer
> Flight Centre Travel Group

Australia & New Zealand

Corporate travel across Australia and New Zealand is evolving quickly, with safety, flexibility, and cost-savings emerging as top priorities for businesses. While businesses focus more on traveller well-being, confidence in the effectiveness of safety protocols remains a challenge. At the same time, rising costs have become a significant pain point, pushing companies to re-evaluate their travel programmes to ensure every dollar spent delivers maximum value.

Regional considerations:

1. Traveller safety

Ninety-two percent of travel arrangers and **94%** of business managers in Australia prioritise traveller safety.[16] However, many also recognise there's room for improvement on how safety measures are put into practice, especially when it comes to using real-time tracking and emergency support tools more effectively.

2. Cost-saving initiatives

In Australia, **84%** of travel bookers focus on cost analysis to find savings opportunities, compared to **59%** who prioritise value-added services like premium travel perks. The shift toward affordability is evident in the rise of regional travel, which has surged by **29%**, with some routes experiencing growth of over **60%** due to the demands of the mining sector.

In New Zealand, domestic airfares have eased slightly, but packed flights and limited seating could drive prices up in 2025. Low-cost carriers are still a top choice for many, reflecting the ongoing focus on value and savings. While airfares are balancing out, business class and discount economy tickets are still higher than pre-pandemic levels, and moderate price hikes are likely this year.[17]

3. Travel managers are embracing AI

AI is transforming business travel, helping travel managers streamline operations and focus on growth. In Australia and New Zealand, **95%**[22] of business travellers are open to AI-powered travel solutions, even as some remain cautious. AI can simplify bookings, automate admin tasks, and predict disruptions like flight delays, allowing for real-time adjustments. It also delivers smart insights into travel patterns and spending, helping teams forecast demand and optimise budgets. By looking for travel partners who are actively developing AI-powered travel solutions, businesses are expecting their travel programmes to be operating at maximum efficiency. This means time saved, reduction in wasted spend, and smoother travel experiences.

CASE STUDY #1
In a recent New Zealand poll, 63% of respondents said travel costs were a major concern, with international business-class fares climbing by $600 compared to 2019. Despite these challenges, Corporate Traveller New Zealand saved customers $2 million NZD in 2024 and supported 28,262 travellers with tailored travel solutions that balanced cost efficiency and traveller needs.

[16] Corporate Traveller (2024). The Corporate Traveller Value and Savings Pulse Check
[17] https://www.hcamag.com/nz/news/general/employers-cutting-business-travel-perks-despite-strong-demand/494428
[22] https://ecommercenews.co.nz/story/travel-managers-in-australia-nz-embrace-ai-for-growth

Australia & New Zealand

CONTINUED

4. Premium travel preferences

The demand for premium travel appears to be growing significantly in Australia, with business class bookings made through through FCTG's corporate business rising by **14%** in the 2024 fiscal year. Comfort and flexibility are driving this shift, as **50%** of corporate travellers prioritise flexible schedules over lower fares, rescheduling flights to align with dynamic schedules.[18]

In New Zealand, on the other hand, cost-cutting measures have forced many companies to scale back on comfort-focused requests. Twenty-eight per cent have reduced overnight stays to avoid long travel days, or opt against pricier direct routes (**28%**), while **27%** are cutting back on business or premium class, or favouring public local transportation over taxis or ride-share apps. This reveals the competing priorities that many in New Zealand are coping with, as they choose between employee comfort and company budgets.

5. Domestic demand

The 'Golden Triangle' of Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane saw a **12%** boost in bookings in the first half of 2024 compared to the previous year, driven by increasing domestic demand. BITRE's Air Passenger Movement Report[19] shows a forecast average annual growth rate of passenger movements in Brisbane Airport by **4.5%** over the decade to 2026, along with busier routes throughout the region.

Looking ahead, routes from Australia to China have already surpassed capacity. Encouragingly, economy fares on this route have dropped by **14%** over the past six months, offering cost-saving opportunities for businesses. As companies continue to adapt to evolving travel behaviours, they will need to strike a balance between cost efficiency, safety, and flexibility to meet the demands of the modern workforce.

[18] https://www.fcmtravel.com/en-au/resources/news-hub/demand-for-business-cabin-surges-with-travelling-corporates
[19] Australian Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics (BITRE), 2008, Air passenger movements through capital city airports to 2025–26, Working Paper 72, Canberra ACT.

South Africa

Business travel in South Africa is undergoing a dynamic shift, with organisations embracing sustainability, cutting-edge technology, and enhanced traveller safety as top priorities. As companies navigate the complexities of domestic, regional, and international travel, these trends are redefining how travel programmes are managed across the country.

Regional considerations:

1.

Travel demand

Domestic travel in South Africa saw an impressive increase of **18%** compared to 2023, while regional and international travel combined rose by **32%**. Travel days jumped by **26%**, though the associated costs only increased by **6%**, showcasing a more efficient approach to managing budgets despite rising demand. Car rentals also surged by **26%**.

While international accommodation bookings dropped by **33%**, domestic and regional room nights increased significantly, by **14%** and **52%** respectively.[20] This suggests businesses are focusing more on travel closer to home, possibly to manage budgets or reduce environmental impact.

2.

AI requirements are growing

Technology is playing an increasingly critical role in travel management. Virtual cards and digital wallets are becoming the standard for travel payments, streamlining transactions and enhancing efficiency. Additionally, artificial intelligence is acting as a co-pilot for business travellers, offering instant rebooking options and hyper-personalised experiences. These tools are helping organisations manage disruptions, improve efficiency, and provide travellers with adaptive solutions, however, for many the lack of dedicated service leaves them feeling vulnerable in an emergency.

3.

Sustainability

With more extreme weather events, companies are strengthening plans to keep their employees safe. Businesses are stepping up efforts to address environmental risks and improve preparedness, while also adopting policies that prioritise biodiversity protection and regenerative travel. These initiatives go beyond traditional carbon reduction strategies, aiming for a more holistic approach to minimising environmental impact.

Balancing sustainability, technology, and safety with cost-saving is key to maximising ROI. Trends from 2024 demonstrate that efficient travel management can drive significant financial benefits — such as containing cost increases to just **6%** despite a **26%** rise in travel days.[21] By leveraging tailored travel solutions, tech-driven efficiencies, and sustainable practices, businesses can uncover hidden savings and maximise long-term returns while meeting the needs of their employees and the planet.

> "The usual travel policies, hotels and flights are still all about max productivity over employee wellbeing. That's got to change. Keeping employees happy, high-performing and loyal means taking a more balanced approach

Bonnie Smith,
General Manager
Corporate Traveller South Africa

20,21 Corporate Traveller & GBTA. (2024). Business Travel in South Africa: What's New?

Solutions and next steps for your business
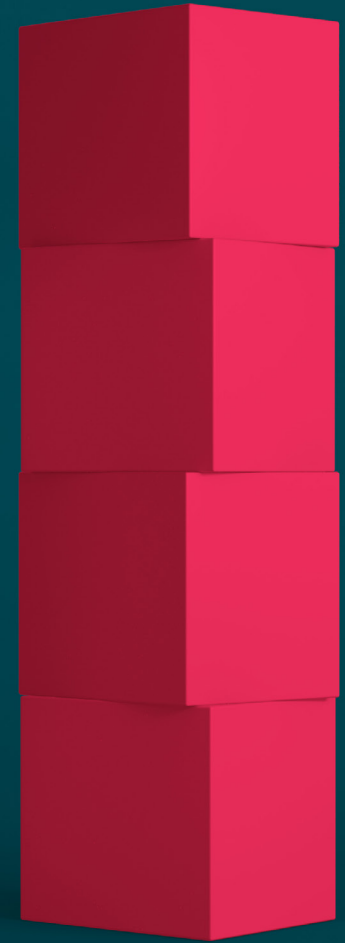
Proactive hybrid solutions:
Choosing the right travel management company

In today's fast-paced and increasingly complex travel environment, many businesses struggle to make clear, timely decisions leading to missed opportunities, wasted resources, and rising costs that impact the bottom line. Whether it's underutilising an existing travel partner or stretching internal resources too thin, these challenges signal the need for change.

Partnering with a business travel agency or TMC gives organisations full visibility into their travel programmes, helping to track budgets and identify areas for improvement. A strong partnership can take the burden off internal teams, enabling them to focus on their organisation's bigger goals while ensuring every travel pound is well-spent.

The right travel partner goes beyond booking flights and hotels – they act as a strategic ally, tailoring solutions to meet your specific goals. A strong partner helps design, implement, and manage a travel programme that blends people and the latest technology to fulfill your business needs.

By proactively managing costs and offering expert insights, they help businesses make informed choices, avoid unnecessary spending, and free up employees to focus on higher-value work instead of navigating travel logistics.

"

In the last five to six years, we've seen a major shift in the travel market, driven by technology. Traveller expectations and the costs associated with travel have both evolved significantly. That's why a blended approach is critical — combining real-time human interaction with mobile tools that can offer better technological support.

"

Joshua Roebig
Chief Operating Officer

> **Since bringing on [a TMC], we have reduced travel costs, provided better service to our employees, and are able to focus on our core operations.**
>
> Jaylene Kibala, Chief Financial Officer at Arcan Construction

Balancing technology with human support

Effective travel management often requires a hybrid approach. While mobile booking tools, automated expense tracking, and other technologies can help employees quickly and easily manage their travel needs, there are moments when human expertise is irreplaceable — such as handling disruptions, rebooking during emergencies, or managing complex itineraries.

Maintaining the balance between real-time human interaction and the latest tech and AI advancements maximises ROI by reducing downtime, preventing costly mistakes, and keeping travellers productive and satisfied during critical moments. This comprehensive approach ensures businesses get the most value from their travel investments as they adapt to ever-changing circumstances.

Measurable impact

The benefits of partnering with the right TMC go beyond convenience — they can lead to a measurable financial impact.

Not all TMCs are the same. Some cater specifically to SMEs offering dedicated service and tech solutions, while others focus on tech-driven, no-fee, and low-touch service models. A company that requires high-touch service wouldn't benefit as much from a tech-focused, no-fee travel solution. The key is finding a TMC that aligns with your business priorities, ensuring smarter, more strategic travel decisions. A scoring index with your dominant buying decisions is a great way to approach this.

> **Our booking fees have fallen and we're now capturing more travel spend and have greater overall visibility, allowing us to really pinpoint where there are further savings to be made.**
>
> Vicki Mann, EA @ New Era

Conclusion

As companies navigate the evolving landscape of modern business travel, it's important to remember that challenges also bring new opportunities. Corporate travel is no longer just about moving people from one place to another – it's about delivering ROI through stronger relationships, higher employee satisfaction, increased deal attraction, and more.

By investing in the right tools, expert partners, and tailored travel programmes, businesses can make better decisions that aid the travel buying process. From negotiating better rates to minimising downtime caused by delays, even the smallest choices can contribute to a more efficient, cost-effective travel programme.

When business travel is managed thoughtfully and strategically, it becomes more than just an expense; it's a competitive advantage and a powerful tool for achieving long-term success.

Corporate Traveller has been providing travel management solutions globally for over 30 years. We offer our customers a unique service model that blends dedicated travel managers and user-friendly travel technology. We specialise in creating tailored solutions that meet the needs of startups and small to medium-sized enterprises, saving them time, money, and peace of mind. Our 24/7 support, exclusive deals, and personalised service make business travel simpler, faster, and more effective.

Get in touch

corptraveller.com/en-gb

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