



# Building a mobile strategy for your corporate travel programme

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# Introduction: FINGERTIP CONTROL

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The increased use of mobile devices for travel has been nothing short of dramatic since the first apps appeared nearly a decade ago. Smart phones and tablets are a necessity in the business travel space and most will have multiple travel apps downloaded on them in order to smooth their way through airports, hotels, car hire pick-ups, airport to downtown transport options, to digitalised expenses and the like.

The move to a mobile world came in tandem with a move to a self-service world in which travellers can book travel and communicate directly with travel suppliers to better manage their trips. Apps have filled the gap for savvy travellers to book and update travel itineraries on the move.



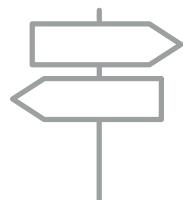
*A survey of corporate travel buyers from around the world in 2017 by ACTE highlighted how business travel preferences are changing, by an increase in use of market disruptors such as:*



Sharing economy  
lodgings



App-based  
transportation

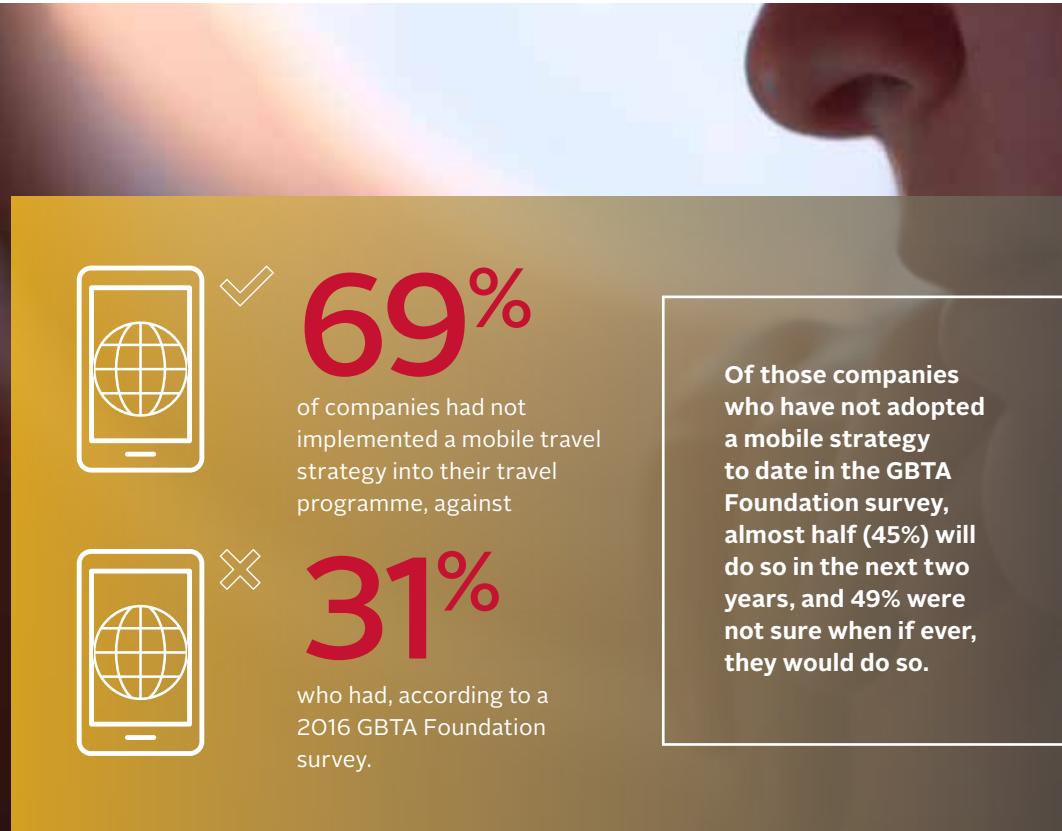


Ride shares

**25%**  
↑

**56%**  
↑

**50%**  
↑



## Looking to the future

Gone are the days when higher value bookings were still made on a desktop or offline by talking to a TMC; today, the reliance on mobile devices is total and all bookings are made on them, regardless of value.

The apps give travellers fingertip control of their hectic working lives like never before. Alerts of airport gate changes, flight delays, traffic snarl-ups and expedited hotel check-in procedures; the business traveller is now in the driving seat.

*According to  
Statista, there are:*

**8**  
**million apps**  
in the Google Play store

**669**  
**thousand apps**  
in the Windows Store

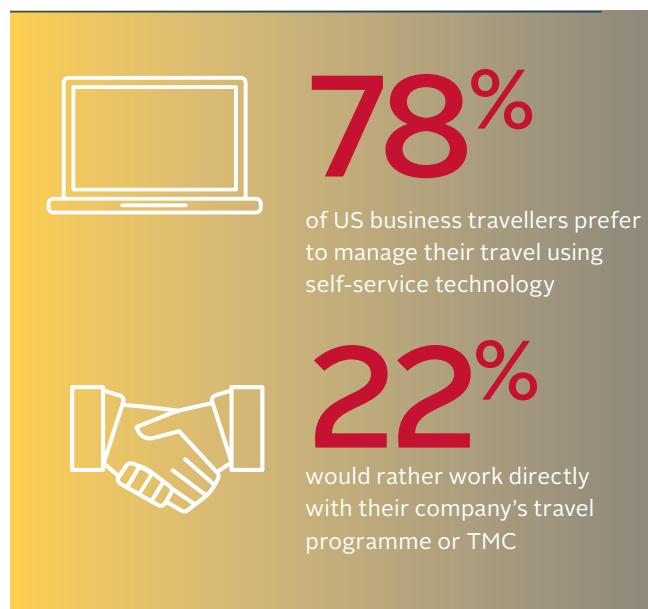
**2.2**  
**million apps**  
in the Apple App Store

**600**  
**thousand apps**  
in the Amazon App store



However, many companies restrict the apps employees can download to their work mobiles, necessitating the use of downloading some apps to their personal phones. Carrying two phones on the go has become the norm, with the spectre of an enhanced travel experience outside the company travel programme, rather than inside it.

***According to a 2016 GBTA Foundation survey, The Digital Business Traveler:***



Companies have the very real prospect of disengaged travellers, greater travel policy non-compliance and thus missed savings. Corporate travel managers need to ensure that their company travel programme delivers on ease of use, rich content, clear communication and with a fully integrated mobile strategy. Their goal should be to make the traveller experience simple and seamless.

It's telling that despite the 197 billion apps forecast to be downloaded in 2017, people tend to use only a few on a daily basis. According to TechCrunch, the average number of apps people use is nine apps daily, and 30 apps monthly. That

translates to a genuine opportunity for corporates to add real value to travellers' daily lives.

***"Today mobile is the most frequently used device for almost all of us. This means that mobile must be seen as a primary platform to be used for booking, changing and managing trips,"***

says Scott Davies, Chief Executive Officer of ITM.

The merits of incorporating a mobile strategy into a corporate travel programme are obvious, but companies have been slow to do so. Issues such as security, company culture, IT issues and trust stand in the way most often. But the risk of inaction equals less visibility of travellers and the legal ramifications of company duty of care obligations.

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# Opportunities and challenges:

# NO PAIN, NO GAIN

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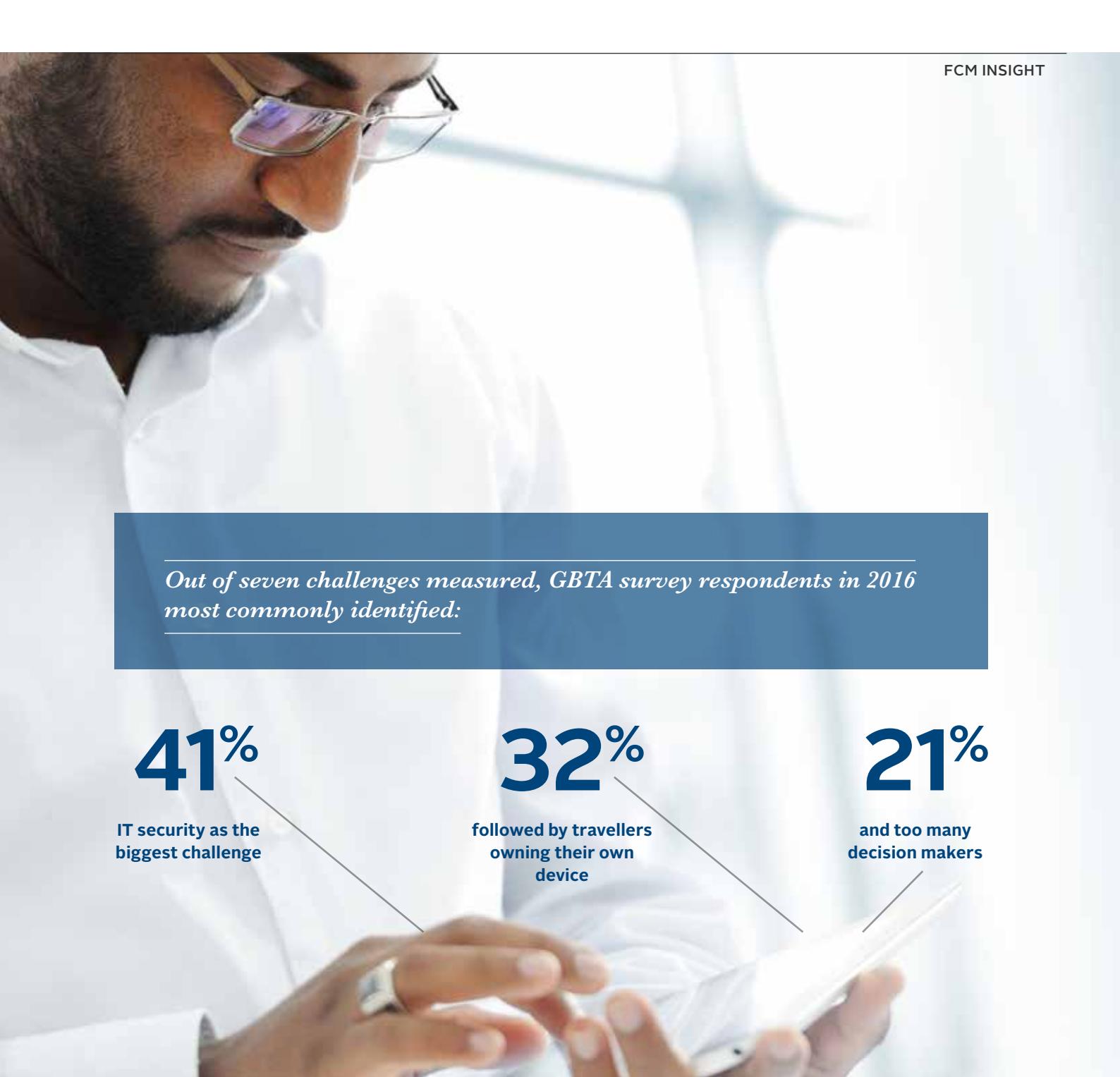
Travel Managers have the opportunity to incorporate key travel apps into their managed travel programme in order to engage travellers and keep them in policy.

However, the plethora of apps in the marketplace means that there is a real need for consolidation. TMC and expense apps are the key apps and generally companies have avoided creating a super app due to the inhibitive costs of doing so.

One hurdle to climb can be the internal structure of a company as often, ownership of the company mobile device policy stands with IT or HR departments, and not the travel manager.

There are also roaming costs to consider, when the typical Road Warrior is away half the month. “Roaming costs and travellers streaming movies can rack up a significant bill for a company,” says Michel Rouse, Chief Technology Officer, Corporate – EMEA at Flight Centre Travel Group. “Some companies expense it and some don’t.”

But far and away the biggest concern is security. “A traveller could inadvertently install malware or a virus,” says Rouse. A company’s trade secrets could then be shared with the competition or a traveller’s itinerary could get into the wrong hands, for example.



*Out of seven challenges measured, GBTA survey respondents in 2016 most commonly identified:*

**41%**

IT security as the biggest challenge

**32%**

followed by travellers owning their own device

**21%**

and too many decision makers

*The biggest opportunities of implementing a mobile strategy, according to GBTA:*

**78%**↑

increased traveller engagement

**43%**↓

reduced off-programme bookings

**55%**↑

increased compliance

**34%**↓

lower transaction costs

# One company's journey

# CASE STUDY - PAREXEL

Multinational life sciences consulting firm PAREXEL made the decision to move to company-owned devices only. "Our IT security head does not see travel apps as critical as long as they are known and on a company-owned and controlled device," explains Ben Park, Director of Procurement and Travel. "The issues are Android phones and other self-installed apps which could read data from a travel app."

PAREXEL took these steps because their biggest concern was traveller security.

*"Somebody could access the moving profile of who is where and when, especially of company executives,"*

says Ben Park, Director of Procurement and Travel

# PAREXEL®

PAREXEL's procedure is that all who have a company issued phone must install the company's four travel apps only on that company phone, and for a variety of functions namely for

- trip assistance
- airline check-in
- ground transportation
- expenses and receipts
- hotel check-in and room selection
- virtual payments

PAREXEL has one app for booking and expense; two for ground transportation, currently two for trip assistance and another for corporate credit card and virtual cards. PAREXEL does not either support or list hotel and airline apps.

The company procedure is that no critically sensitive personal information should be stored on the app or phone. "Then we are good," says Park.

The implementation, which began five years ago, didn't go as smoothly as thought. "Our vision was for travellers to book and expense everything on their phone, but we had to wait two years until the technology caught

up so the first few years were frustrating," says Park. Travellers were still preferring to print out their itineraries so there was a change management issue. "We book almost a six-digit amount of trips a year so imagine if everyone printed out their itinerary; that's a lot of trees. Sustainability was as important as digitalizing the experience"

A super app was never on the table, "because the speed of new features available is so quick and the investment is so high, you can't keep pace with the individual apps from the big players," says Park. "You would be out of date the day you launched it. To get the best experience, you need to provide travelers with multiple apps"

Their expectations was not to achieve high adoption levels quickly, which was just as well as the biggest issues were operational, with travelers unable to set up an account with a username and password after installing the app. "That was a lesson learnt," he says.

It took six months to reach good adoption levels and PAREXEL has achieved a steady 95% satisfaction levels in surveys over the last three to four years with the travel program.

## *Park's best practice tips include:*

- differentiating between those apps which travellers can download and manage themselves (eg the hotel apps) so the focus can be on just a few specifics apps which they would not use in a leisure environment
- to give guidance on how to utilise chatbots, if travellers need support during a trip
- to select ambassadors – or super users – so they can train others to speed up the adoption process
- to offer webinars as part of the support package
- support all generations in a company. A strong app mandate might not be the best fit for your company

# How to implement a mobile strategy

# BACK TO BASICS

**Mobile apps go only part of the way to solving the issue. A mobile strategy should be all-embracing over the mobile space with the goal of integrating it with the travel policy to help make the traveller experience seamless.**

The first question corporates should ask is why they are deploying a mobile strategy.

Is it to:

- improve traveller engagement?
- be used as a communication tool in real-time?
- raise the profile of the travel policy?
- share top tips?
- for operational reasons, ie to make a booking?



Flight Centre's Rouse puts it succinctly: "Discover what the problem is to solve". The answer to this question will determine which department you engage with. It might be IT, Finance or Operations.

***"Change management has to start at a high level,"***

advises Jo Lloyd, partner with consultancy Nina & Pinta. "You always need an advocate at the top of the food chain to send the right message."

If the goal is traveller engagement then her advice is to "cuddle them into compliance rather than beat them into submission". In other words, to utilise apps with useful trip information, how far the office is from the hotel for example, or restaurant reviews. "Travellers appreciate that and it will lead to better compliance," says Lloyd.



***Other considerations are:***

- to create a handful of corporate apps covering booking and expense, ground transportation, trip info, travel risks and corporate credit card and virtual cards
- to deploy only company phones if you want to share corporate payment details so travellers can capture receipts in digital form and push their expenses through on the go
- explain app usage clearly in travel policy
- to decide where the liability stops with geo-locators on apps as some travellers see this as an infringement of privacy
- to engage with key travellers and bookers who will be early adoptors
- to ensure the company travel policy can be viewed on their mobile device
- to integrate the apps between all storage, general services and travel services
- to build interfaces between all the programmes
- to talk with your TMC about how to get the best out of mobile apps and how it can deliver benefit to the business

# One company's journey

# CASE STUDY

## Market-leading global re-insurance company

When a global re-insurance company decided to standardise travel for its 10,000 travellers through a global travel and expense travel solution and to incorporate mobile, their first task was to get the right stakeholders in early. Despite the project being an initiative from the finance department, a project group was created to take it forward, comprising HR, IT, finance and procurement.

***“Communication is the greatest challenge in any global organisation”***

“With multiple stakeholders across the world, ensuring everyone understands the task in hand and can interpret the information to meet their own regions’ requirement is essential,” explains the company’s Procurement Category Manager - Travel UK & APAC, adding that,

***“It can be a little daunting when you’re dealing with such senior people.”***

Concerns were many and varied: security issues over travellers booking through non-traditional booking routes, particularly in the accommodation space, the spectre of fraud through the company’s smaller offices across the globe booking via offline routes, and maintaining the strict company protocols around what employees can and can’t add to their phones.

The company’s plans are to offer a global solution for travel across the company’s offices in Europe, the US, the UK, Canada, South America, the Middle East and Asia, and to move to a self-service platform to give travellers more flexibility when on the move when plans change or travel is interrupted. By April 2019 the UK will roll-out their global solution, using a proprietary booking app and expense app used on travellers’ mobile devices (both company assets and personal phones). Each traveller will have a sign-in log-in.

User testing is taking place now with a group of super users and the company is confident it will work. “There is a strong appetite from travellers who use mobile functionality already, digitalising their expense receipts on the fly,” says the company spokesperson. Employees can already book domestic travel via mobile phones.

***“The status quo is that 90% of travellers book travel on the company SBT or via the offline team as they don’t all have the self service function yet but over the course of the next few months they will.”***

The spokesperson believes the company will benefit from improved policy compliance, better quality MI and a better travel experience for employees.

***“I want the UK to be the best in class,” spokesperson.***



**90%**

of travellers book travel on the company SBT or via the offline team

# The future: THE TRAVELLER TAKES CONTROL

**"For simple transactions, a lot could move to voice bots," believes Adrian Parkes, CEO of the GTMC.**

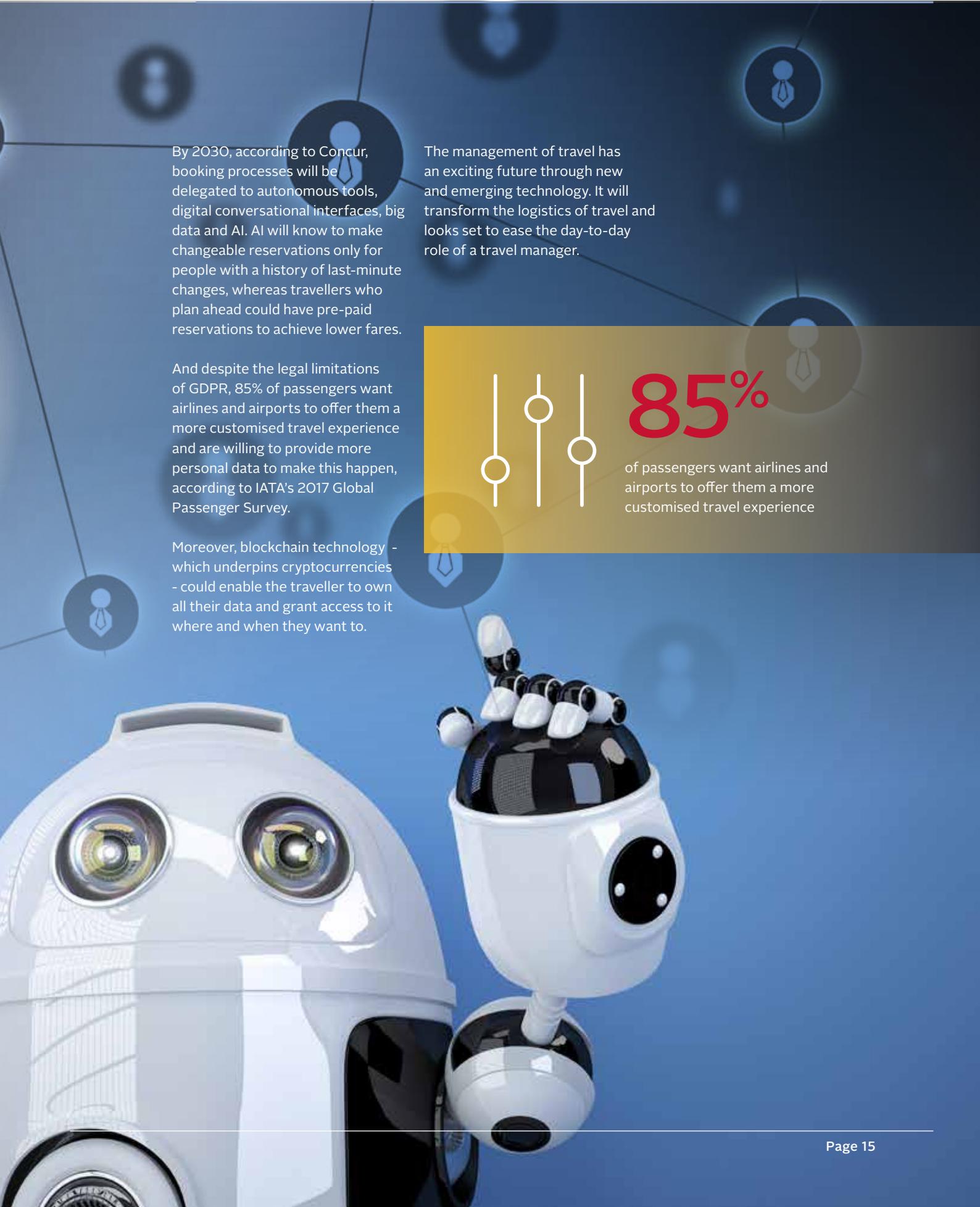
Using a smaller screen for trip management necessitates big button, slimmed-down features plus, "the addition of chat/chatbot facilities to help respond when the traveller needs more info than the device app can provide," says ITMs Scott Davies.

***"Mobile assistants, as they are becoming known, are emerging as an integral part of the mobile experience."***

Business travellers are already conversing with AI chatbots and AI will move further to business travellers' lives as the technology proves itself.

According to some crystal ball gazing from Concur, travel itineraries will become dynamic, agile and self-thinking entities powered by AI, personalised to the traveller's preferences, compliant with company travel policy, and tweaked by the individual traveller using a digital conversational interface.





By 2030, according to Concur, booking processes will be delegated to autonomous tools, digital conversational interfaces, big data and AI. AI will know to make changeable reservations only for people with a history of last-minute changes, whereas travellers who plan ahead could have pre-paid reservations to achieve lower fares.

And despite the legal limitations of GDPR, 85% of passengers want airlines and airports to offer them a more customised travel experience and are willing to provide more personal data to make this happen, according to IATA's 2017 Global Passenger Survey.

Moreover, blockchain technology - which underpins cryptocurrencies - could enable the traveller to own all their data and grant access to it where and when they want to.

The management of travel has an exciting future through new and emerging technology. It will transform the logistics of travel and looks set to ease the day-to-day role of a travel manager.



**85%**

of passengers want airlines and airports to offer them a more customised travel experience

## About FCM

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FCM is a single global brand providing a comprehensive range of corporate travel and expense management solutions. We have a presence in more than 95 countries and are regarded as one of the top five travel management companies in the world. FCM is responsible for the travel programmes of some of the world's most successful corporate brands.

It has always been personalised service that sets FCM apart from the rest and we blend this with innovative technology and unrivalled access to content to drive the optimum performance of your travel programme.

Contact us today to find out how FCM can elevate the performance of your corporate travel programme.