

Ten steps to evaluate your travel technology

FCM INSIGHT

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IS YOUR TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY WORKING FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?

Business travel is growing again as a new generation of travellers and travel buyers comes to the fore. The World Travel and Tourism Council and Travelport says that \$1.3 trillion will be spent on business travel globally in 2017¹ and will rise by 3.7% per annum over the next ten years.

But in a changing world, that technology has to meet the needs of a changing business traveller demographic.

After all, understanding the expectations, needs and lifestyles of the workforce is crucial to the success of any business. Travel technology has to evolve too, but how?

The millennials – those born between 1980 and 2000 – is the always-on, tech-savvy generation for whom travel is a lifestyle choice. By 2020 the millennials (or Generation Y) will make up over half of the global workforce and account for close to 50% of all business travel spending².

Then there's the new kids on the block – those born after 1995, known as Generation Z. These consumers have a wealth of information and data at their fingertips; expect greater personalisation and are willing to provide more data to brands. Having grown up with smartphones and tablets, they have performed 5.1 billion Google searches, watched 4 billion YouTube videos, sent 500 million tweets and downloaded 1 million apps. 74%³ spend most of their free time online and 66% frequently use more than one digital device at the same time.

Gen Z's preferred communication channels are different too. Phone time is spent on messaging apps like Snapchat whilst WhatsApp is becoming the medium of choice through which to engage with travel brands. In short, Gen Z takes personalisation for granted.

Generation Z in numbers



GOOGLE SEARCHES
\$1.5B



YOUTUBE VIDEOS
\$4B



TWEETS SENT
\$500M



APPS DOWNLOADED
\$1M

One of the main factors in the growth of business travel has been the industry's adoption of technology.

The huge popularity of WhatsApp and digital assistants like Amazon's Alexa, Google Assistant, Siri and Cortana has propelled Artificial Intelligence (AI) to generate new business value by integrating voice into their technology. AI and travel are the perfect fit because of the volume and depth of information travel companies – TMCs in particular – hold on travellers, their travel patterns and preferences.

In a travel world where personalisation and Big Data are trends, Artificial Intelligence is the great enabler. Travel suppliers are already using AI to interact with travellers before, during and after their trips and as more brands launch these mobile travel assistants and expand their capabilities into non-travel recommendations. Travel management is bound to follow suit.



HOW DO YOU SCORE?

Against this background of change, it's not surprising that the role of travel management companies has gone way beyond simply offering an online booking tool (OBT). Instead Travel Management Companies (TMCs) are using the latest technologies to create integrated travel ecosystems through which they can help their clients achieve specific business objectives.

Any travel ecosystem should consider every stakeholder's needs, from finance to procurement; HR to IT; from the traveller to the travel manager. The range of tools provided has to include profile management, booking, expense management, reporting and security.

Most importantly, these tools should be interlinked and integrated across every market in which the business operates.

To assess whether your travel technology meets the needs of your organisation, start by asking yourself these questions...





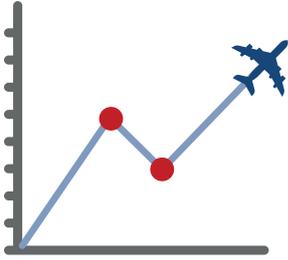
1. IS YOUR TRAVEL TECHNOLOGY CUSTOMISED TO YOUR COMPANY'S NEEDS AND TRAVEL POLICIES?

Any business traveller using the OBT should only be able to access approved travel products. If your policy only permits, for example, your travellers to stay at certain hotels, they should only see those hotels on the tool and book their stay accordingly.



2. DOES IT STREAMLINE APPROVAL PROCESSES?

Your travel system should provide an electronic approval application that talks directly to your mobile apps, meaning travellers can apply for approval at the click of a button. Line managers would be notified immediately and approve the application within seconds, initiating an automated real-time booking process.



3. CAN YOUR SYSTEMS TRACK TRAVEL TRENDS?

Imagine what you could do with valuable data feedback that includes, for example, identifying frequent travellers who spend too much time travelling and consequently may be facing burnout or be considering resigning. Your technology should notify you of health and safety concerns, for example, when an employee travels often enough to justify business-class travel, or if they are over-travelling.



4. ARE TRAVEL RISK MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AUTOMATED?

Your risk management solutions should give you direct access to crisis control centres across the world. Technology should integrate risk management, booking and reporting systems so that travellers' locations can be tracked and advice given in real-time. This would also manage concentration risk by highlighting instances where too many employees are travelling on the same flight.



5. DOES YOUR TECHNOLOGY HELP YOU CONTROL TRAVEL COSTS?

An integrated suite of travel technology tools should give the procurement or travel manager visibility of travel costs, organisation-wide, and to manage preferred supplier agreements. The right combination of technology and provider should also enable you to benchmark your travel program against that of our competitors.



6. IS YOUR TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION SCALABLE?

Many global organisations have requirements for a single technology solution which will allow for a consistent user experience across multiple markets. It's important the solution is scalable as the decision to implement a 'best in market' or a single global or regional booking tool will impact the booking experience, overall travel management and suppliers significantly. One, scalable solution will allow for greater visibility of travel spend and booking behaviour across national, regional and global levels.



7. DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO DATA ANALYTICS?

Heat mapping functionality allows different aspects of the travel program to be reviewed, areas of strong or under-performance highlighted and divisional delivery to be benchmarked. Your system should provide you with dashboards and KPI scorecards, as well as on-demand reporting, to give you detailed analysis on your travel activity and spend.



8. DOES YOUR TECHNOLOGY PROVIDE A PLATFORM THAT KEEPS TRAVELLERS CONNECTED?

A good business travel experience is about being connected. Technology should allow travellers to access and manage their travel reservations via their mobile devices, enabling them to make changes when necessary and to receive relevant notifications such as flight delays. Some apps also allow for information to be accessed offline, avoiding excessive data charges and reducing costs for the organisation.



9. DOES YOUR TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATE THE SHARING ECONOMY?

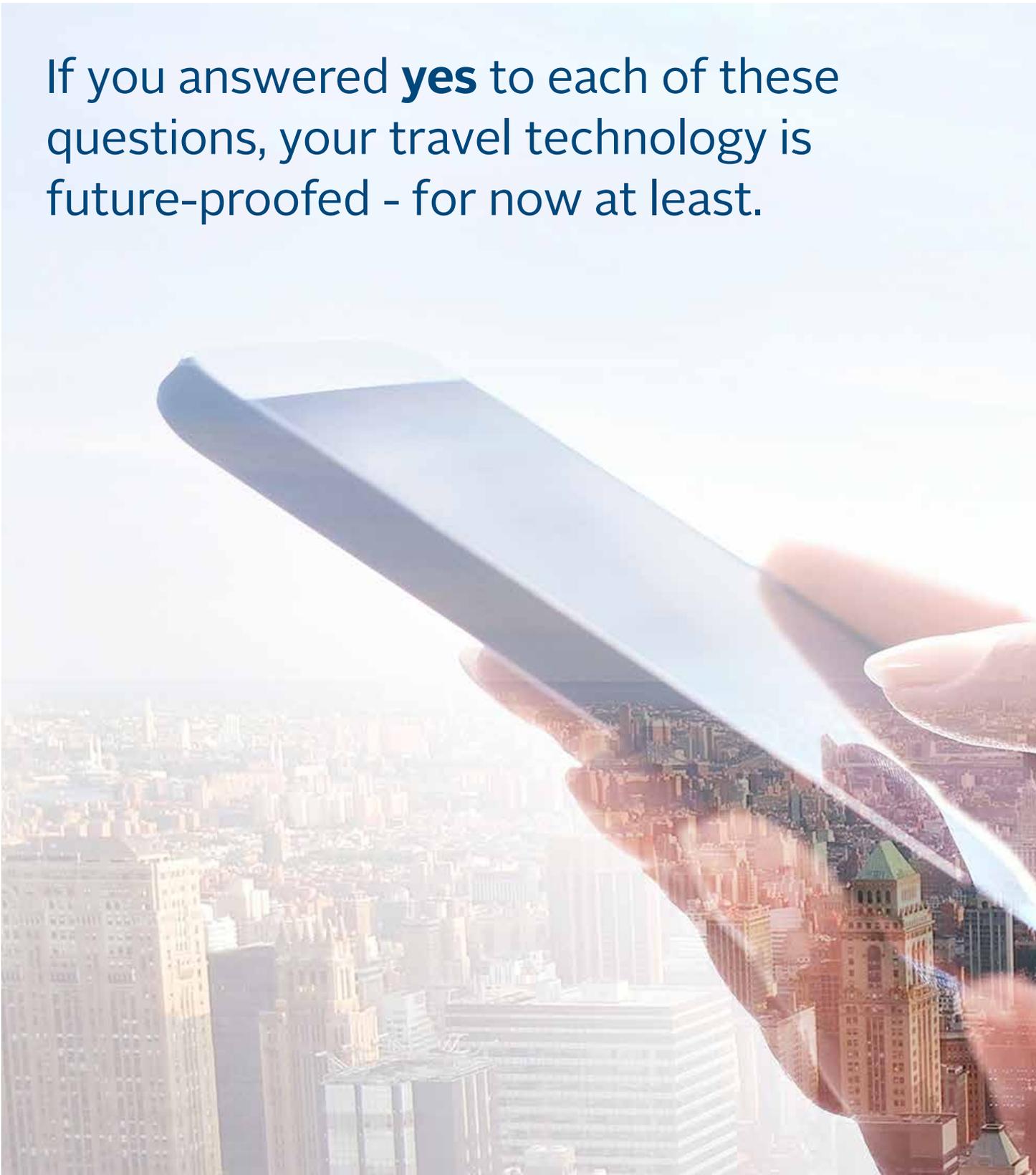
Today's (and tomorrow's) traveller will demand that your program includes sharing economy suppliers, such as Airbnb and Uber, so your so your technology will need to integrate these services into a manageable channel. Sharing economy services should be handled in the same way as other travel transactions, with travellers able to claim back or track costs by uploading receipts through a smart integrated mobile app.



10. CAN IT HELP TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF YOUR TRAVELLERS?

If you have travellers in a country where a safety risk arises suddenly, your technology should be able to notify them immediately. With the right TMC partner, every traveller should have access to crisis-control centres worldwide that can assist travellers should they need to be repatriated.

If you answered **yes** to each of these questions, your travel technology is future-proofed - for now at least.





If you answered **no** to any of the questions, your travel technology is under-performing and should be improved.

CONNECT YOUR COMPANY TO BETTER CORPORATE TRAVEL

FCM Connect is an integrated global platform of travel technology tools designed to get you and your travellers moving. Across the booking, travelling and management journey you're completely connected with a streamlined travel program. Accessible through HUB, a simple connection point, FCM Connect provides an end-to-end solution from pre-trip approval and booking travel, to traveller tracking and reporting that provides complete visibility of spend.

Our travellers also have 24/7 access to FCM's expert Travel Managers, should they required personal assistance for complex enquiries or emergency support.

Find out more at www.fcmtravel.com

About FCM Travel Solutions

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 program.

Sources

1. Information Age - What does technology mean for the future of business travel?
2. Boston Consulting Group
3. IBM's 2016 Uniquely Generation Z research



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