

2020

Is it time to review your travel management provider?



For businesses with a significant spend on corporate travel, the start of a new year (and indeed a new decade) is an ideal time to reassess both your program and potentially, your provider.

The beginning of a new year naturally lends itself to reflection and review. Psychologically, we are more prone to take stock around observable milestones.

Planning changes though, and actually taking action to commit to those changes, are two very different things. Creating an action plan can help you successfully keep up your New Year's resolutions.

If you're planning to reassess your travel program, this step-by-step guide will assist you to implement an achievable plan and a successful outcome.

Don't worry, it's not rocket science...



ASSESSING THE NEED TO GO TO MARKET



Do you really need to change providers?

- 1 If you are obliged to tender your Travel Management Company regularly, move onto the next step.
- 2 If your travellers and other stakeholders are happy, then leave well alone.

Strong reasons to change

- 1 Your existing Travel Management Company relationship is broken or weak.
- 2 Your business has changed: you have grown organically or through mergers and acquisitions or your corporate strategy has changed.
- 3 Your travel program has changed: Significant evolution of your travel profile may require greater powers of negotiation or more sophisticated tech integration.
- 4 Your current travel technology is not meeting your needs. If your TMC is not keeping up with innovations in online and mobile technology they are behind the times... and by extension, so is your travel program.

Download the in-depth guide

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REDEFINE PROGRAM DIRECTION AND OBJECTIVES



If you're purely looking at cost, you're not considering your program's full potential

- 1 Define the full extent of what you expect to outsource to your Travel Management Company. eg. Do you require meetings & events management, VIP services, visa & passport assistance?
- 2 What other changes are you making? Do you need integration with your HR system; a new online booking tool?
- 3 Listen to your people. Employee productivity and traveler friction can potentially impact your bottom line more than the cost of travel.
- 4 Other than cost management, define your key metrics for success, eg. Online booking adoption, travel policy compliance, increased productivity.
- 5 What are the key non-travel deliverables, eg data sovereignty, reporting and analytics, automated approval flows.

RESEARCH YOUR OPTIONS



This process should start well before you plan to go to RFP

- 1 Meet them in person. Host a meeting at your office or ask for a tour of their offices.
- 2 Industry events and trade shows are an excellent forum to meet travel providers and gain industry feedback on them.
- 3 Keep up to date with the latest news and media for the corporate travel sector.
- 4 Subscribe to their newsletters or magazines to see what kind of insights they offer.
- 5 If you hear of a Travel Management Company launching a new product that interests you, ask for a demonstration.

BEST PRACTICE RFP



Getting this right is imperative to a successful outcome

- 1 Lay the groundwork with an RFI (request for information). You can save yourself a mountain of work by establishing minimum criteria pre-RFP.
- 2 State your objectives clearly. The more detail you provide about your program's goals, the better.
- 3 Focus on the quality of your questions not the quantity.
- 4 Include all the bid information including: timelines, service level agreement, how to respond to the RFP and a compliance matrix.
- 5 Provide as much data as possible. Without the relevant data, answers will be 'vanilla' and offer no value and waste your (and their) time.

SELECTION



As well as analyzing written responses, there are other ways to select the right Travel Management Company

- 1 Obtain references but don't just rely on these. Build up contacts with industry associations and travel suppliers and ask around.
- 2 Beware live price comparisons. True comparisons are very difficult to guarantee.
- 3 Carry out site visits. This is a must to establish cultural alignment and to understand how the Travel Management Company organizes its client-facing services.
- 4 Get the financials right. There are a range of commercial agreements you can explore. Picking the most appropriate one for you depends on many variables.
- 5 Listen to your people again at shortlist stage. If your stakeholders endorse your choice, they will feel much more invested in a successful implementation.