



Make a complex landscape simple again.

Safety and risk playbook for travel managers in 2021

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It was Jamaica's Minister of Tourism, Edmund C. Bartlett, who first coined the term 'Gen-C Travel' back in April 2020.

Put simply, 'Generation C' refers to the post-COVID traveller and it includes every age and demographic (from Boomer to Zoomer). Cautious and careful, these travellers require reassurance – and up-to-the-minute information – that their trip will be safe and seamless.

As the world gets back to travel, the focus is firmly on safety and risk. For decision makers and travel managers alike, this means working closely with a TMC that can address traveller

insecurity with confidence; manage the logistics of post-COVID travel; understand (and detail) health and safety protocols at every point of the journey; and track your travellers so they can be brought home quickly should the need arise.

Today trust, communication, and the flow of timely, accurate information between TMCs, travel managers and travellers has never been more important.

Creating a safe and seamless travel experience for the Gen-C Traveller.

When safety, trust and tracking are key, make sure your duty of care programme includes:

1. An interactive safety and risk dashboard

Duty of care is not new. TMCs need to have their fingers on the pulse when it comes to global events, including adverse weather, natural disasters, airline strikes, civil unrest or terror incidents. But COVID-19 has added an additional layer of complexity in terms of potential border closures and lockdown advisories.

FCM's new interactive dashboard lets you track your travellers at any given time, giving you a snapshot of your travellers by risk, location and flight number.

2. Real-time updates and alerts

According to an IATA survey, more than 80% of travellers are as concerned about potential quarantine restrictions and 'getting stuck' in a destination due to border closures as they are about the virus itself.

This is understandable in a world where things can change in an instant. The FCM Mobile App sends travellers and travel arrangers security alerts as well as entry and exit notifications, movement restrictions alerts, and flight changes or

cancellations. We're also developing new auto-rebooking, meaning you're always on the next available flight home.

3. A global network of trusted partners

Gen-C travellers expect operators and establishments to implement the strictest health and safety protocols possible.

FCM's global booking platform puts a wide array of safe, vetted and trusted accommodation and transport choices at your fingertips. Whether you're booking air, hotel, car or shuttle options, FCM offers smart recommendations, critical information and on-the-go support pre, post and during your trip. Our crisis communications process is driven by Crisis24's Management Team, formerly known as WorldAware.

4. A streamlined approvals process

With the health and wellbeing of their travellers now the number one priority for businesses, many corporate travel programmes have introduced additional layers of approval for each trip.

Talk to your TMC about updating your travel programme to include new, faster

channels for approval and solutions that integrate country risk ratings and border restrictions. Whenever a traveller tries to book a high-risk destination, their booking needs to be flagged for approval. The FCM platform also offers a pop-up which educates travellers on destination risks and will alert them that they need to fill out an approval form.

5. Flexible, 24-Hour Support

As the industry begins to recover, new trends are beginning to emerge, including around booking processes and customer support.

Many companies have opted to take their travel bookings offline – relying on the knowledge and personal advice of travel experts. FCM understands this and has combined the convenience of our easy-to-use, plug-and-play, AI-enhanced technology with a team of experts who are on hand to provide information, advice and moral support 24/7.

This hybrid model delivers unmatched flexibility, meaning we can change tickets, update itineraries and deliver a seamless, stress-free experience for travellers and travel managers alike.



Navigating a new travel landscape – and why you shouldn't do it without an expert TMC at your side.

The mere thought of navigating the post-COVID travel landscape can seem daunting – and exhausting for many of your travellers. From border closures, to testing requirements and different quarantine regulations around the world, travel has never been more complex.

The good news is that TMCs are there to simplify the process and deliver an altogether easier, more enjoyable and seamless experience for both you, the travel Booker, and your travellers.

Here are just four good reasons to have an expert TMC at your side:

1. Get the information you need at the time you need it

Are you planning on sending your travellers to New York, but you're not sure what the restrictions are? And what is happening with quarantines in the UK?

FCM's modern user platform, safety dashboards and real-time alerts mean that travel managers travellers are always informed. Whether you're looking for country-by-country restrictions and entry requirements – or up-to-date information on your company's travel policies, FCM has you covered.

Even better, Sam (FCM's AI powered travel assistant) now exists across all our platforms and is available online, in app and in your inbox, keeping you up to speed with travel alerts and notifications.

Clear, concise information can only build traveller confidence. As you return to travel, make sure you're armed with the necessary information and details (and expert partners) to make your trip a breeze.

2. Receive advice on the best travel product for your company

COVID-19 has changed the entire travel landscape, from available flights to current, operating accommodation establishments and safe transport suppliers.

FCM's global digital platform uses integrated, plug-and-play technology to put a wide selection of local and international content at your fingertips. Not only is the product vetted (and the information up to date), but we're

also developing intelligent technology that will be able to offer smart recommendations to meet your needs, with our AI powered travel assistant, Sam.

3. Adopt a flexible approach to your travel needs

One of the biggest challenges in air travel at the moment is flight delays or cancellations. Always a pain point for travellers (think adverse weather conditions, the knock-on effect due to a delayed aircraft, or strikes), the situation is compounded by airlines suspending or limiting services into a country due to changing COVID directives.

Not only will FCM source the best flexible fares possible, but we're working on advances in Sam to offer an auto-rebooking functionality that will mean

that you will always be on the next available flight – without missing a beat.

More than that, a dedicated travel expert is always on hand to offer on-the-go support should you need to make changes to your itinerary.

4. Keep your travellers safe

Top of mind for any travel manager is duty of care. The burden of keeping travellers safe and healthy is felt keenly by decision-makers and travel bookers, and travel managers are under pressure to enforce policy compliance, ensure travel is approved and do everything in their power to facilitate a safe journey.

By booking all your travel through a TMC (and discouraging leakage), you'll have the peace-of-mind of knowing exactly what flights, hotels and shuttles are

booked – and where your traveller is at any given time.

FCM is developing a new safety dashboard that will help you to gather information on your traveller's whereabouts, schedules, departures and ETAs quickly and easily. We'll also flag any potential risks, alert travellers (and the team back home) to any developments and actively liaise with local consulates and embassies should the need arise. Once again, Sam will be indispensable – with an auto call function to check that your traveller is safe at any time of the day or night.

A shot in the arm for business travel.

It's been more than a year since the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on 11 March 2020 – causing the travel industry to shut-down overnight.

And although green shoots are starting to appear in the form of domestic business travel, many executives do not expect demand for international travel to return to any significant levels until successful vaccine programmes are firmly in place.

But will vaccines spur the sector's recovery in 2021 and beyond?

Here are just four things to keep in mind:

1. Vaccine programmes are moving at different speeds around the world

While the UK and US are meeting their vaccination targets (with President Biden setting an ambitious goal of returning the country to 'near-normal' by 04 July 2021), many other countries around the world are yet to gain momentum.

In the meantime, much of Europe is experiencing a third wave and countries in sub-Saharan Africa, like South Africa, are anticipating a third wave in winter (May/June). This means travel advisories and restrictions remain in place despite the progress around vaccination programmes.

2. Different vaccines deliver different levels of protection against different strains

Much has been made of the new strains of COVID-19 emerging around the world. New strains have been detected in the UK, South Africa, Brazil, the US and Ghana (among others) and it raises a key concern: How do the available vaccines hold up against emerging variants?

Vaccine developers are working hard to establish the safety and efficacy of their vaccines against the new variants, and we can anticipate that work around

vaccines (including the development of new, second-generation vaccines and boosters) will continue long into the future.

3. Vaccinated or not, travellers will still need to be careful

It follows then, that vaccinated travellers will need to exercise as much caution as ever. Think masks, social distancing, and the liberal use of hand sanitiser.

COVID protocols will remain in firmly place and many innovations, like touchless tech, are likely to become an industry standard.

TMCs will still vet suppliers and partners in the travel industry (from accommodation establishments to transport providers) to ensure strict health and safety measures are adhered to. In other words, returning to 'normal' will still feel very different as we get back to travel.

4. A global approach to vaccinations will be required

This is perhaps the biggest challenge of all: How will different countries handle their travel policies, especially with regards to the vaccine? Will travellers require a health passport detailing their

vaccination status? Will negative PCR tests still be required? These are just a few of the issues which need to be ironed out.

But despite current challenges and questions, there is little doubt within the travel industry that the COVID-19 vaccine will have a massive – and positive – impact on the corporate travel landscape. China has already (as of end March 2021) vaccinated around 80 million citizens, while countries like Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Bahrain lead the global effort to roll out vaccines. There's definite progress, and it seems more and more likely that vaccinations will be at the heart of business travel's recovery – and perhaps sooner than we think.

FCM is a member of the Good Health Pass Collaborative, an open, inclusive, cross-sector initiative, bringing together leading companies and organisations from the technology, health, and travel sectors. This collaborative is creating a blueprint for interoperable digital health pass systems and building a safe path to restore international travel and restart the global economy.

Passport? Check!

As vaccines are rolled out across the world, discussions continue about the possibility of having some kind of digital document to prove that travellers are protected against COVID-19. These digital 'health passports' will hold information regarding the COVID-19 health status of travellers, including test results and vaccinations. These 'passports' are expected to be freely available as apps on smart phones, and promise to play a key role in getting corporate travel up and running again.

Vaccine passports are not new. Frequent international travellers will be familiar with Yellow Fever vaccine requirements and tuberculosis vaccine cards.

However, as with the COVID vaccines, the health passports are presenting a number of challenges:

1. Too many cooks spoil the broth

Several different companies and international bodies are suggesting a variety of technological solutions. However, the sheer number of options and the lack of standards could complicate travel again. According to newspaper reports, there are at least 17 different 'passport' initiatives underway. The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology was recently quoted by the US Post as saying: "A chaotic and ineffective vaccine credential approach could hamper our pandemic response by undercutting health safety measures, slowing economic recovery, and undermining public trust and confidence."

The FCM Travel Platform app will have a new 'wallet' where Health Certificates can be uploaded and stored. That way, the traveller will be able to easily locate health certificates when required.

2. Data privacy remains a concern

The storing and handling of personal data is always a concern, especially in the European Union, which has particularly stringent rules encoded under its General Data Protection

Regulation (GDPR) regime. This doesn't mean a 'health passport' is impossible however. Some developers have put safeguards in place by storing data on decentralized and anonymized blockchain-based systems.

"In the blockchain mechanism we've put in place, no data is exchanged. It doesn't leave the [individual user's] phone, and it's not stored anywhere else," Sebastien Bedu, airport services product manager for MedAire, the ISOS aviation and maritime subsidiary working on AOKpass, was recently quoted in Business Traveller News as saying.

The data is encoded into a QR code, which can be scanned at airport check-in or at immigration control upon arrival to verify a vaccine or a negative test. If the app is deleted from the phone, all the linked information will also be deleted.

Other passports, such as the IATA Travel Pass, are relying on the biometric identification functionality to ensure data security. Users create a digital identity within the Travel Pass app by taking a photograph of themselves, which is verified against a traditional passport using facial recognition technology. After the digital ID is created, users are directed to labs or sites where they can be immunized or tested, with records subsequently sent back to Timatic.

3. What if travellers can't or don't want to be vaccinated?

Another concern is that the health passport could potentially create a divide in the traveller demographics. What will happen to those travellers who might not have access to a vaccine or are not willing to be vaccinated?

"I do worry about the further implications of a passport ... that enables those that are vaccinated to do things that others cannot," Dr Adrian Hyzler, chief medical officer at travel risk consultancy Healix International, was quoted as saying in Business Travel News. "This form of immune privilege will disadvantage a number of people, many of whom are already victims of inequity and discrimination, not just as a result of COVID, but dating back well before the pandemic."

As a result, travel groups around the world have indicated that although they believe vaccinated individuals should be exempt from international testing requirements, they do not support "vaccine requirements as a prerequisite for travel."

Despite the challenges, health passports are believed to be a huge step towards making governments, citizens and travellers more comfortable with travel.

"There must be collaboration across the industry and with governments to achieve success. But we'll continue to support our travellers with information – and we'll follow any and all advancements closely. Rigorous guidelines and protocols around vaccines can only increase traveller confidence, giving the industry a much-needed shot in the arm."

STEVE NORRIS, CORPORATE MANAGING DIRECTOR EMEA,
FLIGHT CENTRE TRAVEL GROUP.

Back to Travel?

Your 10-point Duty of Care checklist.

Is your company ready to resume business travel?
Before you book that flight, check if you can answer the following questions:

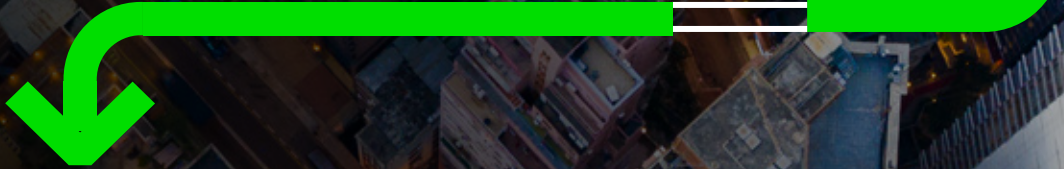
1. Have you updated your travel policy, or implemented a temporary travel policy?
2. Have you assessed your travellers' readiness?
3. Have you clearly communicated travel guidelines and policies with travellers?
4. Is your company up-to-date on all security advisories for the countries to which your employees travel? Do you use reliable data to inform risk management planning?
5. Do you have the ability to update travellers with urgent alerts?
6. Do you know how to locate and contact your travellers in case of emergency?
7. Are you working with human travel experts who can advise and guide travellers?
8. Have you selected reliable service providers (accommodation, car rental,...) on the ground?
9. Do you have the right insurance policies in place?
10. Do you know how to get your travellers home in case of border closures or illness?

Conclusion

Faced with a constantly changing world, travellers today need up-to-the minute information and expertise, as well as the reassurance that their trip will be safe and seamless. It requires teamwork between the TMC, the travel manager and the traveller to build back trust and traveller confidence.

At FCM, we are passionate about bringing you a seamless experience. We will help you balance the need to get back to work and the safety of your travellers. We can help you navigate the current landscape (along with mountains of information) and determine when and if it is safe to travel.





Discover the alternative

FCM is one of the largest travel management companies in the world, and the flagship global business travel division of Flight Centre Travel Group. Whether you have regular international travel needs, take single trips at the last-minute, or want to consolidate your business travel services and costs — FCM's global network has the experience, reach and negotiating strength you're looking for in a travel partner.

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