

5 flight booking management tips for travel buyers

Flight Centre Business Travel has released its Travel Bookers Guide to Airfares, which includes recommendations to make sure that perfect airfare never passes you by, saving your travel business time and money, and having you stay in tune with your traveller. General manager, Ryan Potgieter says: "With some smart thinking, travel bookers are sure to find good deals. The best way to go about it is to know your business traveller's wants and needs."



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Be in the know

Aligning company policy and budgets with traveller preferences can be a daunting task for any travel booker. Determine what size budget there is for the trip, suggests Potgieter. This will serve as a useful reference point, not only when it comes to securing the best airfare, but throughout the entire planning process.

It is also helpful to break up the total budget into components such as airfare, transportation, accommodation and transfers.

Know your traveller

Convenient flight times on popular routes sell out first, so make sure you get there early.

Coordinate with your business traveller before booking, so you know which departures work best for them. Also, ask for their preferences in terms of class of travel and added extras, such as additional leg room, priority boarding or preferred seating. This will help eliminate a back-and-forth approval process, which could mean the difference between securing that perfect airfare in time or not.

Direct, non-stop or connecting

The difference between a direct and non-stop flight can have a big impact on the cost, length and comfort of a trip. A non-stop flight is just as it sounds: a single flight between two points with no stops. These are generally preferred by corporates because they are the fastest but non-stop fares can also be the most expensive.

A direct flight makes at least one intermediate stop along the way to its final destination but has only one flight number. Offer your business traveller a connecting flight. A connecting flight involves at least two different aircraft, with two different flight numbers, before the final destination is reached.

Connecting flights are less expensive than non-stop flights, but they are not always the best option for travellers who place a premium on time. Discuss these options with your traveller before making a booking.

Create a traveller profile

Once you have all the relevant information from your business traveller, create a traveller profile to keep on file to approach the planning process of a business trip with more confidence.

Call in the professionals

Consider using a travel management company which provides the added benefit of a dedicated account manager. The account manager will get to know your business and ensure employees are travelling in the most efficient, cost-effective manner.

An account manager provides you with at least three options on every quote, enabling more informed travel choices.

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