

6 ways tech can make business travel bookings easier

 By [Oz Desai](#)

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When it comes to booking travel, we are a little spoilt for choice. There are a variety of Apps and websites enticing travellers with discounted deals and bonus rewards. Although these different solutions may seem attractive, the reality is that booking across a multitude of different mechanisms and platforms can be less efficient and just as stressful as having no technology at all.



Image Supplied.

The following six scenarios will show how the right technology can considerably simplify and improve the travel booking process:

Cheap is not always the best value

Are you an expert at finding that all-time cheapest airfare or the best value-for-money hotel room? You browse a few websites, compare times and prices and, voilà, you manage to save yourself (or your company) a few precious rands. Before you pat yourself on the back, how long did it take you to find that rate? Is it really cheaper? And how much is your company paying you by the hour?

Employees regularly spend hours browsing unrelated booking websites in search of the best place to stay or the cheapest fare. Booking fees can be double, or triple, as a result, negating any gain from using a "cheap" site.

By sticking with relevant technology, such as an online booking tool, travelling employees can log-in and book multiple aspects of their trip in one place, saving time and potential booking fees. If the technology is customised to the variables of a company's travel policy, travellers are more likely to select the right option for their flight or hotel, saving time and money.

This kind of technology, backed by an expert travel manager, can enable a much better line of sight and considerably increase control. Experienced travel managers will be able to help you optimise your travel efficiency by using their industry knowledge to suggest better ways to travel. For example, a travel expert may use travel reporting to determine whether you could benefit from advance bookings or more flexible tickets.

Forgetting the nitty gritty of the travel policy

We all know that the company's travel policy has been designed for the best interest of the traveller and the company, but who can remember all the information and restrictions? Do you know who to speak to about approval? Do you remember which car category you were supposed to book for that trip to Cape Town?

With the right online booking tool, requests for approval are sent directly to the person in charge. There isn't any back and forth, and documentation is automatically filed in the system for easy recall.

Oops... I forgot my frequent flyer number

You need to book a last-minute business trip quickly. Do you know your frequent flyer number off hand? And what about your passport number?

Employees and travel bookers can spend hours finalising bookings and need to keep all relevant documentation altogether, but that's often easier said than done.

Technology tools allow traveller information including passport details, frequent flyer numbers and more to be stored on the system. Plus, these tools automatically remember references, reducing the process to just a few clicks.

When geography becomes a blur

Who could have guessed that lovely little hotel near the Eiffel Tower is a rather long drive from the Paris Convention Centre? It's quite easy to make these kinds of mistakes when you haven't visited your destination, which can mean thousands of rands in foreign currency spent on private taxis.

The right technology will record the company's preferred hotels and provide details about each property, including its location, helping travellers to make smarter choices.

Where is everyone?

Safety and Duty of Care are a top priority for most travellers and companies. Travel is, after all, inherently risky because it places people in unknown environments and unfamiliar situations.

If you book that cheapest fare on your own and fail to report it to the travel manager, they have no idea where you are when you're away on business. It will also become impossible for them to provide regular updates if your flight has been cancelled or delayed.

The right technology will allow travellers to access live travel alerts and stay abreast of any travel disruptions that pop up around the world. The travel manager will be able to access traveller tracking reports that pinpoint the location of all travellers in an emergency.

Forgetting to submit your expenses and invoices in time

Submitting expenses and invoices remains one of the most dreaded tasks for most travellers. However, without the right information, it becomes impossible for your company to know how much their travellers spend, and how long each person is away. If decision-makers and travel bookers can't see any of this information quickly, it can take hours or days to make spending decisions.

Using technology to benchmark reporting can give the company all that information at a glance, meaning decision-makers can make cost-saving decisions immediately. They can decide to cancel trips, or even add new ones. Knowledge is power.

The most effective way a business can solve its pain points and streamline its travel technology is by introducing a sophisticated Online Booking Tool. Instead of relying on separate systems, an integrated technology suite like YOUR.CT provides a simple way for your travellers to research, approve and book their travel.

Even with the most advanced technology at your fingertips, having an experienced travel manager in the wings is a smart idea. An efficient travel process isn't just about using the right tools; it is about making sure those tools work together.

ABOUT OZ DESAI

With a proven track record in business management and finance, Oz Desai heads up Flight Centre Travel Group's dynamic Corporate Traveller brand in South Africa. Having worked in a retail travel, management and finance environment within the Flight Centre group, Desai's first-hand experience brings great depth to the role of positioning Corporate Traveller as the preferred provider of travel solutions to corporate South Africa.

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