

New online resource hub launches to rebuild traveller confidence

In South Africa, as in the rest of the world, the travel sector is gradually reopening with more airports approved to open and more hotels ready to welcome guests safely. However, as the industry is reopening, the question is whether travel demand will follow suit.

To help rebuild traveller confidence, Corporate Traveller has launched its Pledge Campaign. The online travel resource hub, which will be launched in South Africa on 6 July, will provide travellers with all the information needed to make informed decisions about their upcoming travels.



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"Our first priority at Corporate Traveller is to ensure business travellers feel safe to travel. IATA research revealed that four out of five air passengers still fear an increased risk of coronavirus infection from flying. It is important to address these fears by providing customers with reliable and accurate facts," says Oz Desai, general manager, Corporate Traveller.

The resource hub will also be available through the Corporate Traveller chatbot – Smart Assistant for Mobile, or Sam for short. Sam will send out push notifications with all the details, news and facts travellers require.

However, technology alone is not enough to rebuild traveller confidence, explains Desai. "We strongly believe in a blended approach to travel technology. Artificial intelligence is great to get information and facts quickly to the traveller at any time of the day or night, but the human connection is still very much needed, especially in uncertain times like the Covid-19 era.

"When dealing with a crisis or stressful situation, humans want to be able to reach out to other humans. While a chatbot or robot may help them with hard facts, it's the human-to-human empathy when the customer calls a representative that is needed to truly rebuild traveller confidence."

Identifying travel pain points

In order to further identify any possible pain points and insecurities of travellers during this crisis, the company is also in the process of conducting an in-depth global **State of the Market** survey, which will be released in phases over the coming months. This is an ongoing research project, including customer polls in phase one and two, which will be followed by further in-depth customer interviews and focus groups over the next two months.

The first phase of the survey indicated, among others, that winning new business and managing existing client relationships are the two dominant business activities motivating organisations to a return to business travel.

The results show that human connections are an integral part of doing business. Desai explains that although building relationships online is possible, anyone who has tried to organise a virtual meeting for more than ten people will know that it is simply not conducive to interaction.

With the gradual return to 'normal' comes justified concern, and as a travel management company, it is our duty to address these concerns. We help companies review their travel policy and arm travellers with the information they need to feel safe in a post-Covid world," says Desai.

In the coming months, the company plans on launching additional pledges addressing expertise, budget and change management. Desai concludes: "Through our pledges, we promise to lead the way out of this crisis, setting the benchmark for 'new normal' business travel, helping our industry and others to come back stronger."

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