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**VOICES**

What's next for meetings & events technology, according to Bizly's Ron Shah.

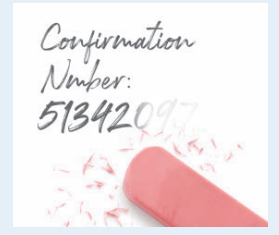
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**TRANSPORTATION**

Airlines continue to adjust to Boeing 737 Max groundings as fix is delayed.

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**MANAGEMENT**

BCD & CWT each globalize & centralize their energy, resources & marine platforms.

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## TOP STORY



BY ADAM PERROTTA

# TMCs & Startups Engage

Fragmentation and consumerization are changing business travel, and travel management companies are emphasizing services that go well beyond their traditional functions of ticketing. Established TMCs have doubled down on innovation and traveler engagement, and many are looking to startups and other tech providers to drive growth in this key aspect of the TMC value proposition.

Those setting their sights on partnerships with tech providers include the mega TMCs, all of which have established business units to identify partners and manage the growth of those alliances. The structures of those relationships vary, but all aim to tap into innovative ideas, to add their reach and scale to bolster the startups' concepts, and to improve the experiences for corporations and their travelers.

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 8

## Airbnb Invests Big in Indian Hotel Company

BY DONNA M. AIROLDI

Airbnb has invested between \$100 million and \$200 million in India-based hotel company OYO Hotels & Homes, according to Reuters. The capital is part of OYO's \$1 billion series E round of fundraising, which was announced in September and led by Tokyo's SoftBank Group.

Airbnb's investment will expand its reach into the growing Indian and Chinese markets, which means traditional hoteliers will face increased competition from both the home rental giant and the fast-growing OYO, which claims to be the sixth-largest hotel chain operator in the world. "Airbnb's strong global footprints and access to local communities will open up new opportunities for OYO Hotels & Homes to strengthen and grow while staying true to our core value proposition," said OYO global chief strategy officer Maninder Gulati.

OYO launched in 2013 with a single hotel, focused on the budget leisure market, but as of December 2018, it had 458,000 rooms, mainly in India and China. It has ramped up expansion plans into the U.S. with its OYO Townhouses brand, which is geared toward Millennial travelers, and it plans expansion into Europe, adding to OYO's current handful of U.K. properties.

Globally and across brands, OYO grew nearly sixfold year over year from 13 million room nights in December 2017 to 75 million in December 2018. Its model is based on transforming unbranded hotels through a variety of means, including property renovations, guaranteed services like air conditioning and free Wi-Fi, and proprietary technology that manages revenue, pricing,

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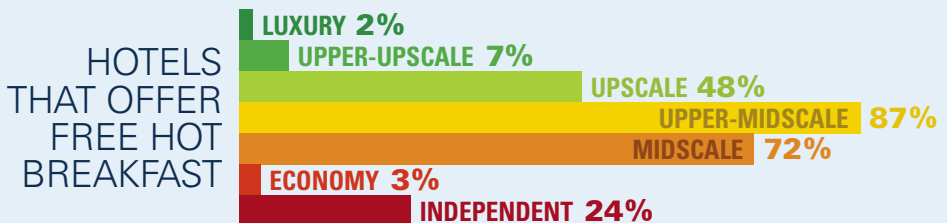


Troovo CEO Kurt Knackstedt on the robotic payment generator's long-term vision

"Right now, we use virtual card. If a transaction is created through a blockchain platform or generated through a smart contracting engine, we can do that just as easily."

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What U.S. hotels say they offer for free and what they charge for, from hot breakfast to parking, may be fodder for negotiation.





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## U.S. Role Differs in Two Emerging Aviation Markets

BY MICHAEL B. BAKER

Despite the shaky trade relationship between the U.S. and China, demand for international air travel to China has remained strong. The future role of U.S. carriers there, though, is a question. The story is different in Latin America, where both U.S. and Latin American full-service carriers likely will remain dominant.

### China

The Chinese aviation market will see major growth over the next few years, as Air China, China Southern and China Eastern all have ambitious fleet plans that will put their sizes at the top of airlines globally. China's major airports in Shanghai and Beijing are undergoing major expansion plans. Amid political uncertainty, the U.S. and China also could see an open skies agreement this year that would "fundamentally reshape the Asia/Pacific region," according to American Express Global Business Travel's 2019 Air Monitor report.

In the nearer term, however, there are concerns that further escalations in the China-U.S. trade war will have an impact. As of yet, that hasn't happened, as U.S.-China traffic has remained "pretty stable and the demand is there," said Amex GBT EMEA and Asia/Pacific director Philip Haxne.

Airlines have made similar reports in recent earnings calls. Delta CEO Ed Bastian said revenue to China increased 27 percent year over year in the fourth quarter and that he expects a similar level of growth for the first quarter of 2019. United Airlines chief commercial officer and EVP Andrew Nocella said the carrier is monitoring business class demand levels for China but as of January "had yet to see any reduction in demand ... resulting from these trade disputes."

While the growth rate of China's economy has been slowing, it remains high, Haxne said. Even so, some carriers have been adjusting their schedules to China. American Airlines, for example, ended service between Chicago and each Beijing and Shanghai last year. That, however, was because the routes were not profitable; Chinese carriers have lower labor costs and the nation's government has a controlling interest in them, so they are able to fight with lower fares. American Airlines president Robert Isom said flights between China and Chicago are "worth about \$30 million a year in terms of losses and we're able to redeploy that to much more profitable places within the system."

As the Chinese carriers rapidly bulk up their fleets, it's not out of the question that U.S. carriers "mostly or completely will exit the China air market by 2030 and perhaps sooner," according to recent analysis by Forbes. However, outside those recent schedule adjustments, "we won't see a lot of changes from the U.S. carriers" for the present, said Mark Drusch former ICF aviation analyst and VP.

That growth does present an incentive for U.S. carriers to strengthen ties to Chinese carriers. Delta and American have invested in China Eastern and China Southern,

### Asia/Pacific Airlines' 2018 Traffic Growth

# 7.3%

That's slower than in 2017 but still higher than other regions, according to the International Air Transport Association. China's domestic air traffic also rose 7.3 percent in 2018 while its capacity rose 9.8 percent.

Source: International Air Transport Association

### Control of Seats on U.S.-Upper South America Routes

# 76%

American, Latam, Avianca, United & Delta

# 17%

Spirit, JetBlue, Azul & Gol

Full-cost carriers also dominate U.S.-to-lower South America seats.

Source: CAPA Centre for Aviation

respectively. United and Air China have a partnership, though Air Canada registered the first agreement between North American and Chinese carriers via a joint venture with Air China. Should the U.S. and China reach an open skies agreement, it would pave the way to deeper relationships between the nations' carriers.

A final factor worth watching is the development of high-speed rail across China, according to Amex GBT VP Marco Pellizzer. Plans are to connect every major city by 2030, he said, which will be strong competition for airlines' domestic service.

### Latin America

Over the past decade, low-cost carriers have grown to represent the majority of domestic traffic within Brazil and Mexico, where they now control 65 percent of seats, according to ICF. Their presence on international routes, however, remains limited. LCCs will "continue their expansion as new aircraft models with the capability of operating on longer routes and benefitting from improved cost performance create opportunities for expansion into markets previously not viable," according to the CAPA Centre for Aviation. "However, it appears that expansion will occur at a measured pace, as most operators in the region are using new-generation narrowbodies to drive cost efficiency."

Even so, LCCs are causing "the same evolutionary process seen in North America and Europe" as full-cost carriers "have woken up to new competition around them," said ICF principal Carlos Ozores. In recent years, for example, Latam has adapted the LCC model on its short-haul routes, employing branded fares that unbundle such amenities as seat selection and checked baggage while keeping full-service capabilities on longer routes. Copa introduced its own LCC for Colombia. Avianca, meanwhile, is now "the only carrier in Central and South America that offers a full business class product on one-hour domestic segments," Ozores said.

At the same time, Latin America's full-cost carriers are tightening ties with U.S. carriers. Avianca, Copa and United announced a joint business agreement late last year, and Latam and American Airlines are awaiting approval on their own joint business agreement. Delta got approval for its JV with Aeromexico in 2016. However, Mexico President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has canceled the in-process construction of a new airport meant to replace the current one, which is operating well above its designed capacity. His decision will "have a material impact on Aeromexico's execution of their business model to become more of a hub-and-spoke carrier," Ozores said.

LCCs are a part of crossborder partnerships, too. Delta has an investment in Brazilian LCC Gol, and Brazil's decision last year to allow 100 percent foreign ownership of Brazilian airlines—previously, foreign investors were capped at 20 percent—could propel more investment in the nation's airlines, Ozores said.

Latin America already is attractive for airline investors, according to Ozores. Large players like Indigo Partners—a private equity firm that controls Chilean LCC JetSmart and has a stake in Mexican LCC Volaris—and Irelandia, which has the Viva brands in Colombia and Peru, are investing in new aircraft and routes in the region, as well.

As the full-service carriers adapt, the region is positioned to absorb that growth, Ozores said. "They're not taking traffic away," he said. "They're exploiting the fact that large portions [of travelers] have not flown and have been traveling long distances domestically by ground." ■



# Applying Robotics & Rules to the Travel Payment Process

Robotics process automation provider Troovo's software routes payment decisions based on each client's needs and automatically switches on a virtual card process—or in the future, blockchain or other payment processes—when appropriate based on those client rules. Since Troovo was named Innovator of the Year at BTN's Innovate conference in October, the middleware provider has expanded via travel management companies like Orbit World Travel. The company also is expanding its partnerships with issuing banks and other virtual card providers like Airplus and Wex. CEO Kurt Knackstedt talked with BTN payment and technology editor Adam Perrotta.

### WHAT ABOUT TROOVO'S PAYMENTS CAPABILITY RESONATED WITH THE INNOVATE JUDGING PANEL?

Even though we are not trying to compete on price, Troovo is low cost and, more importantly, we are scalable at low cost. We can generate multiple virtual cards per transaction or [passenger name record]. That means it costs users the same whether they use it for one part of the transaction like hotel or for all parts including air, hotel, car, whatever. [Scalability] has been the missing link around virtual card adoption. If you can achieve it, virtual card can be the next lodge card. It should be the new central bill standard globally because virtual cards provide better security and with Troovo, they provide better data that you don't have to spend months reconciling as you would traditional central bill solutions. The other thing, though, that the judges seemed to like—and our customers, too—is that our operating approach has no impact to the existing process. Troovo inserts into the workflow robotically, so you don't have to retrain travelers to use the virtual card product or retrain consultants every time you want to change policy around how the virtual card should be configured or what it should pay for. Our robots automate, which means there's also no overhead to generating the card.

### CAN YOU EXPLAIN ROBOTICS PROCESS AUTOMATION?

Most systems lack a rules engine that drives logic to say, "Why are you doing what you are doing?" Today, those decisions, from generating the card to setting the parameters, are in the head of a travel consultant and there are a ton of rules driving those decisions. Our robots determine what form of payment should be used for a given transaction and what parameters should be set for the card: the spending limit, the expiration date, how many times it can be used. Our robot will take care of all of that. The logic in a non-routine-based system like Troovo is far more powerful than a routine-based system, [for which] you need a person to kick off the process. We can pre-program for an infinite number of scenarios and for situations that the corporate wants us to drive. We take that off the TMC's hands. [Troovo can initiate a virtual card payment automatically if, for example] the booking is made through the online channel, through this cost center [for] a hotel in London.



Troovo's Kurt Knackstedt talks ...

- How Troovo works
- Virtual cards in the age of security hacks
- How to realize virtual card delivery on demand

**Scalability "has been the missing link around virtual card adoption. If you can achieve it, virtual card can be the next lodge card."**

### WHAT'S THE REVENUE MODEL?

When it comes to virtual card, different markets have different models. In Australia, for example, the corporate books all the hotels with the TMC, the TMC bundles those charges into a single monthly invoice and the corporate pays. The TMC uses the virtual card to pay the hotel for the stay, and the TMC owns the virtual card relationship. If the corporate wants to use Troovo for travel and other procurement categories, we still implement the solution at the TMC to drive travel payments but we would also implement within the corporate enterprise platform to drive office supply [payments], equipment, monthly phone bills—whatever they want to pay centrally. In that model, we charge the corporate for those transactions at 25 cents per PNR. We do have to integrate into the [global distribution system] and configure the rules for each client. That's a one-time set-up fee. We don't charge issuers like Amex, BOA or Wex to generate the cards; we just help them get more volume, so they really like us. And, in that case, if the corporate has a volume rebate deal, we can push more volume on the card to increase that rebate. When [a] credit card company or an [issuing] bank becomes our customer, they pay the license fee to use our technology.

### HAS THE DESIRE FOR PAYMENT SECURITY DIRECTED BUSINESS TO VIRTUAL CARDS?

I don't think there is a direct correlation that I can point to, but the message doesn't change. Virtual cards provide a significant level of security because the card itself disappears. If a security breach gets to a traditional corporate card, the corporate card is still out there. The industry needs to reduce its reliance on corporate cards. They really should only be used for taxi and restaurant spend, incidental spend. If you are pushing [corporate cards] for every part of the transaction, there is a bigger chance that it might be misappropriated.

### WHAT'S NEXT FOR VIRTUAL CARDS?

We still have a long way to go. Step 1 is to make [virtual cards] the new lodge card. Post that, how do you get the cards into the hands of travelers themselves through digital wallets and mobile devices? The tech exists to push a card into a digital wallet and use it at the point of sale, especially if you have tap-and-pay capability in the market. The challenge is that the card issuers, card schemes and the digital wallet providers have to agree commercially to allow it to happen. It's happening all over the place for consumers. The corporate should want to generate virtual card on mobile devices even for a taxi. The traveler is sitting there, tap it against the terminal, card disappears; the taxi driver can't write it down. But you still need a logic layer for the corporate policy to generate the card, so if the traveler wants the virtual card for an on-demand transaction, logic-driven tech like Troovo can determine the parameters for the card and sort that so the travel manager still has control over the experience.

### IS VIRTUAL CARD REALLY THE END SOLUTION? MANY THINK IT'S BRIDGE TECHNOLOGY TO SOMETHING BETTER.

Our engine doesn't care which type of transaction is used or the payment method. Right now, we use virtual card. If a transaction is created through a blockchain platform or generated through a smart contacting engine, we can do that just as easily. We have done an integration already with a smart contract platform. We can even deal with bitcoin. ■



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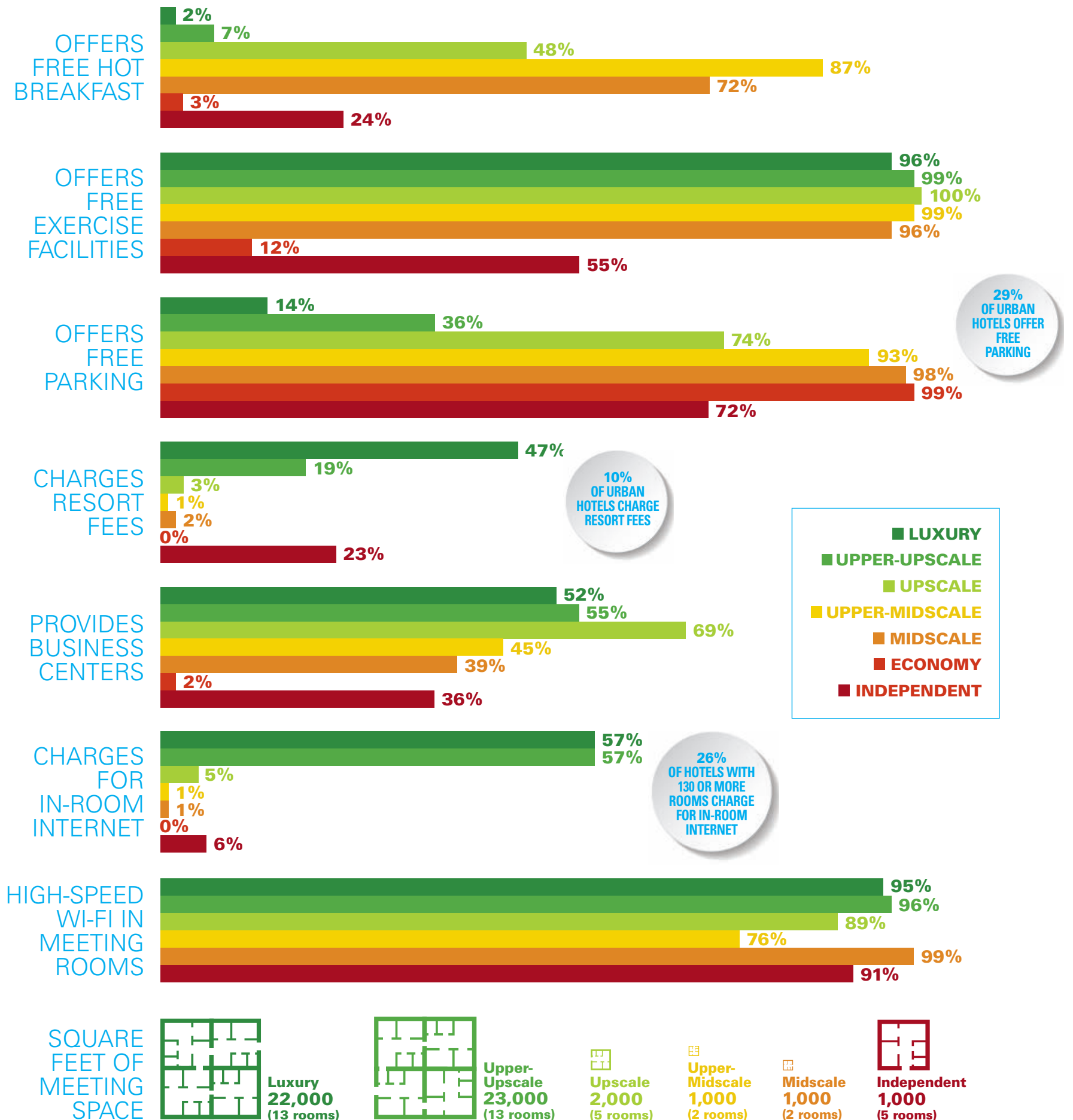
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## That's Negotiatiable: Base Hotel Offerings

Check out what 11,469 hotels say they offer, according to a survey STR conducted in July and August on behalf of the Americas Hotel & Lodging Association. Perhaps you'll spot opportunities to negotiate with your travel program's hotel partners.



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## INNOVATE 2018 CORPORATE TRAVEL BUYER ATTENDEE FEEDBACK:

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**90%** said their overall experience was excellent/above average

**90%** said networking was excellent/above average

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CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

## TMCs & Startups Engage

### An Unprecedented Opportunity

“Technology has created an unprecedented opportunity for TMCs to meet the needs of the modern business traveler and travel manager by developing truly integrated, traveler-centric products and services,” said American Express Global Business Travel VP of marketing and product strategy Evan Konwiser. “There are new entrants to the industry every day bringing fresh ways to shop, track traveler data and preferences, and more.” Amex GBT made a tech partnership splash in November, when it announced a five-year exclusive tie-up with Lola, a tech-forward, Boston-based startup that offers a mobile travel booking and concierge app designed for use by smaller companies. The partnership enables Amex GBT to offer Lola’s small and midsize enterprise-focused technology to clients in the lightly managed travel segment—a key area of focus for GBT, according to Konwiser, who helped lead negotiations for GBT.

Many startup travel tech solutions focus on traveler convenience (*see What’s in Demand below*), a goal in line with that of TMCs, which have shifted toward a more predictive, service-based value proposition, noted BCD Travel director of product planning Irina Matz. “We’ve seen this through automation, artificial intelligence and even something as simple as developing software for mobile devices and wearables,” she observed. “TMCs that embrace and leverage this technology will be better able to serve their clients and the end traveler” by driving desired traveler behavior through seamless experience, which in turn leads to operational efficiencies and optimized program spend, she added.

BCD’s relationships with third-party tech providers center around a marketplace platform, dubbed SolutionSource, through which the TMC offers clients access to service provider partners. Launched in early 2018, SolutionSource was conceived in response to the quickening pace at which tech providers were entering the travel space. The marketplace model enables BCD to offer its clients flexibility to choose providers, said Matz, who heads the program. “No two travel programs are the same, so instead of forcing our customers to conform to a preselected, single-source technology, we’ve integrated a variety of technology solutions so they can select what best complements their program,” she noted.

Meanwhile, CWT strategy is to get involved early with promising tech partners. A deal with startup accelerator Plug and Play gives CWT access to early-stage companies in the travel space. Once CWT decides to work with a startup, a dedicated CWT innovation team based in Silicon Valley shepherds the young firm as it develops its offering and tailors it for the managed travel market. “We take a very deliberate approach to identifying startups and how to find the next, best thing out of the pool of those types of companies,” said CWT senior director Brandon Balcom, who leads the company’s open innovation team. “If you get to a partnership sooner, you can architect something better right out of the gate. From there, we continue to invest in it, and our customers eventually benefit” from that startup’s service, he noted.

### Making a Match

With so many startups entering the market, it can be a tall task for TMCs to pick which third-parties to work with. Matz said, “The first question we ask when looking at a potential SolutionSource partner is: Do they have a clear value to the marketplace and meet specific needs for our clients?” Companies that meet those standards undergo a comprehensive review to determine how their solution works and to ensure it can be integrated across BCD’s platform, she added.

Amex GBT similarly places a premium on solutions that meet existing client needs and can be delivered with relative ease. The TMC explores the viability of a startup partner via what Konwiser characterized as an “extended ‘dating’ process.” GBT assesses proof of concept and whether the technology can indeed solve the problem—or problems—it claims to, as well as whether it can play nice with GBT’s existing delivery platform. “A

nice piece of tech in a vacuum doesn’t do anything,” he said. “It has to be integrated and implemented.”

Leadership is another important factor. “Talent is always a top priority,” Konwiser said, noting that GBT views the addition of talent via partnerships as no different than hiring directly. “That is important because nobody here works in a silo and talented people have a multiplier effect on what they can do inside our organization.” The Lola deal serves as an example; the startup’s founder and chief technology officer, Paul English, also co-founded metasearch giant Kayak and served in executive leadership roles there until Priceline acquired the company for \$2.1 billion in 2013.

But innovation partners aren’t limited to startups working in the business travel space, Balcom noted. CWT’s partnership with Plug and Play brings the TMC into contact with a wide range of startups, many of which begin with their sights set elsewhere. “We see a lot of companies that are initially focused at the leisure travel space or even fintech whose products could have a great business travel use case,” he observed. Such startups often can benefit from zooming in on business travel and leveraging CWT’s standing within that sector, Balcom added. “We can offer a startup access to the industry and to our customer base,” which can serve as a ready-made audience to help drive growth quickly out of the gate while allowing the startup to focus more on perfecting the platform and less on scaling up the business side, he noted. Startups that pivot from the consumer side often also bring a traveler-focused perspective to the table. It’s that seamlessness and service that TMCs are eager to capture.

**“With access to [startups’] data-driven resources, TMCs can better learn about a traveler base over time and make decisions and recommendations built around individual needs.”**

—AMERICAN EXPRESS  
GLOBAL BUSINESS  
TRAVEL’S EVAN KONWISER

### What’s in Demand

So what types of tech are the most transformative? Konwiser cited AI and machine learning tools that optimize preferences and customize for businesses and their travelers. “With access to these data-driven resources, TMCs can better learn about a traveler base over time and make decisions and recommendations built around individual needs,” he said. AI also enables TMCs to shift employees from manual processes to higher-value services, such as customer interactions, resulting in a higher-quality experience for the client, he added.

Matz added blockchain, chatbots, virtual reality and the Internet of Things to the list of promising travel technologies. Balcom said CWT has seen success with fare tracking and price prediction

startups, including companies that initially targeted consumer travel. Other services with promising applications on the corporate side include automated flight delay compensation and bots that can make proactive recommendations to travelers shopping for hotels or flights, encouraging them to book within travel policy parameters. “Those types of services offer a real opportunity to drive efficiency and productivity while also catering to the needs of the individual traveler,” he noted.

### Three’s Company

Once the TMC identifies the right tech partners and completes the so-called courtship, it’s time to bring trusted travel buyers into the innovation lab. The ultimate end users of a startup’s service, they provide valuable input on functionality in the “real world.”

CWT’s innovation team lets its corporate clients browse from among its tech partners and pick the services they’re interested in exploring via experimental implementations and pilots. “Clients can step in and learn about a feature, gain an understanding of the opportunities and then attach themselves to the right ones,” Balcom said.

BCD’s marketplace approach with SolutionSource also incorporates travel program input when fine-tuning a third-party service. “We are continually working with our partners to identify opportunities that streamline and optimize their offerings to our clients,” Matz noted. “There have been cases when clients requested capabilities to address specific challenges. In those cases, we work with our partners to assess the viability, feasibility and investment required to create solutions that meet these needs.”

But when serving as a matchmaker between startup partners and corporate clients, TMCs are careful not to be squeezed out (*see Walking the Line at right*). Balcom noted: “Buyers are smart. If we don’t add value that’s noticeable, they’re just going to go directly to those companies to cut out the middle man.” A TMC needs to offer “something more than a buyer would get from a direct relationship” with a startup, Balcom advised.

BCD’s marketplace, for instance, positions the company as an ever-evolving one-stop shop and clearinghouse for the latest innovative third-party services, said Matz. “The SolutionSource model lets us bring in new partners quickly and provide many options for our clients to customize their programs,” she noted. “We want to be agile and continue to add new partners to the marketplace as great new solutions emerge.”

**If CWT partners with a startup early in its life cycle, “you can architect something better right out of the gate ... and our customers eventually benefit.”**

—CWT’S BRANDON BALCOM



### Walking the Line

For startups in the business travel space, partnering with an established TMC can offer a clear path to scale and a ready-made audience of potential customers. But in pushing products and services that could disrupt the industry’s TMC-centric model, those startups must walk a fine line, offering innovation that complements TMCs’ services and commercial models rather than interfering or devaluing.

Rocketrip CEO Dan Ruch, whose startup has seen success with many TMC and travel technology partnerships, told BTN the company still gets pushback from potential TMC partners who view the product as an interloper in traditional TMC commercial agreements. In its simplest form, Rocketrip encourages travelers to spend less on travel even if it means staying with a friend, and that, he said, means lower returns for the TMC. “I’ve literally sat around a table with a corporate client and a major TMC, where the TMC told the buyer that an airline partner wouldn’t allow the agency to properly leverage our product.” The buyer asked the TMC to bring the airline into the discussion, at which point the TMC acquiesced to the buyer’s request to enable a successful Rocketrip deployment. “TMCs that work to protect financial territory instead of serving clients may win the battle, but over the long term, they will eventually lose the war. We should all be focusing on enabling customers to build better travel programs.”

Startups are ready to play on this field, though, and one way to do it is to focus on narrow functionality, noted Daniel Senyard, CEO of Shep, a startup designed to reduce booking leakage via a browser extension that applies corporate policy restrictions to consumer travel sites. While the company does sell directly to corporate clients, it also has targeted the TMC distribution channel and last year struck a reseller deal with Flight Centre Travel Group. “Travel management is entering an era of microservices, not monoliths,” noted Senyard. “We believe that to be a successful startup in the space, your best bet is to find a spot in the ecosystem that is underserved, innovate and integrate into the existing stack, and then learn where to grow to from there.”

Because Shep’s service captures information a corporate travel program would not be able to get from its TMC—in this case, out-of-channel bookings—it doesn’t step on any TMC toes, Senyard observed. “Neither of us can provide that total picture alone, so it’s a very natural fit. In addition to integrating our leakage data with TMCs’ reporting, they have the tools and the people to take action, whether it is providing duty of care, enforcing policy post booking or renegotiating supplier agreements based on the improved view.”

Another company aiming to innovate in business travel without obviating TMCs is Roadmap, a Europe-based tech specialist that builds traveler-friendly mobile trip management apps. Though Roadmap sells only directly to corporates, TMCs remain a key part of the equation, according to CEO Jeroen van Velzen. “We believe in ‘and’ not ‘or.’ The TMC will never disappear,” he said, adding that Roadmap’s various corporate clients have relationships with all major TMC players. Roadmap draws booking and traveler data from a given client’s TMC into its own app, where it’s presented in one central location. “We help the buyer get in control of their program by giving them control over traveler communication and insights in behavioral data,” he noted. “We don’t fulfill travel distribution functions. We just simplify the process, liberate the data from the incumbent silos and overlay it with a very sexy corporate interface.”

While working with clients’ TMC partners does sometimes present “strategic, commercial and operational challenges,” he said, those challenges can always be overcome by keeping buyer and traveler needs paramount. Shep also has had to navigate pitfalls when collaborating with TMCs. “Because we can move quickly, it can be easy and tempting to be swayed by big, influential partners,” Senyard said. “Most TMCs we talk to are very excited about what we could become and have slightly different visions for our road map. In order to not get distracted from our core path, we have to stick to our beliefs and convictions while still being a good, collaborative partner.”

In the world of managed travel innovation and traveler engagement, the flip side is also true, according to Amex GBT’s Konwiser. Working with shiny tech startups that distract from core objectives or that don’t integrate well isn’t useful because TMCs must focus on the same goals they’ve had for decades: “Supporting travel managers as they work to keep travelers productive, happy and safe while managing costs.” ■



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**With the first quarter of 2019 already in the rear-view mirror, corporate road warriors are back in the sky traversing the country as part of their daily jobs. As they take to the air, Southwest's Corporate Sales Team has been taking in feedback from Customers from across the nation to better position SWABIZ as a more robust tool to help manage a company's travel program. This self-service solution has received a major functional overhaul to help our Customers better manage their business travel on Southwest Airlines.**

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As the economy grows, the need for companies to manage their travel budgets intensifies and that's where Southwest® comes in. While we offer a variety of solutions including customized agreement by our own Southwest Account Managers, we're also putting more emphasis on SWABIZ, our free booking tool. SWABIZ allows a company's travel manager the ability to better track and manage business travel expenses while providing access to exclusive business offers for travelers and the company, without incurring any transaction fees, thus improving their bottom line.

### SIMPLE AND ROBUST REPORTING

In December, working in partnership with our Technology Team, we rolled-out

major improvements to SWABIZ and were able to fully implement several new enhancements that Corporate Travel Managers have been asking for. These include the ability to have more robust reporting, like the Travel Funds Report, which allows you to save time and money by depicting all unused funds created on or after December 1, 2018, associated with the company's SWABIZ account. We've also implemented a more enhanced reporting feature that allows you to see more details on your travelers' scheduled flight departure time, type of booking channel used for the source of sale, and day of contact information all aimed at assisting with a Travel Manager's Duty of Care responsibilities. We are also making it easier to have access to SWABIZ itineraries by offering the ability for Corporate Travel Managers to opt in to receive travel confirmation emails.

### VALUE FOR YOUR TRAVELERS AND YOUR COMPANY

And road warriors can take advantage of managing their own SWABIZ reservations on the go as they can now be modified and canceled via a mobile device. We're also excited to promote SWABIZ as a one-stop-shop travel solution with the return of the hotel feature. With hotel booking capabilities on SWABIZ, travelers can honor their company travel policies for air, car and now hotel. We encourage you to check out these new features by visiting [SWABIZ.com/whatsnew](http://SWABIZ.com/whatsnew).

This refresh is designed to make doing business with Southwest easier. And while some might say "job well done," we're saying "this is just a start." We are continuing to invest by growing our Corporate Sales Team and adding new tools for our Customers that will continue making it even easier to do business with Southwest.

**To learn more about SWABIZ, visit [SWABIZ.com/about](http://SWABIZ.com/about) or to connect with a member of our dedicated Sales Team to learn about exclusive SWABIZ promotions email [SWABIZ@wnco.com](mailto:SWABIZ@wnco.com).**

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# Tech DNA Drives Travel Decisions

## Q&A WITH CONSENSYS' MAT DOMARADZKI

**ConsenSys is a technology startup creating Ethereum-based blockchain infrastructure, applications and practices that will “enable a decentralized world,” according to its website. Travel manager Mat Domaradzki joined a year ago, and now he’s launching what he calls Travel 2.0, which calls for a more cost-conscious approach to travel and narrower lanes for booking and supplier choice. As a tech-forward company, however, ConsenSys looks for partners that can handle its deep drive to innovate and its commitment to what Domaradzki calls “radical transparency.” He spoke with BTN editor-in-chief Elizabeth West.**

### **WHAT’S YOUR ROLE AS A TRAVEL MANAGER FOR A MIDSIZE PROGRAM IN A RAPIDLY GROWING ORGANIZATION?**

I want to help ConsenSys grow its business effectively, and I don’t want to be a friction point. The travel experience should be as seamless as possible, but at the same time, we are a business. We have four things we think about: We want to consolidate spend and gain visibility; we want to take care of our people with duty of care; we want to consider cost savings and be able to negotiate rates; and we want to manage our meetings and event spend.

### **THAT LAST PART IS INTERESTING FOR WHAT I WOULD CALL A NASCENT TRAVEL PROGRAM. WHY ARE YOU FOCUSED ON MEETINGS AND EVENTS?**

We are a remote-first company with many people distributed around the world. We call it a “mesh,” and ConsenSys employees are members of this mesh. From time to time, our people need to get together to get on the same page. This is the same with any kind of company, but with a distributed company, it’s even more important. We want to provide effective, cost-conscious solutions for getting our people together. Especially for a young company, the collaborative mission and engagement is really important.

### **CONSENSYS PRODUCES BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY FOR MANY INDUSTRIES, AND YOU EVEN HAVE SOME EMERGING SOLUTIONS FOR TRAVEL MANAGEMENT. IS YOUR PROGRAM USED AS A TEST GROUND FOR THOSE?**

We have an incubation to create solutions for the greater world using blockchain, from supply management to finance and including travel. We do test our solutions on our internal travel program. Right now, Ansero [which works on blockchain travel solutions] is learning a lot about how to build out its Smart Hotel Rate solution by working with us. We know the hotel negotiation and RFP process is not all hunky-dory; we think blockchain can help.

### **HOW DOES THE DRIVE FOR INNOVATION AND WHAT YOU CALL “RADICAL TRANSPARENCY” AFFECT YOUR TRAVEL SUPPLIER CHOICES?**

I’ve worked in travel my whole life. The industry is built on old technology, and we want to see that change. I was disheartened in the supplier meeting [at the Association of Corporate Travel Executive conference] on Sunday. So many people complained about new technologies. We want to work with like-minded suppliers that want to revolutionize managed travel. We are working with Troovo on virtual card and payment systems. We are talking to Zeno to potentially replace our current Concur system, which really needs a heavy investment in the user interface and [mobile solutions]. I would tell anyone out there with a great new travel technology to come talk to us. We are willing, able and excited to try new things.

### **DOES WORKING IN A FLAT ORGANIZATION PRESENT CHALLENGES IN TERMS OF NOT BEING ABLE TO LEVERAGE TOP-DOWN AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT OR ENFORCE THE TRAVEL PROGRAM?**

We are called ConsenSys. That’s literally who we are, right? We tell everyone internally how much we’ve spent on travel. Every three weeks we send out updates on everything

travel: HR has a slide, finance has a slide. We look at advanced bookings. We celebrate people who have been spending frugally. We look at whether there has been a spike in spending. We have healthy debates internally about what we should be doing. Those debates have culminated in a strategy around Travel 2.0, which is aligned with a larger [corporate initiative underway] called ConsenSys 2.0.

### **WHAT ARE THE GOALS OR ELEMENTS OF TRAVEL 2.0?**

In 2017, our compliance was about 50 percent, but in 2018 it fell to 30 percent. We told people how they should travel, but in a fast-growing company it can be hard to focus on those guidelines. It’s time now to put processes in place and time to mandate them. It’s never about telling people no, but we’re setting up notification reports to team leads about travel that has been booked against their budgets. We are looking at pretrip approval so [team leads] can approve what travel is hitting their budgets. That’s a tough one for a startup. Internal events have been a priority [because] we needed to spread the word and build the company. As we mature, we want everyone to take a second look to see what is really needed for their business. We’ve put in a lot of partnerships that are easy for our travelers like Airbnb for Work or Uber for Business and Lyft for Business. We saw a huge shift into the program after implementing Airbnb for Work and gained more visibility, as well as savings. That’s not the right solution for every company, but it works for us.

### **WHAT’S THE BEST THING ABOUT MANAGING TRAVEL AT A STRONG STARTUP?**

Everyone understands they are like an owner and they are working to build a company. We trust people’s judgment, and I am not the only one building the travel program at ConsenSys. We are all contributing to that effort because we want ConsenSys to be a healthy company for the long term. ■

## What makes a buying experience exceptional?

“We believe it’s being a personal and professional resource you can have honest dialogue with – whether it’s about a new cost-savings initiative or the best place to eat in a new city.”

**Jennifer**  
Market Account Director

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## Airlines Continue to Adjust to Boeing 737 Max Groundings as Fix Is Delayed

Boeing 737 Max aircraft will be grounded for at least several more weeks as the aircraft manufacturer enhances software for the aircraft's anti-stall system that played a part in the deadly crashes by Lion Air in October 2018 and by Ethiopian Airlines in March. The FAA expects to receive Boeing's enhancement "over the coming weeks," after which the software will be subject to a "rigorous safety review."

Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg has apologized for the crashes, and U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker said the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, which he chairs, is investigating whether FAA inspectors lacked proper training and certification when evaluating the system.

Amid the grounding, North American carriers have adjusted their schedules:

**Aeromexico:** Since grounding its six Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft on March 11, the carrier has covered those flights with other aircraft from its fleet.

**Air Canada:** After grounding its fleet of 24 Boeing 737 Max aircraft and removing them from its schedule through at least July 1, Air Canada expects it will cover 98 percent of previously planned flying. It has substituted different aircraft on most routes, extending leases for some aircraft scheduled to leave its fleet and speeding up the intake of Airbus A321 aircraft it acquired from Wow Air. Some flights have been consolidated onto larger aircraft,



some seasonal route starts have been pushed back, and partner carriers are providing extra capacity on some flights, such as a Montreal-Frankfurt flight that Lufthansa will operate during May. A few routes, including Halifax and St. John's to London Heathrow, have been suspended, but Air Canada plans to restart them when it is able.

**American:** American has canceled about 90 flights per day through June 5 due to the grounding of its 24 Boeing 737 Max aircraft. Cancellations include flights that were not scheduled to be serviced by Max aircraft so the rerouted planes can cover routes that were served by Max aircraft.

**Southwest:** Southwest has pulled Boeing 737 Max aircraft from its flight schedules through May, Reuters reported. The carrier's fleet of 34 737 Max 8 aircraft account for less than 5 percent of its daily flights.

**United:** United has been communicating with customers on affected flights but said the grounding has not had a "significant impact" on operations. Max aircraft accounted for only about 40 daily flights prior to the grounding. The carrier has removed Boeing Max aircraft from its schedule through May 9 and has contingencies in place through June 5, according to a spokesperson.

**WestJet:** WestJet's 13 Max aircraft make up about 8 percent of its fleet, the largest proportion of any major North American carrier. It has reaccommodated travelers through May 3.

A research note from Cowen indicated that the longer the grounding lasts, the lower the impact it will have on carriers, as they will have had more time to adjust schedules and swap aircraft. Delta, Alaska, JetBlue, Frontier, Allegiant, Hawaiian, Spirit and Volaris do not have Boeing 737 Max aircraft in their active fleets. ■

## Delta Will Return to London Gatwick

Next year, Delta will return to London's Gatwick Airport for the first time in nearly a decade, with service from Boston and New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport. Though Gatwick was Delta's first transatlantic destination more than 40 years ago, the carrier has not served the secondary London airport since 2012. Delta and partner Virgin Atlantic will operate the routes and will announce the schedules this year, according to Delta.

This month, Delta upgraded Boston-London Heathrow service to Airbus A330-200 aircraft. It already uses the aircraft on JFK-Heathrow routes. In November, it will upgrade again to refurbished Boeing 767-400s on both routes, which then will offer Delta One, Delta Premium Select, Delta Comfort Plus and the main cabin.

Both the new and the upgauged service are part of Delta's transatlantic growth plans. Over the next several months it will increase service between JFK and each Tel Aviv, Paris and Amsterdam, and on May 23, it begins seasonal service from Boston to each Lisbon and Edinburgh. Virgin Atlantic, meanwhile, will begin service from Heathrow to Tel Aviv on Sept. 25 and to Sao Paulo next year.

On April 1, Delta began service between Minneapolis/St. Paul and Seoul, as well as between Seattle and Osaka, Japan. Additionally, Korean Air will begin service between Boston and Seoul on April 12. Those three flights are the first additions to the carriers' partnership since launching their joint venture last year. ■

## Booking & Paying for Parking on Avis App

Avis has integrated the Arrive platform into its mobile app to enable booking of and payment for parking. Avis app users now can search and pre-pay for parking operators, such as garages, that have partnered with Arrive. Charges go to the payment method associated with the car rental, giving travel buyers greater visibility into parking spending, according to Avis. Arrive, which rebranded from ParkWhiz this year, offers parking in more than 230 cities in the U.S. and Canada only, according to a spokesperson. ■

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## Half the Rooms Marriott Is Adding by 2021 Are in North America

Marriott International plans to add between 275,000 and 295,000 rooms via 1,700 hotels by 2021, part of its 478,000-room longer-term pipeline. 214,000 rooms already are under construction. Nine percent of those coming over the next three years will be luxury, 33 percent upper-upscale and 58 percent upscale and upper-midscale. Almost half will be in North America, a quarter in Asia/Pacific and 15 percent in Europe. The pipeline for legacy Starwood Hotels & Resorts brands has grown 25 percent since Marriott acquired Starwood in the fall of 2016, according to Marriott, and now equals a third of the Starwood system that existed at the time of the merger.

Additionally, Marriott's loyalty program, Bonvoy, will offer peak and off-peak pricing starting this year to "drive redemptions to low occupancy dates," according to global chief commercial officer Stephanie Linnartz.

—Jeremy Silk Smith

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

## Airbnb Invests in OYO

inventory and certain operations.

The Airbnb investment in OYO has relevance for corporate travel buyers. According to the Global Business Travel Association's latest BTI Outlook, India tops the list of countries with the fastest predicted growth in business travel from 2017 and 2022. It's expected to grow 71 percent to reach \$63.5 billion by 2022. China was second, with a 37 percent growth rate and anticipated 2022 business travel revenue of \$475.6 billion.

To meet this demand, OYO also is expanding its business travel market, which dovetails with Airbnb's push into—and increasing acceptance of—this segment through Airbnb for Work. In 2018, OYO added more than 2,300 salespeople. Now, its omnichannel, enterprise and corporate business accounts for 20 percent of OYO's sales revenue, according to its annual report. Additionally, over 16,000 corporate accounts use OYO in India.

OYO B is the hotel company's corporate

booking product. Those signed up can use the OYO app's corporate mode to look for and book from a selected list of hotels that have received positive feedback from previous corporate guests. For guests whose companies are enrolled, OYO B Direct then can provide a GST invoice, which breaks down the goods and services tax India introduced in July 2017 and which is required for business transactions.

OYO also has created the SilverKey brand for executive stays in India. It operates in Chennai, Cochin, Coimbatore, Hyderabad and Trivandrum but is expected to open soon in 10 more cities, including Bangalore, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai.

OYO and SoftBank additionally have formed OYO Hotels Japan. Prasun Choudhary will lead the joint venture, OYO's entry to the market. Business travel spend in Japan is expected to grow 12 percent between 2017 and 2022, when it will reach \$71.4 billion, according to GBTA. ■

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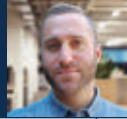
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## TravelBank Upgrades to Next Generation Storefront Display

BY MICHAEL B. BAKER

Travel and expense platform TravelBank launched a new display for flight shopping based on Next Generation Storefront standards. The display sorts flight offerings across fare classes using the star ratings ATPCO and its airline partners developed. Previously, TravelBank’s display was based on the fare class preferences listed within user profiles. Travelers can see, in addition to the star ratings, features like the restrictions associated with tickets, whether Wi-Fi is available, and the amount of legroom. “It gives our users more access and more transparency across all available inventory,” TravelBank co-founder and CEO Duke Chung said.

While airlines have been making a big push for NGS displays in recent months—Delta, for example, temporarily pulled content from TripActions before TripActions unveiled its NGS platform—TravelBank has been working on a more transparent display for about a year, Chung said, adding that American, Delta and United all assisted.

The display helps not only travel buyers who

### TravelBank’s Next Generation Storefront-Based Display

The NGS star ratings sort airfares in columns based on product, ancillaries and restrictions. The one-star category, for example, indicates basic economy fares, while standard economy fares fall largely in the two-star category.

Times	Stops	Airlines	Airports	Amenities	Edit Search	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★ ★	★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Sort by: Recommended   Avg Fare: \$225										
7:40 AM – 9:12 AM	Nonstop	Delta Air Lines	SFO to LAX			\$156	\$204	\$386		
Flight Details -		1h 32m	DL 1443			Main	Comfort+	Delta One		
7:00 AM – 8:52 AM	Nonstop	American Airlines	SFO to LAX			\$182		\$400		
Flight Details -		1h 52m	AA 166			Main		First		
8:15 AM – 9:50 AM	Nonstop	Southwest Airlines	SFO to LAX			\$225	\$253			
Flight Details -		1h 35m	WN 2234			Anytime	Business Select			1 more option
8:00 AM – 9:46 AM	Nonstop	United Airlines	SFO to LAX			\$183	\$449	\$407		
Flight Details -		1h 46m	UA 613			Economy	Economy Plus	First		

want to keep travelers booking within certain fare types but also travelers who might be enticed by lower fares without knowing the associated restrictions. “We’ve found the general user who may or may not travel much may not know the difference, and the new NGS display makes that much clearer,” Chung said. “It may be a great price, but they don’t know how it stacks up against other fares.”

The display went live to all TravelBank users March 19, Chung said. Upside plans to incorporate the standard in its display by June. ■

## Data Privacy Legislation Passes Washington Senate

The Washington State Senate has voted 46 to 1 in favor of the Washington Privacy Act, sending it to the Washington House of Representatives for consideration. Like the European Union’s General Data Protection Regulation, the data privacy bill requires companies to disclose what personal data they are collecting, what they are doing with that data and with whom they are sharing it, including processing and consent requirements. The WPA also recognizes a controller and processor scheme, as GDPR does, according to Lucy Tyson, an intellectual property associate at law firm Bracewell. WPA is closer in similarity to GDPR than is the California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018, which is set to go into effect Jan. 1, 2020. “Portions of [WPA] appear to be copied and pasted from the same language that GDPR used,” Tyson said. If enacted, WPA would go into effect July 31, 2021.

Since the start of the year, CCPA-like bills have been introduced in the Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Rhode Island and Maryland legislatures, according to Bracewell. Conversation around a federal data privacy law also has begun—in March, several big tech companies spoke about data privacy before a Senate committee—but no concrete steps have been taken, Tyson said.

—Dawit Habtemariam

## Lola Lands \$37M to Fund Workforce & Tech Growth

Four months after signing a major partnership with American Express Global Business Travel, travel management startup Lola has secured \$37 million in funding to double its employee count and ramp up tech development. The Series C funding round was comprised of existing Lola investors, led by General Catalyst and Accel, with participation from CRV, Tenaya Capital and GV. The financing brings Lola’s total funding since its launch in 2016 to nearly \$80 million. Started by Kayak co-founder Paul English, Lola pivoted away from leisure travel in 2017 to target the lightly managed corporate travel sector. Its five-year partnership with Amex GBT is expected to drive growth, and Lola plans to double its headcount across engineering, sales, and marketing, including hiring more than 60 hires this year. Lola also will focus on tech development. English has said the company is building out its software offerings to better serve larger corporate clients—and that learning how to serve those clients was a major element of its decision to align with Amex GBT.

—Adam Perrotta



## BCD & CWT Each Globalize & Centralize Their Energy, Resources & Marine Platforms

BY AMANDA METCALF

The energy, resources and marine vertical of corporate managed travel is emerging from its silo, combining fragmented content and global support much like travel management companies' traditional corporate travel offerings.

BCD Travel and CWT each have revamped their ERM platforms to put all legs of the trip—from commercial like plane and hotel to logistical like boat, helicopter, charter plane, bus and crew camp—on one platform. “Because of the unique service requirements of energy, resources and marine operations, businesses in these sectors generally rely on highly specialized travel agents that often work in manual processes and are set up separately from their corporate travel service,” said BCD SVP of the Americas Amy Dalton, who will oversee BCD’s ERM practice. “We can bring together both crew and corporate services into a single program.” BCD said a single platform for all travel agents now enables round-the-clock, live support from informed agents, an improvement on BCD’s formerly regional service.

Both BCD and CWT also highlight their one-stop-shop booking platforms for travel arrangers. Peter Brady, CWT VP of global technology and services for ERM, emphasized the need to empower both travel arrangers and travel agents in the ERM space, in which 40 percent of the complex itineraries change after booking.

What it comes down to is that each TMC is corralling commercial booking content and ERM booking content into a single workflow, and from that centralization flows improvements in each service, data reporting, disruption management and traveler tracking.

### BCD’S ERM UPGRADE

Before Ross Pratt, BCD VP of global business development for ERM, joined the TMC in November 2017, its ERM arm served clients regionally, offering nothing to serve large clients across multiple regions, he said. A client may have used BCD for the 80 percent of its travel business that was corporate and used another agency for the 20 percent that was crew, he explained. “Now, we’re looking at clients that are 80 percent crew and 20 percent corporate because we’re able to support that a lot better from a global, 24/7 solution.” Indeed, the offering already has pulled in one of the world’s largest oil field services providers as a client, according to BCD.

Dalton said BCD is placing ERM agents in specific spots around the world in order to provide round-the-clock service regardless of travelers’ locations. And the agents all work on a single platform whether they’re handling crew, contractors, corporate or anything in between. The system allows different workflows for different types of travelers, as determined by the traveler’s profile. Pratt said the varying workflows guide agents to what reporting needs to be captured, what form of payment to get and other aspects that differ by traveler type.



“We’ve built the technology to really flow from the traveler type, so once I know who you are, I can follow a process that’s streamlined just for you,” he said.

The platform takes advantage of BCD’s TripSource, including the TripSource Profile Manager enhancement that’s powered by SAP’s Customer Data Cloud solution and that will roll out in the second half of this year. For a company’s oil rig crewmembers, for example, BCD could turn off the ability to book hotel or air, leaving those travelers to use TripSource just for itinerary management while travel arrangers handle the planning.

In addition to centralized technology, BCD’s ERM platform also leverages centralized supplier agreements and offers a central support desk. More capabilities for travel bookers/arrangers also mean more personal agency. “Everything BCD has built technologywise has been a lot around the traveler having more interaction,” Pratt said. “In this space, it’s a lot more around an arranger or a booker, so we’ve had to put together some technologies, whether that’s an online tool or travel request form or things like that. So we are building out technologies that’ll be more interactive for bookers.”

The ERM platform also links up with BCD’s business intelligence and data visualization tool, DecisionSource, which powers not only trip and spend reporting but also traveler tracking. BCD’s ERM team had to approach DecisionSource a bit differently from its colleagues covering commercial travel. For ERM clients, DecisionSource digests the data by traveler type, whether corporate traveler, crew, contractor, family, recruit or others. BCD also feeds in additional data sources. “Traditional traveler tracking doesn’t work well with one-way travel” or for long-term and ex-pat assignments, Pratt noted. “Where the PNR ended, that’s where the traveler tracking ended.” For a traveler who took a plane to Morocco and then a one-hour bus to a hotel, the bus and hotel often were not tracked. BCD integrates with whichever of those last-mile suppliers are technologically capable in order to capture traveler data. That could mean taking passenger logs from a bus company or even RFID scans of worker badges at mining sites.

The new platform also centralizes security efforts and feeds data to emergency-response suppliers. The TMC’s ERM arm also offers risk mapping, asset mapping, alerts, access to a crisis management team and trip disruption services. Pratt offered the example of a mechanic traveling with a replacement part for a broken-down oil rig. The technology notifies an agent if, say, the traveler is likely to miss a connecting flight. Any rebooking fee likely would pale in comparison to the money the rig is losing while

### Is BCD Moving on CWT’s Turf?

BCD Travel announced its energy, resources and marine division revamp just three weeks after the mega travel management company announced it would bolster its government services efforts. Both were conspicuous moves, considering ERM and government services each have been strongholds of BCD competitor CWT.

Ross Pratt, BCD VP of global business development for ERM, said BCD’s ERM move isn’t about competition but rather about client needs. He inferred, though, that CWT had allowed a window of opportunity to open for BCD: “I worked at CWT in the ERM space for several years, and I know that they’re a great company. I think they made some decisions over the last four or five years in the direction they’re going that clients have seen as not favorable. So what we saw was a need for someone else to come in and play in the space. So with the HRG/Amex merger, where HRG had basically put on hold for the last few years their energy group—now they’re coming back out—CWT had I guess lost some of the passion for that side of the business. And I think BCD saw it as an opportunity to give a new avenue to the clients. Customers wanted a different option. All they used to have was CWT.”

A BCD spokesperson added that BCD simply is in a good position to up its game: “BCD is a privately owned company, and we’re in a very good position when it comes to our debt, our ability to invest. We are sinking 40 percent of EBITDA back into innovation and infrastructure, and John Snyder—our CEO—and John Fentener van Vlissingen—our owner—and our executive team have a very aggressive growth strategy right now. And this is independent of what the competition is doing. It’s independent of what Amex or CWT or whoever is doing. It’s just part of what they envision BCD Travel doing and becoming. ... This is all part of a larger, longer strategic plan.”

out of commission, so BCD can automate and customize rebooking authorizations. One client might allow any rebooking under \$5,000, and another might authorize any rebooking under \$500 but request a loop-in call for anything higher.

#### CWT'S UNIFIED WORKFLOW

As corporations have identified ERM travel as ripe for boosting efficiency, third-party logistics specialists have cropped up, said Brady. "The problem with that is they're not integrated with commercial travel." Thus CWT has created a single platform on which travel arrangers can book both commercial and specialized ERM content.

The centralized platform for travel arrangers also translates into one itinerary for the traveler via the MyCWT app and will mean better total trip cost reporting. "One of the things you hear consistently [from clients] is, 'Do you know: We don't actually have the data end to end in one place. ... We can't see the cost components ... brought together in one place,'" Brady said. That goes for the cost of flying a single traveler from home to an oil rig or an entire crew rotation. And, he noted, if corporations can't see that cost, they can't manage it.

As CWT has been fine-tuning its ERM platform revamp—it was ready to go in January, Brady said—the TMC has been working on ERM data reporting sticking points: What do clients want to see, how do they need to see it, what are the problems they're trying to solve for key stakeholders—in short: "How do we present that data to provide them with actionable intelligence?" The TMC has just completed a pilot for an ERM data reporting solution, and Brady said a product might come to market in the fourth quarter. Corporations then could avail themselves of the existing CWT Travel Consolidator tool if they want to analyze ERM and more typical corporate travel together.

Also on the way: An ERM team is working on trip disruption, crisis management and traveler well-being, according to Brady. A CWT press release said the offering will give travel managers "accurate, real-time information on each traveler," but Brady declined to provide further details.

#### THE BIG DIFFERENCE: CONTENT & HOW IT GETS THERE

Each BCD and CWT have access to traditional corporate travel booking content via global distribution systems, but how to get unique ERM content and put it on the same interface as the commercial content? BCD uses application programming interface connections that allow workforce management systems, other ERM-arena suppliers and aggregators to feed content into TripSource, Pratt said.

CWT started down the same API path but

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40%

of energy, resources/  
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eraries change after  
booking, according to  
CWT's Peter Brady.

deemed the task Sisyphean, considering the infinite number of potential sources. Instead, Brady said, generic GDS content, CWT negotiated fares and clients' negotiated fares feed into the interfaces of a curated group of workforce and logistics management systems: Nordic firm Tieto; Australia's Bright; INX, which has offices in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada; Singapore's Compass; California-based Infinity; and Australia's Trobexis. Pushing the content to those systems allows the travel arranger to work within the broader site operations with which they're already familiar. "What we had to do was really look at: Who are those third-party software systems that make sense for us to be spending our time with?" Brady said of CWT's strategy. "We can't partner with everybody; partnering is really important."

BCD, meanwhile, is bringing in all the content sources it can. Crew camps and other suppliers with their own property management systems can use the TripSource APIs, and BCD can create PMSs for other suppliers. Pratt said BCD also searches for additional content to fill its coffers. In South Texas, for example, where crew camps and hotels often are full, BCD will search for and digitize analog offerings, such as houses that have been converted to apartments to fill the market's shortage.

For traditional content, BCD has built its ERM platform on a single GDS. "We had to start somewhere," Pratt said, though the platform eventually will be GDS agnostic. He said digitizing analog content and aggregating disparate sources lends transparency to the booking options and power to the travel arranger. On a unified platform, for example, BCD can preference a crew camp that's already paid for.

#### AMEX GBT'S OFFERING

As head of the energy, mining and marine division for American Express Global Business Travel, Allan Davidson joined GBT when it acquired HRG in July. He's in his eighth month overseeing the consolidation of the two legacy programs. GBT, like BCD and CWT, is focusing on delivering a consistent platform globally. For GBT, as for CWT, the cornerstone of a global program is a single agent platform for all energy resource/mining agents. GBT's energy, mining and marine agents are located in 15 markets around the world. Davidson, like BCD's Pratt and CWT's Brady, said a globalized platform translates to 24/7 live-agent support. "This is a global space we're working within," he said. "We're targeting global customers, and if we only look from a local aspect, we're not going to be able to deliver on the customer's requirements."

He added that GBT's global platform is helping those GBT clients that had disjointed programs or that have grown through acquisition to consolidate their energy, mining and marine programs. A global platform also will aid scalability, which is on Davidson's mind as he looks to the future. His program also taps into GBT's Expert Care travel risk management solution.

While GBT can gather disparate content sources via API, aggregator, manual data feeds and integrations with workforce management systems, Davidson emphasized GBT agents' role in arranging travel, while CWT and BCD highlight the travel-arranging power their platforms grant to their clients. Davidson did say, however, that GBT is helping customers that are so inclined to automate their processes. The ultimate benefit of that is real-time information on compliance, spend and the locations of both individuals and assets, such as vessels. ■

## Former Travel and Transport CEO Bill Tech Has Died

Former Travel and Transport president and CEO Bill Tech died April 1 at the age of 70. From 1998 until 2014, he oversaw key acquisitions, a nearly 300 percent increase in employees, the transfer of ownership to Travel and Transport's employees and record growth in the five years preceding his retirement. In 2012, BTN named him to its 25 Most Influential list for Travel and Transport's acquisition of New York-based Ultramar Travel Management, which reinforced Travel and Transport's position among the largest U.S. travel agencies. Tech also served as chairman of Radius Travel for over 10 years.

—Dawit Habtemariam



# New Visa Rules in the EU & Brazil

BY DAWIT HABTEMARIAM

The EU Council and the European Parliament have voted to allow U.K. citizens to travel without visas for short stays to Schengen Area countries: the 22 EU member states, plus Norway, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Iceland. Even in the event of a no-deal Brexit, a U.K. citizen can stay in any Schengen Area country without a visa for 90 of the 180 days following the traveler's entry to that country. The exemption requires reciprocity; if the U.K. introduces a visa requirement for nationals from one of the Schengen Area countries, the EU will apply the Schengen Area's visa requirements to U.K. citizens, according to an EU official.

And as of June 17, citizens of the U.S., Canada, Australia and Japan no longer will need visas to enter Brazil, according to Brazil Tourism. Citizens of these four countries can stay in Brazil for 90 days from the date they first entered, and stays are extendable for another 90 days. They're limited to a total of 180 days within the 12 months that follow a traveler's entry into the country. Until June 17, citizens from these four countries still will need an e-visa to enter. Brazil had temporarily dropped the visa requirement for citizens of these countries in the summer of 2016 for the Olympics. And last year, it allowed citizens of these countries to apply for e-visas online for \$40 rather than at Brazilian embassies for \$160. The number of visas issued to citizens of the four countries then increased from 169,910 in 2017 to 229,787 in 2018. According to Brazil Tourism, Brazil considers these four countries to be strategic for the development of tourism. ■

## American Suspends Venezuela Service

American Airlines has indefinitely suspended service to Venezuela amid the country's ongoing civil unrest. The carrier suspended service to the country on March 15 with the intention of starting back up on April 1, but now it has extended that suspension until such time that "the conditions are right," according to the airline. American was the only U.S. carrier still serving Venezuela, with flights from Miami to both Caracas and Maracaibo. Venezuela currently has a Level 4 "do not travel" advisory from the U.S. State Department, and United and Delta each ended service to Caracas in 2017.

—Michael B. Baker

# World's Busiest Air Routes

BY DAWIT HABTEMARIAM

Of the 10 routes over 35,000 kilometers that had the most direct flights between March 2018 and February 2019, eight originated in the U.S., according to OAG's Busiest Routes 2019 report. The busiest crossborder routes of any distance were Kuala Lumpur-Singapore Changi with over 30,187 flights and Hong Kong-Taipei with 28,447. Fifteen of the 20 busiest crossborder routes originate and end in the Asia/Pacific region. OAG excluded carriers that operate fewer than 500 scheduled flights per year. ■

## BUSIEST CROSSBORDER ROUTE IN EACH WORLD REGION

North America	Number of Flights from March 2018 to February 2019	On-Time Performance
New York LaGuardia-Toronto Pearson	17,038 (3 carriers)	54.9%
Europe		
London Heathrow-New York JFK	14,195 (4 carriers)	78.2%
Asia/Pacific		
Kuala Lumpur-Singapore Changi	30,187 (8 carriers)	72.8%
Latin America		
Jorge Chavez (Lima)-Santiago	10,369 (4 carriers)	85.3%
Middle East & Africa		
Dubai-Kuwait	14,581 (4 carriers)	82.5%

## BUSIEST ROUTES OF FEWER THAN 1,500 KILOMETERS

	Number of Flights from March 2018 to February 2019	On-Time Performance
Jeju (South Korea)-Gimpo (Seoul, South Korea)	79,460 (7 carriers)	72.3%
Melbourne-Sydney	54,102 (4 carriers)	72.2%
Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (Mumbai)-Indira Gandhi (Delhi)	45,188 (6 carriers)	67.5%
Sao Paulo/Congonhas-Santos Dumont (Rio de Janeiro)	39,747 (3 carriers)	83.6%
Fukuoka-Tokyo Haneda	39,406 (4 carriers)	83.3%

## BUSIEST ROUTES OF 1,500 TO 3,500 KILOMETERS

	Number of Flights from March 2018 to February 2019	On-Time Performance
Kempegowda (Bengaluru)-Indira Gandhi (Delhi)	28,716 (7 carriers)	72.7%
JFK-Los Angeles	26,286 (5 carriers)	79.9%
Chengdu Shuangliu-Beijing Capital	24,548 (5 carriers)	not available
Beijing Capital-Shenzhen Bao'an	23,200 (5 carriers)	not available
Tokyo Haneda-Okinawa Naha	22,473 (3 carriers)	73.1%

## BUSIEST ROUTES OF MORE THAN 3,500 KILOMETERS

	Number of Flights from March 2018 to February 2019	On-Time Performance
New York JFK-San Francisco	15,587 (4 carriers)	73.7%
New York JFK-London Heathrow	14,195 (4 carriers)	78.2%
Honolulu-Los Angeles	11,628 (5 carriers)	84.6%
Newark-San Francisco	11,302 (2 carriers)	68.3%
Boston Logan-Los Angeles	11,262 (5 carriers)	79.9%

Source: OAG Busiest Routes 2019

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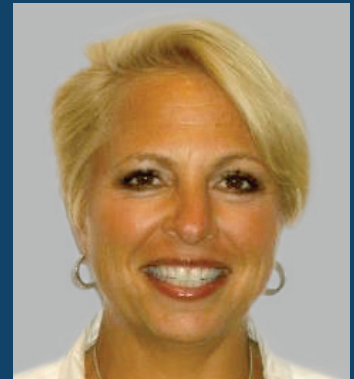
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## CWT Expects Corporate Ticket Prices to Trend Upward

BY DAWIT HABTEMARIAM

The average air ticket price paid by CWT clients rose 6 percent in January and 3 percent in February, to \$702, according to CWT's Air Trends Report, attributing the rise largely to airlines' new revenue management models. CWT forecasts the price will drop 4.1 percent from February's \$702 to \$673 in April. However, that seems to be a blip in the year's upward trend. "Airlines are looking to adopt IATA's New Distribution Capability standard as a means to generate greater ancillary revenue, such as seat selection and baggage fees," said CWT Solutions Group VP Christophe Renard.

Economy class' share of total tickets booked, which fell from November to January and then rose in February and March, will remain flat in April, at 91.7 percent. CWT said corporate travel policies' increasing allowance of premium economy fares have prompted use of economy class to decline over the long term.

CWT predicts that in the next few months, travelers will book closer to their travel dates, as companies are "relaxing travel restrictions." In December, as companies eyed their budgets and tightened their belts, strict enforcement of travel policies led to bookings farther in advance of travel. That effect carried over to January and February, during which 47 percent of tickets were booked more than 14 days out. In March, CWT expects, around 43 percent of all tickets will have been booked more than 14 days out, and in April, 42.6 percent will have been.

CWT forecasts that April will be the first time more than half of all bookings will be made through online booking tools, reaching 50.5 percent. OBT use rose 6 percent from October to December and remained stable from January to February at 48 percent. ■

# 50.5%

**Share of bookings CWT predicts will go through online booking tools in April, the first time it would crack 50 percent**

## Deal Brings Amex Corporate Card Payments to SAP Ariba

BY ADAM PERROTTA

Users of the SAP Ariba procurement platform soon will be able to use American Express corporate cards to make payments. Amex will become a network extension partner for Ariba, enabling corporate buyers to use their existing Amex corporate cards to generate virtual payments within Ariba, starting this year. Ariba's procurement platform connects more than 3.8 million companies worldwide and hosts more than \$7.2 billion in goods and services traded daily, according to the company.

More than half of Amex's largest global customers already use Ariba for procurement, the card network noted. The integration means users won't need to set up and maintain separate standalone payment accounts within Ariba. Buyers also will gain more control over payment amounts and timing, as well as easier reconciliation, Amex said.

The pact deepens an existing relationship between the two companies, which in 2016 streamlined noncontract purchases by automatically matching transaction data from Amex commercial accounts to purchase order data from Ariba's Spot Buy platform. The companies plan to partner on "additional digital solutions" in the future. ■

## How One Company Drove Parking Savings

BY DAWIT HABTEMARIAM

Telecommunications company TDS's travel program has a lot of control over air, hotel and car spend but little over parking. "We thought parking was just something you have to pay, just like you have to pay for mileage," said TDS enterprise travel manager Bonnie Brabb. "You have to pay it to conduct business."

TDS sales, engineers and marketers drive quite a bit into Chicago, where Brabb is based and where the company's U.S. Cellular business is headquartered. Parking spaces are tough to come by. "You'd spend a lot of time circling around for parking," Brabb said. "I think a lot of people can't get street parking as a rule, so they would just go to these parking garages," she said. Even then, "you would go to one building and it was full by 9 a.m."

Brabb was familiar with parking reservation apps, having used Parking Panda personally. In May 2017, she heard SpotHero for Business head Becca Rabinowitz speak at a GBTA function and was excited to see the concept applied to business travel. She

learned that the service, like consumer parking apps, helps travelers shop for, reserve and find parking spots but also gives travel managers visibility into their programs' parking spend.

Brabb ran a report from Concur Expense and was surprised at how big parking spend was. "We knew it was there but definitely not as big as it was."

In September 2017, she signed on with SpotHero for Business and e-mailed her entire company encouraging them to use the service. Employees started using the app in December. And in February 2018, a SpotHero account manager visited TDS's Chicago office and got more than 100 additional employees onto the app. Brabb continues to look for opportunities to encourage travelers to sign up. She emails anyone who expensed parking in a city where the service is available: "We know you parked in Downtown Chicago. We have partnered with SpotHero. Here is the link. Here is how you can sign up for the company."

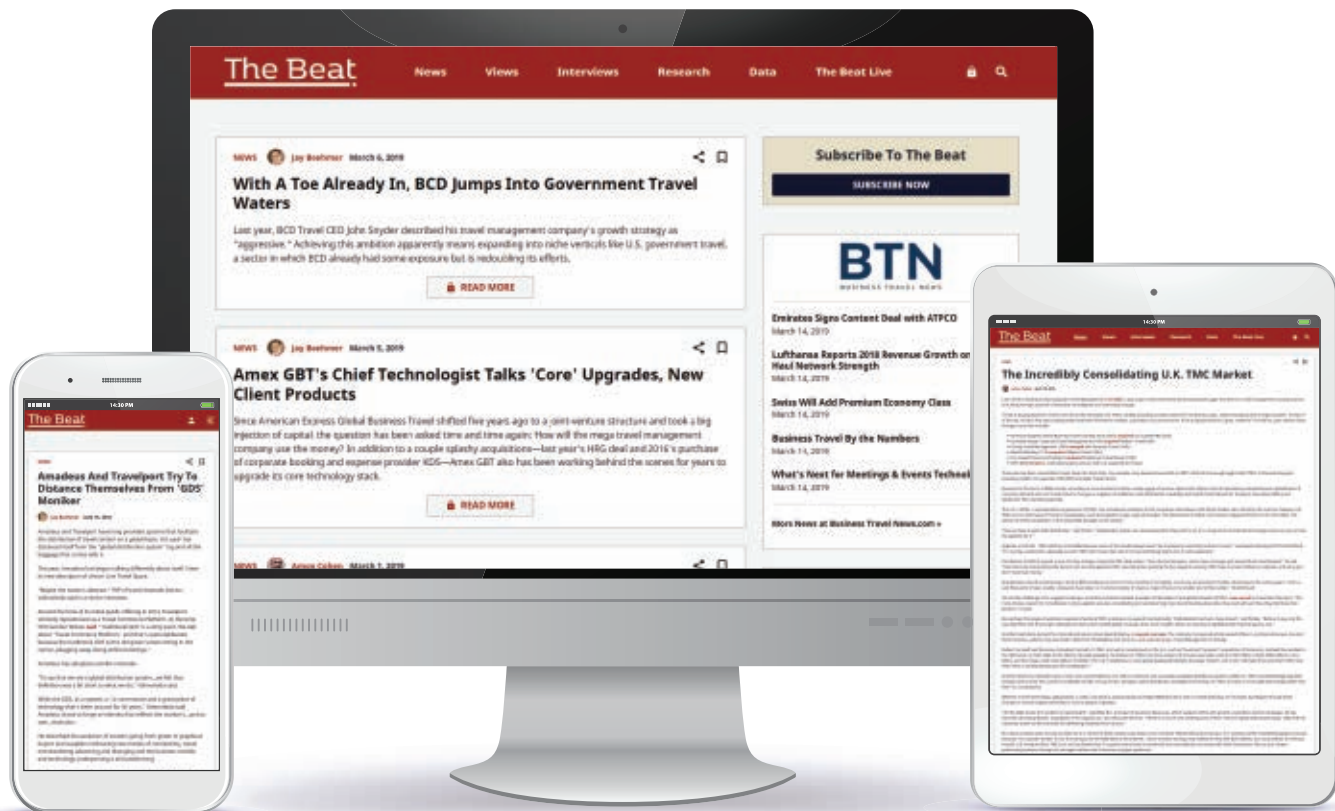
Savings also have come in employee time. It takes

no more than 30 seconds, Brabb said, to book on SpotHero but could take as long as 30 minutes to find a parking spot, not to mention the mileage incurred in circling around. In the SpotHero for Business app, a user enters the destination, date and how long he or she needs parking. The app then maps nearby available parking spots and prices. The user hits reserve, and the app gives directions to the parking garage, a picture of the entrance and directions to follow upon arrival, such as scanning a barcode to enter the parking lot, Brabb said. She also loves that travelers use their phones to book, which fits with TDS's image as a cellphone provider and technology company.

She also said travelers don't have to spend time uploading their parking receipts into Concur. SpotHero expenses populate into Concur automatically, minimizing human input errors. And now, all travel-related spend—air, hotel, car rental and parking—appear together in Concur, getting Brabb's data reporting closer to displaying the full cost of travel. ■

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## What's Next for Meetings & Events Technology

BY BIZLY CEO RON SHAH

Corporate meeting and event teams face the opportunity of a lifetime. It may not feel that way, with last year's hotel commissions-cut announcements going into effect, but the opportunity is here.

The rise of remote and distributed teams is forcing the C-suite to find the right solutions for the future. "Borderless" offices have changed not only how companies recruit and retain talent, but also how they convert their sales pipeline and build community—both inside the office and with customers. HR, marketing and sales departments are more determined than ever to build experiences that drive employee and customer engagement, as well as long-term loyalty. Those experiences have to include meaningful, in-person interactions, and with distributed teams in play, the strategy absolutely requires live events.

See where we're going here? The time is now for meeting and event teams to reinvent themselves as strategic partners that can provide M&E services across all company divisions, impacting business goals while also overseeing risk and spend. M&E teams won't get there with traditional meetings technology stacks, though. They're going to need to change their perspective on what the technology should do and even who can use it. If they can do that, they may also tap into a reservoir of new budgets and drive greater attention around their value.

### Being a Strategic Partner

**Prioritize User Experience:** As a tech veteran, I've been surprised at how many meeting and event leaders have said, "I don't care about the user experience; I just need the data." This perspective is not aligned with enterprise (or consumer) technology trends over the past decade. The reality is that great user experiences accelerate employee adoption and yield more powerful behavioral data that will help create the program of the future.

**Data Portability Is Critical:** For long-term success, each organization must own its data and house it in a centralized store that it controls. This gives the buyer the flexibility to select "the best provider for the job" versus sticking with an existing provider. It also frees the buyer to negotiate directly with technology providers rather than expose the company to higher prices due to intermediary markups.

**Support, Support, Support:** Technology is great, but support is still required. Meetings and events are



Ron Shah is CEO of Bizly

**The time is now for meeting and event teams to reinvent themselves as strategic partners.**

complex undertakings. When assessing a modern tech solution, make sure human support is available to deal with challenges that crop up in "the last mile."

**Get the Metrics Right:** Meetings and events metrics are not like corporate travel metrics. It's not all about savings. That's how you measure a cost center. Meetings drive revenue, engagement and shareholder value. Setting M&E against strategic metrics like compliance or "return on objective" is the way to tap a reservoir of new budgets. Cost center-type metrics are important, but they don't tell the full story about the strategic value.

**Start Small:** Appropriate scoping is the best way to impact change and introduce new technology. Start with small user groups that reside in your backyard. Get things right, and then expand gradually, with adoption as the key metric. Build integrations and global plans only after the core is in great shape.

### The Future

Here's what I see for meetings and event technology. Ready? Go:

**Ditch the Clutter:** Arguably, Google is the most highly adopted software on the planet. Its interface? A single search bar. Yet, most of today's events technology asks employees to begin their event journeys with a 10-minute-long meeting request forms. Forget it. While the events team will always require complex solutions for their needs, significant change is on the horizon in terms of who will be using the tools. In a decentralized workplace, admins and ad hoc meeting owners in HR, sales or marketing need to build events, and this requires a completely different self-service approach.

**It Must Be Intelligent:** Strategic meetings programs have to get easier to deploy and adopt. They will do it with artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities that automatically design events around business objectives and personalize packages with negotiated rates and policies, attendee preferences and local market nuances.

**Analytics Ascend:** The future of M&E technology should make lives easier and deliver data insights. In-person experiences can build a "social graph" of the workplace, ensuring that event organizers include the right people in the right gatherings and understand the journey of the customer or employee. Return on objective or experience analytics will live easily alongside spend analytics to give the business a more comprehensive value picture.

When we embrace the value of meetings and push for a technology future that enables a consistent meetings strategy across the organization, teams finally will be recognized for the shareholder value they create. ■

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