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Take the Lead on Duty of Care for the Modern Business Traveller

In September 2016, ACTE asked its global membership to take part in a research programme investigating the needs and behaviours of today's business travellers. The first output, *Meet the modern business traveller*, revealed a new breed of corporate traveller who uses technology to stay connected, cares about quality of life issues and seeks to integrate both professional and personal travel.

ACTE returned to its members in April 2017 to explore the extent to which they were facilitating traveller quality of life issues. Continuing the theme of the 2016 research, *Serving the multifaceted modern business traveller* investigated traveller attitudes toward personal safety and how their employers have responded.

ACTE undertook the third stage of research in June 2017, homing in on traveller safety and duty of care. Key takeaways from the survey include heightened traveller concern surrounding safety, growing recognition among travel managers about their central role in protecting travellers, and that significant barriers still stand in the way for travel managers looking to modernize their duty of care efforts. But these challenges can be overcome, and the evolving landscape of duty of care presents an opportunity for travel managers to take the reins and play a leading role in ensuring traveller security.

Safety continues to trouble travellers

Personal safety has been one of the modern business traveller's persistent concerns since the inception of this research series. Since September 2016, a majority of travel managers report increased traveller queries about safety. In June 2017, more than a third (37 per cent) of travel managers saw a rise in enquiries relating to traveller safety, even after taking actions to address those concerns. Thirty-five per cent said enquiries had remained stable.

In April 2017, ACTE found that 54 per cent of travel managers had seen a rise in traveller enquiries related to visa and immigration issues associated with travel to and from the United States. Revisiting the issue in June 2017, the survey found more than a third (36 per cent) of travel managers globally have seen an increase in the levels of information on immigration and border crossing requested or provided in the last six months. The proportion of travel managers seeing an increase was roughly the same in both North America and Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA).

Corporate responses to traveller safety concerns

	In place, introduced or enhanced	Measure already in place	Introduced in last 6 months	Measure enhanced in last 6 months	Measure was not in place
Traveller location technology	83%	62%	8%	13%	18%
Proactive safety communication to travellers	79%	47%	12%	20%	21%
Detailed emergency action plan	73%	43%	7%	23%	27%
Safety / security services from the TMC	70%	59%	4%	7%	31%
Emergency check-in technology	57%	35%	9%	14%	43%
Traveller safety training	51%	29%	10%	12%	49%

How did key elements in your duty of care programme change over the last six months?

The research further explored how travel managers are responding to traveller safety concerns with respect to safety education and communication, technology tools and planning.

Given sustained levels of traveller safety concern, it is perhaps surprising that key elements of duty of care had not always been implemented or enhanced over the last six months.

Safety education and communication

Providing safety training is one of the most immediate ways travel managers can respond to traveller safety concerns. In its April 2017 research, ACTE found that just under half (47 per cent) of travel managers had already introduced, or were about to introduce, this measure.

Returning to this topic six months later, the picture does not seem to have improved: The June 2017 research finds almost half (49 per cent) of travel managers do not have traveller safety training in place.

Proactive safety communication, however, has improved: In the six months to June, the majority (79 per cent) of travel managers had implemented proactive communication measures. Of course, this means that more than one in five did *not* have these processes in place.

Tools are available – but some fail to utilise them

Organisations are taking advantage of technology to support their travellers and give them peace of mind. The data shows more than four-fifths (83 per cent) had implemented, changed or enhanced traveller location technology in the previous six months. However, travel managers say their organisations were markedly less likely to use emergency check-in systems: a little more than half (57 per cent) had invested in this technology over the same period.

A look at the demographic features of respondents revealed further insight into how organisations have been tapping new tools and technologies to support duty of care. Travel managers with 'younger' organisations (where most travellers are aged less than 40) were more likely to have deployed or upgraded their traveller location systems than their peers in 'older' organisations. Twenty-four per cent of 'younger' organisations had introduced or improved these systems in the previous six months versus 19 per cent of 'older' organisations. This perhaps reflects the overall greater

willingness to travel among employees at ‘younger’ organisations, as well as higher awareness of personal and professional safety issues.

Planning for emergencies

More than a quarter (27 per cent) of travel managers claim not to have had a detailed emergency plan in place in the six months up to June 2017.

The lack of detailed emergency plans may be connected to the fact that planning meetings are a rarity in many organisations. Thirty-nine per cent of travel managers report that these meetings do not take place, have happened just once or occur only irregularly. Only 14 per cent of organisations report convening key stakeholders for planning meetings once or more per month.

Travel managers located in EMEA are twice as likely to report that planning meetings ‘never happen’ than their peers in North America, which perhaps results in part from differences in legal liability frameworks across the four continents.

This never happens	14%
This has happened just once	5%
Irregularly or only after an incident	20%
Regularly: annual or twice-yearly basis	37%
Monthly or more	14%
Not Applicable: we only utilise internal resources for risk management	7%
Not Applicable: we don't formally address this	3%

How often do you, your TMC or third party risk manager meet to discuss planning for disruptions or emergencies?

Spotlight on travel policy

The September 2016 modern business traveller survey revealed that more than half (54 per cent) of travel managers had tightened policy in response to traveller safety concerns. A further 36 per cent were considering changes to policy. Action was on the agenda for the vast majority (90 per cent) of travel managers.

The June 2017 data tells a different story. Today, 58 per cent of travel managers have not made any changes to policy in the last six months as a direct response to safety concerns. Among respondents based in North America, this figure rises to 65 per cent.

Where travel managers have revised policies, the top action has been to impose restrictions on visiting certain countries, cited by 29 per cent of travel managers. Significantly, travel managers in ‘younger’ organisations (41 per cent) are more than twice as likely to impose these restrictions than their peers in ‘older’ organisations (18 per cent).

Just 12 per cent of travel managers globally have revised or increased mandatory traveller training in the last six months. Travel managers in ‘younger’ organisations are almost twice as likely to have increased mandatory traveller training than their peers in ‘older’ organisations (18 per cent versus 10 per cent, respectively).

Policy compliance training

Travel managers appear convinced that compliance is key to a robust safety policy. Eighty-one per cent of travel managers had instituted policy compliance training in the six months prior to June 2017. Twenty-two per cent had enhanced training in response to traveller concerns.

Barriers to delivering for the traveller

What factors can prevent travel managers from delivering the enhanced duty of care their travellers need and demand?

	We cannot put in place all the measures we want	Cost / budget barrier	Lack of personnel	Not aware of offers	Other / reason not given
Extra TMC service	45%	27%	2%	11%	60%
More safety training	40%	20%	17%	23%	40%
Emergency check-in technology	38%	29%	3%	18%	50%
Traveller location technology	16%	44%	0%	6%	44%
Proactive safety communication to travellers	13%	15%	38%	15%	31%

**Do you believe you can put in place all the measures you want to deliver for your travellers?
What are the barriers?**

Three areas emerged where a significant proportion of travel managers would like to be able to do more. Almost half (45 per cent) want more support from their travel management company (TMC). For more than a quarter (27 per cent) of these travel managers, cost is a key obstacle.

Forty per cent of travel managers would like to give travellers more safety training, but 23 per cent cite a lack of awareness about available training as a hurdle, while 20 per cent identify budget constraints as the problem.

Emergency check-in technology is another area where many travel managers (38 per cent) want to do more. Of these respondents, 29 per cent see cost as a key barrier. Cost appears to be a decisive factor in whether an organisation adopts duty of care technology: Almost half (44 per cent) who are not able to introduce traveller location technology say they face budget constraints.

One area where travel managers encounter fewer barriers is proactive safety communication. Here, 60 per cent believe they can deliver adequate communication to travellers today; a further 27 per cent are working to improve in this area.

Five action points

Based on the insights derived from the June 2017 research, ACTE offers five areas where travel managers can set the safety agenda for their organisations and demonstrate leadership in duty of care.

1) Don't wait for a crisis. Engage now.

Thirty-nine per cent of travel managers don't meet regularly with key stakeholders to plan for emergencies. Take the lead! Invite HR, security, IT, senior leadership and others to plan before a crisis happens.

2) Leverage technology for traveller peace of mind.

Only 57 per cent of travel managers have deployed emergency check-in technology. While 83 per cent of organisations have adopted some duty of care tools, such as traveller tracking, the latest tech often remains unused. Leverage cutting-edge solutions to make your travellers feel safe, connected and supported.

3) Educate and inform travellers about safety.

Forty-nine per cent of travel managers don't provide traveller safety training, and more than a fifth (21 per cent) don't have proactive safety communication. Use your internal communication platforms to regularly update travellers on safety so everyone is prepared in a crisis.

4) Talk to your TMC.

Forty-five per cent of travel managers want more TMC service but don't believe they can afford it. Engage with your TMC about budget and your duty of care needs so they can work with you to craft solutions that provide more proactive training, real-time communication and efficient traveller support.

5) 'Younger' organisations point the way.

Travel managers with organisations where the average traveller is under 40 are more likely to respond proactively to traveller safety concerns. These leaders are adjusting policy, mandating traveller training systems and introducing or enhancing traveller locating systems. Network and learn from peers with exemplary programmes.

About the study

This study is the latest instalment of ACTE's modern business traveller insights programme, underwritten by American Express Global BusinessTravel (GBT). ACTE and GBT collaborated to identify research questions and key themes to address, seeking to take a comprehensive look at the most pressing issues facing the corporate travel industry. Find the previous modern business traveller studies at www.ACTE.org.

In this study, ACTE polled 170 corporate travel buyers from around the world (North America 58%, EMEA 26% and AsiaPac 14%) between 15 and 28 June, 2017 as part of its ongoing modern business traveller research series. For more information about this study or the wider modern business traveller insights programme, please contact: info@acte.org.

In some cases, percentage figures in tables may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

About the Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE)

The Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE) has a 29-year reputation for leading the way corporate travel is conducted. As a global association comprised of executive-level members in more than 100 countries, ACTE pioneers educational and technological advances that make business travel productive, cost-effective and straightforward. ACTE advocacy and initiatives continue to support impactful changes in safety and security, privacy, duty of care and compliance along with traveler productivity that supports global commerce.

Learn more at www.acte.org.

About American Express Global Business Travel

American Express Global Business Travel (GBT) equips companies of all sizes with the insights, tools, services and expertise they need to keep their travelers safe, focused and productive while on the road. With approximately 12,000 employees and operations in nearly 120 countries worldwide, American Express GBT empowers customers to take control of their travel programs, optimizing the return on their travel and meetings investments, while, more importantly, providing extraordinary traveler care.

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