



10 Steps to Recharge Your Hotel Program

Learn where to start, what to change, and how to move forward

With vaccines ramping up in many countries, some companies are starting to think about reopening offices and having employees return to business travel. With that in mind, we've put together a list of 10 steps with actions you can take to help set your hotel program up for success.



1. CONDUCT A HOTEL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT.

Now is the perfect time to evaluate your content and property types. Start by assessing your past travel data. This includes leakage data (credit card) and data from multiple travel management companies if it exists. Consolidating, removing duplicates, and annualizing spend will be key initiatives that can be accomplished by aligning with a travel management company that does the heavy lifting on data management.



2. REFINE YOUR RFP STRATEGY.

Get answers on rate sourcing in the new environment. Toss out previous norms around sourcing and work with your accommodation partners to define a path that explores multiple content options and mid-year sourcing when necessary, all while meeting travelers' wants and being conscious of safety needs.



3. ADD ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATIONS.

Some travelers might feel safer in alternative accommodations, which often have fewer public spaces and foot traffic than hotels. Our accommodation partners, like Expedia and

Booking.com, offer short-term rentals and extended stay options. If you haven't already, consider integrating their listings into your booking tools. WWStay can also provide additional options. Reach out to an American Express Global Business Travel (GBT) representative for more information about alternative accommodations.



4. LOWER YOUR RATES.

There are a few actions you can take to encourage your travelers to book the lowest possible rates so you can boost your savings when travel returns.

First: establish rate caps/targets to help your employees stay within budgets. Once they're in place, make sure your policy supports compliance to targets and then reach out to employees who book above the threshold. This could include a summary of available hotels within the city or it could be as simple as a policy reminder. Clients of our Global Business Consulting (GBC) team can utilize our rate-cap compliance dashboard to help.

Next: adjust your online booking tool (OBT) to allow for hotel bookings based on the lowest logical rate approach instead of limiting travelers to specific hotels that may or may not have listings and competitive pricing loaded.



5. ADD HOTEL RE-SHOPPING.

Rates tend to fluctuate, but savings shouldn't stop when the booking is made. Save more without lifting a finger through our proprietary re-shopping technology, Hotel Re-shop Expert™ (HRE), which can help you search and book cheaper hotels after you make reservations. There's no need to spend time digging around for lower rates. There are no setup or maintenance fees either. You only pay if you save.

How much do clients really save? Well, in 2021, HRE converted an average of 12% of hotel bookings, resulting in an average savings of \$77 per stay.¹ If you don't have HRE yet, click [here](#) to learn more or reach out to your GBT representative to add it to your hotel program.



6. OFFER WORKSPACES.

With many companies closing offices, travel managers are now challenged to resume business as usual. Cost-effective, alternate workspaces are often needed for essential meetings or employees who find it hard working from home. That's why we have a new workspace solution that provides individuals or small teams with the ability to reserve hotel space or alternate venues. Once you register for Workspaces [here](#), you'll receive a unique booking link so your employees can start searching and booking workspaces right away.



7. ADJUST YOUR POLICY.

Modify your policy to support your hotel program goals. Make sure it includes language on booking overnight stays through your corporate channels to meet your duty of care requirement. Is your OBT up to date with new policy changes? It should be. If you need help assessing your policy and communicating the right way to book, feel free to contact GBC.



8. COMMUNICATE TO EMPLOYEES.

Notifying employees of any changes to their overall travel experience is another good idea. That way they know what to expect on overnight trips if they haven't traveled for a while. If you haven't yet, send them a link to our [Travel Vitals™](#) page so they can find necessary information for their trips.



9. PREVENT OUT-OF-POLICY BOOKINGS.

Make sure you have content available from multiple sources to prevent out-of-policy bookings; this includes third-party content from Expedia and Booking.com. Use technology like Trip Recommender™ and Expert Auditor™ so when travelers book transportation, they also book a hotel with their reservation. Our Trip Recommender tool provides them with smart hotel suggestions after a flight has been booked without a hotel while Expert Auditor monitors transactions according to your parameters. Both help to prevent travelers from booking outside of your program, which is important from a duty of care perspective. To learn more about Expert Auditor, click [here](#).



10. SCHEDULE REGULAR CHECK-INS.

Monitor your hotel needs and patterns throughout the year and adjust your policy for rate fluctuations and trip frequency. Focus on mid-year adjustments that offer better options and cost-savings opportunities. Being nimble while travel returns will be key to maintaining a successful hotel program.

Small changes can create large results. Putting these suggestions into action will help you optimize your hotel program and maximize savings while fulfilling your duty of care requirements.

Need help?

Click [here](#) and discover Rest Assured Solutions.

¹GBT internal reporting of HRE data, YTD April 2021.