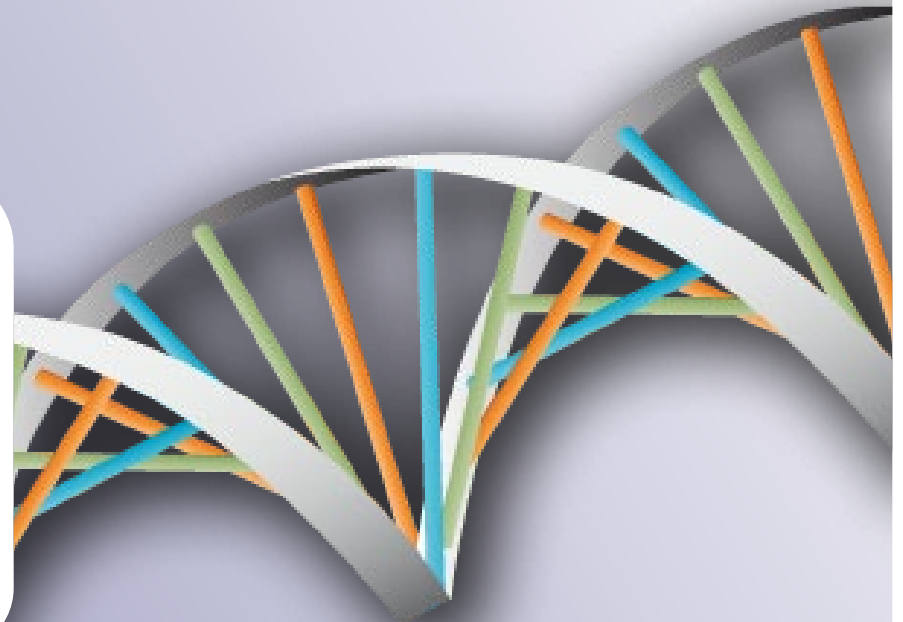


White Paper

Changing the DNA of Managed Travel

*Using Social and Mobile to Enhance
Productivity, Morale and the Bottom Line*

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Thanks to the growth of smart phones and social Web, today's workforce has developed new habits and expectations around interactive information sharing, mobility, interoperability, user-centered design and collaboration. These expectations are changing the way they see, and move through, the landscape of managed travel.

New standards are being set. New behaviors are being mapped. New combinations of technologies and of stakeholders are joining forces to work differently (and better). The strands of "personal" and "professional" are intertwining in unique and fascinating ways. These changing expectations are effectively leading to a veritable (r)evolution in the DNA of managed travel.

This white paper provides an overview of the opportunities and challenges for managed travel posed by the inexorable and irreversible rise of social Web (user generated content and social networking) and mobile technology. Secondly, it guides travel program stakeholders in leveraging these concepts to serve the evolving needs, constituents and consumers of corporate travel and meetings within the framework of a managed program.

The white paper argues that, properly deployed, social Web and mobile technology can help keep travelers informed and aware, offer newly personalized corporate travel experiences and feed vital information into the corporation's program management framework and processes (see Figure 1). The result is a virtuous circle of understanding, awareness and improvement, in which social Web and mobile technology serve the needs of both traveler and program while simultaneously enabling improvements in service, savings and strategy.

Figure 1. The evolving travel industry

The evolving travel industry The emerging habits, expectations and technologies in a changing industry represent significant opportunities for savvy program managers



INTRODUCTION

Cultural and technology forces have changed the landscape

Few white papers begin by proclaiming their planned obsolescence. But such is the nature of the fast-changing social Web and mobile technology juggernaut that it is highly likely that at least some of the applications and innovations we discuss here will have either evolved far beyond their current scope, or disappeared into a virtual graveyard by the time you read these pages.

What will not have changed, however, is the need for travel managers and other travel program stakeholders to:

- Understand the impact on managed travel of the social Web's "wisdom of the crowd," the proliferation of mobile apps and the increasing tendency of business travelers to blend personal and professional lifestyles
- Establish a position and/or policy on the role those elements will play in their programs
- Actively seek to exploit the confluence of technology, expectation and habit to achieve potentially "better than policy" results

We have identified five forces that join cultural-behavioral shifts and technological innovations to currently shape a new landscape for managed travel.

Social Discovery

Travelers are encountering brands, products and services via social channels and are looking for information via their (online and offline) social networks (see Figure 2). In March 2010, Facebook, the world's largest social-networking site, surpassed Google's search engine in weekly hits to become the most visited Web site in the U.S. for the first time, according to research firm Hitwise.

Peer Influence

Business associates, (current and former) colleagues and others whose expertise, insights and perspectives business travelers respect increasingly have more influence in shaping behavior and understanding than do "official" channels and corporate messaging.

Instant Access

Business travelers are on the go 24/7, and they expect information how they want it, where they want it and when they want it. Mobile devices are an essential part of their daily lives. Fifty percent of young corporate travelers now travel with a smart phone.

My Time is Me Time

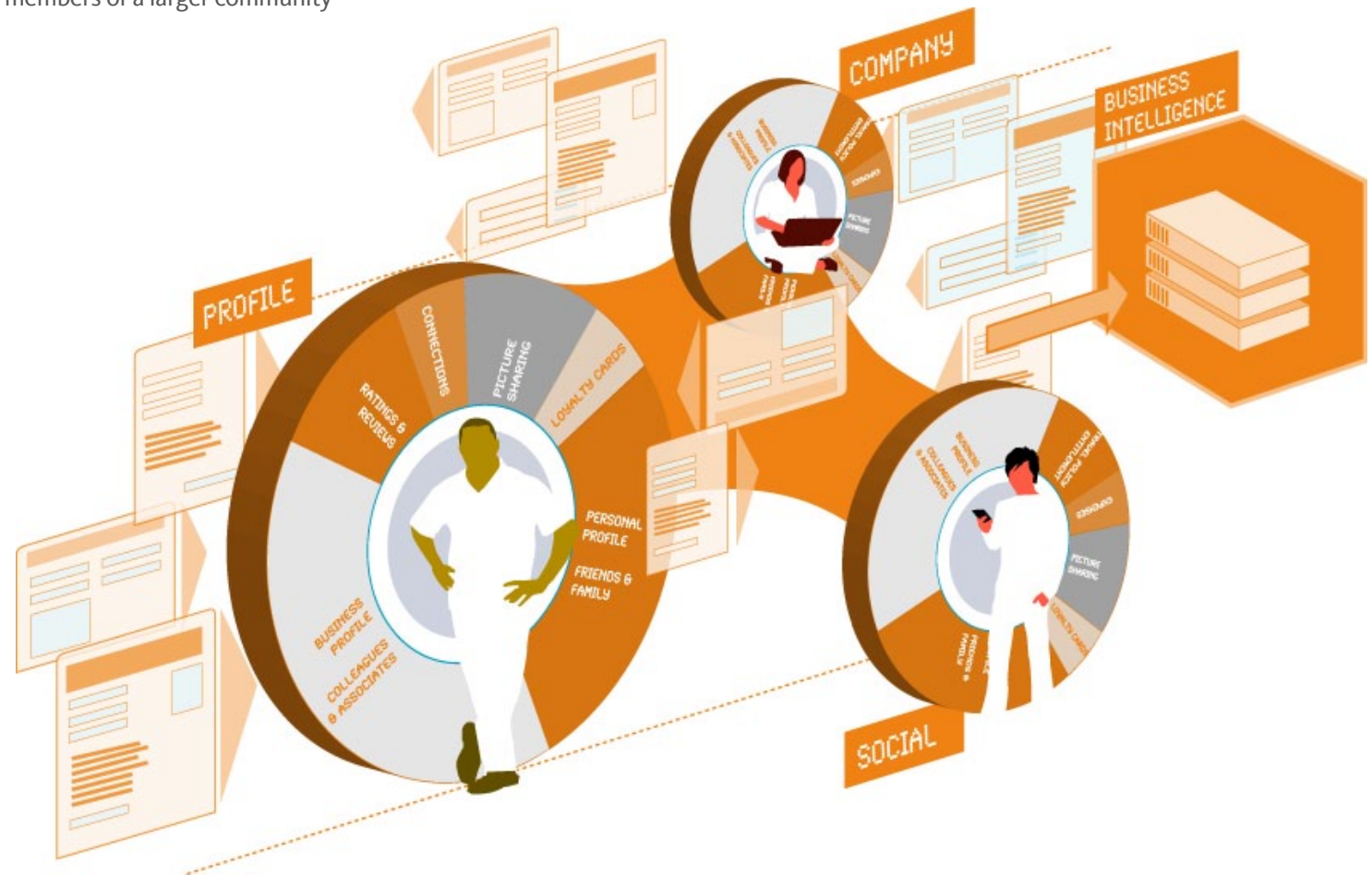
When a traveler is on the road, every interaction has to provide personal value, from dinner at a restaurant that appeals to fans of a certain cuisine to stays at a hotel with in-room entertainment that at least matches their home set-up.

Business is Personal

The business traveler's trip is no longer compartmentalized into nice, neat, separate blocks of "business" and "leisure" worlds.

Figure 2. Connecting with the social cloud

By drawing insight from the experiences of their peers, travelers are effectively becoming members of a larger community



WHERE DO CORPORATE PRIORITIES LIE?

Where, in this changing landscape, do strategic corporate objectives, as channeled through the travel program, sit? While they aren't static (and have certainly expanded in recent years to include a focus on, for example, corporate social responsibility), what we term "the Big Three" have tended to remain fairly consistent.

Enhancing Productivity

Minimizing wasted or down time, ensuring travel and travel-related processes are simple, streamlined and efficient

Traveler Safety, Satisfaction and Morale

Ensuring traveler wellbeing, complying with duty of care responsibilities, ensuring traveler satisfaction

Managing the Bottom Line

Containing total travel cost, capturing spend, maximizing program compliance, optimizing procurement negotiations

Much of the dialogue around the forces and technologies that are shaping the current and future landscape of travel has tended to position them as sources of tension or pressure for the managed travel program and for the Big Three strategic corporate objectives.

We would argue, however, that such an approach is far too negative, and that these trends represent instead an important opportunity for corporations and travel program stakeholders, including travelers, to drive value in new and exciting ways, affecting aspects of consumption, fiscal and social responsibility and program execution.

For travelers, mobile technology and social Web can allow them to:

- Choose channels those that are best suited to their preferred communication styles
- Seamlessly integrate personal and professional lives through the ability to plan, network, and interact with information and other travelers
- Receive services as the travel experience unfolds over time, so they can interact, connect and communicate before, during and after the trip
- Stay in touch and informed in times of need
- Gain productivity

From the corporate perspective, mobile technology and social Web can allow companies to:

- Support responsible travel
- Gain important feedback on program and policy
- Encourage compliant – or better than policy – behavior
- Gain from interplay between individual traveler behavior and overall program results

The bottom line: When program objectives and supporting technologies reflect a combination of company and traveler needs, satisfied travelers will do everything they can to contribute to the program's success. According to a recent trend report by Business Traveler Magazine and Orbitz for Business, 70 percent of surveyed travelers felt personally obligated to save their company money when they travel.¹ Traveler self-motivation already exists; now the tools are in place to foster it into greater action.

¹ Orbitz for Business/*Business Traveler Magazine* Quarterly Trend Report, July 2010.

BURGEONING GROWTH OF MOBILE APPS AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CONSUMER SECTOR

In much the same way that the boundaries between personal and professional are collapsing on the individual level, the boundaries between “consumer” and “corporate” are collapsing in the mobile and social Web arena. Business travelers are using mobile apps and social Web that were never designed for use in a managed travel program and making them work to improve their travel experience.

Travel managers who believe that they can ignore the encroachment of consumer applications do so at their peril (see Figure 3). The “Millennials” (e.g., the generation born between 1977 and 1998) are not a force of the future—they are in the workforce now and are bringing their digital habits and expectations with them.



Figure 3. Facebook is the third-largest “country” in the world

 1. China 1,336,450,000	 6. Brazil 192,651,000
 2. India 1,178,436,000	 7. Pakistan 169,010,500
 3. Facebook 500,000,000	 8. Bangladesh 162,221,000
 4. United States 308,898,000	 9. Nigeria 154,729,000
 5. Indonesia 231,369,500	 10. Russia 141,927,297

Source: Mashable

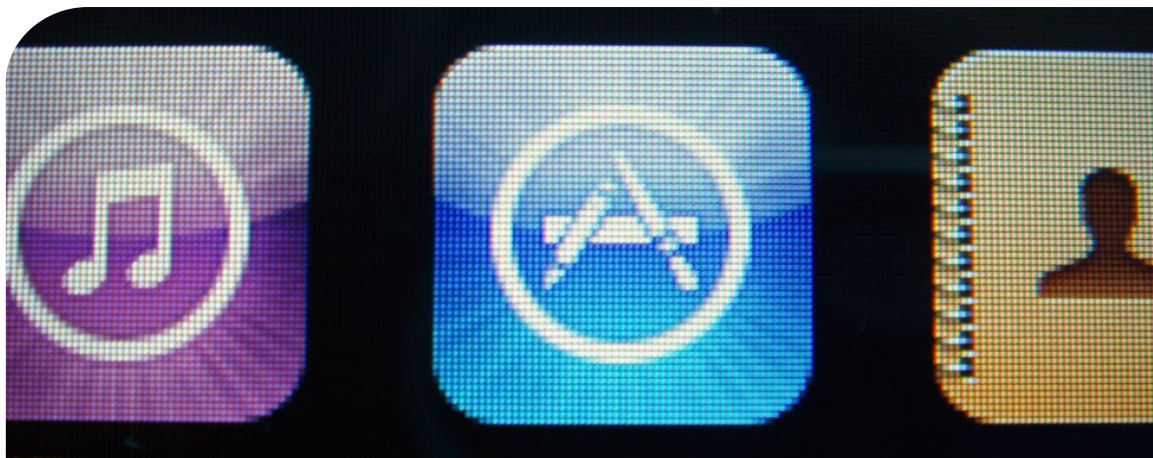
In some areas of the world, especially in developing markets and in the Asia-Pacific region, desktop browsing has been eclipsed, and Internet users surf primarily on their mobile devices. According to the data analytics company eMarketer, there will be more mobile Internet users in China than the entire population of the U.S. (roughly 310 million) by the end of 2010. The company also forecasts that the number of mobile Internet users in China will grow fast to reach a staggering 957 million, and that the country will count approximately 1.3 billion mobile subscribers by 2014.²

² eMarketer, *BRIC Mobile: Emerging Markets Mature*, February 2010.

BURGEONING GROWTH OF MOBILE APPS AND SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CONSUMER SECTOR

By early 2010 mobile penetration in Singapore had passed 140 percent, with 3G customers comprising some 47 percent of the total mobile subscriber base.³ Current mobile penetration in the U.S. stands at 91 percent of the population.⁴ In the United Arab Emirates, mobile penetration has reached 200 percent – meaning an average of two mobile devices for every person in the country.⁵

AdMob, one of the world's largest mobile advertising networks, noted in February 2010 that smartphones accounted for 48 percent of their worldwide traffic, up 13 percentage points year over year, fueled by heavy application usage on iPhone and Android devices. The company noted that while the overall traffic from feature phones is growing, traffic from smartphones and mobile Internet devices is growing faster.⁶



From the college dorm to the cubicle Millennials are moving into the work force... and they're bringing their habits and preferences with them.

- 97% own a computer
- 94% own a mobile phone
- 76% use Instant Messaging (IM)
- 15% of IM users are logged on 24 hours a day/7 days a week
- 34% use websites as their primary source of news
- 28% own a blog and 44% read blogs
- 49% download music using peer-to-peer file sharing
- 75% have a Facebook account
- 60% own some type of portable music and/or video device such as an iPod

Source: *Connecting to the Net.Generation: What Higher Education Professionals Need to Know About Today's Students*, Reynol Junco and Jeanna Mastrodicasa (2009)

³ Paul Budde Communication Pty Ltd, "Singapore: Key Statistics, Telecom Market and Regulatory Overviews," March 2010.

⁴ CTIA, Semi-annual Wireless Industry Survey, March 2010.

⁵ UAE Telecommunication Regulatory Authority, December 2009.

⁶ AdMob, "February 2010 Mobile Metrics Report," February 2010.

THE CHANGING TRAVELER EXPERIENCE

The business traveler increasingly brings to the table certain behaviors and expectations formed as a result of his “alter ego” leisure traveler. His actions in that sphere can be broken into six discrete phases (see Figure 4). Let’s take as an example a business traveler who’s about to take a personal trip and see how those phases unfold.

Figure 4. The travel cycle, consumer edition



THE CHANGING TRAVELER EXPERIENCE

For the **Inspire Phase**, he goes to TripAdvisor to read reviews and see pictures others have posted about a few destinations that have recently caught his eye. He might use email promotions he's signed up for previously to spark ideas for the trip.

In the **Shopping Phase**, he often goes to an online travel agency (OTA) or meta search site to compare his options. He is used to being able to search on many different filters such as price, schedule or airline—all while watching sports highlights on streaming video after work.

As he enters the **Booking Phase**, he might book from the OTA site if he feels it is a good value or package. Or he may go to the supplier site(s) to book his vacation options directly if he thinks he will get a better price or service.

In the **Pre-Travel Phase**, he will go to the airline site to find information about his flight and sign up for pre-trip notifications via his mobile phone. He'll look for availability of in-flight entertainment options and other on-board services such as wi-fi. He might check to understand the baggage fees and guidelines that are associated with his trip. The same applies for his hotel booking.

During the **Travel Phase** or day of travel, he'll print his boarding pass ahead of time – or use the barcode of the paperless pass on his smartphone to check in and transit security. He expects the airline to text him with updates on departure or gate changes and notify him of any security wait times. He would like the airline site to notify his friends and family if there are any changes in his schedule. When he arrives at the hotel he expects them to recognize him and offer services that he has indicated within his profile. He will update his status on any number of social networks along the way.

For the **Post-Travel Phase**, he will log onto the supplier sites to confirm that his frequent flyer and hotel loyalty information has been updated. He might check for a response to his customer service query. He'll blog or tweet or access his preferred social network to post photos and share his experience with others.



What happens—what should happen—when the traveler brings those behaviors and expectations to the trips he makes within his company's travel program?

MOBILE INNOVATION TRENDS THAT ARE IMPACTING BUSINESS TRAVELERS TODAY

The rapid pace of innovation means that some elements of the “ideal” are in fact current practice, and cut across all the phases of the traveler’s experience (see Figure 5). Rapid advances in geotagging and GPS-empowered applications, online mapping services, contextual and location-based search and rich mobile applications are finally beginning to provide powerful, relevant services and content to travelers during their travel and at destination.

Some managed travel programs are already making good use of these applications, especially in the area of mobile itinerary sharing and traveler security and safety.

Some of the hottest areas where mobile is making deep inroads into the travel experience include:

Figure 5. The ideal traveler experience

Commitment through choice	Fitting into their lives	Experience unfolds over time
Multi-modal Self-Paced Personalized	Personal Professional Rich UGC Relevant Contextual	Pervasive Ubiquitous Ongoing Location-based

Mobile itinerary management

The itinerary is often the epicenter of the traveler’s world. They want to have it on their calendar, build additional plans around their travel, share their itinerary with personal and professional colleagues, get up-to-the-minute information on events that affect their travel, such as cancellations or delays, gate changes and arrival information; and access destination information and risk scenarios tailored to their specific itinerary. Services like Triplt offer a mobile, Web-based interactive itinerary service that helps travelers stay connected, organized and informed.

Security and safety on the road

Companies like ConTgo and BlueCRM offer travel and security teams the opportunity to move beyond PNR data, which tells them only where a traveler is supposed to be, to the precise identification of that traveler’s location via a GPS-enabled mobile device and the ability to initiate direct (and bi-directional) communication with that traveler. Complementing corporate security and duty-of-care initiatives by giving the traveler the ability to interact with travel-related support resources while en route, these technologies empower and reassure the traveler, and reflect the corporation’s investment in their employees’ well-being (see Figure 6).

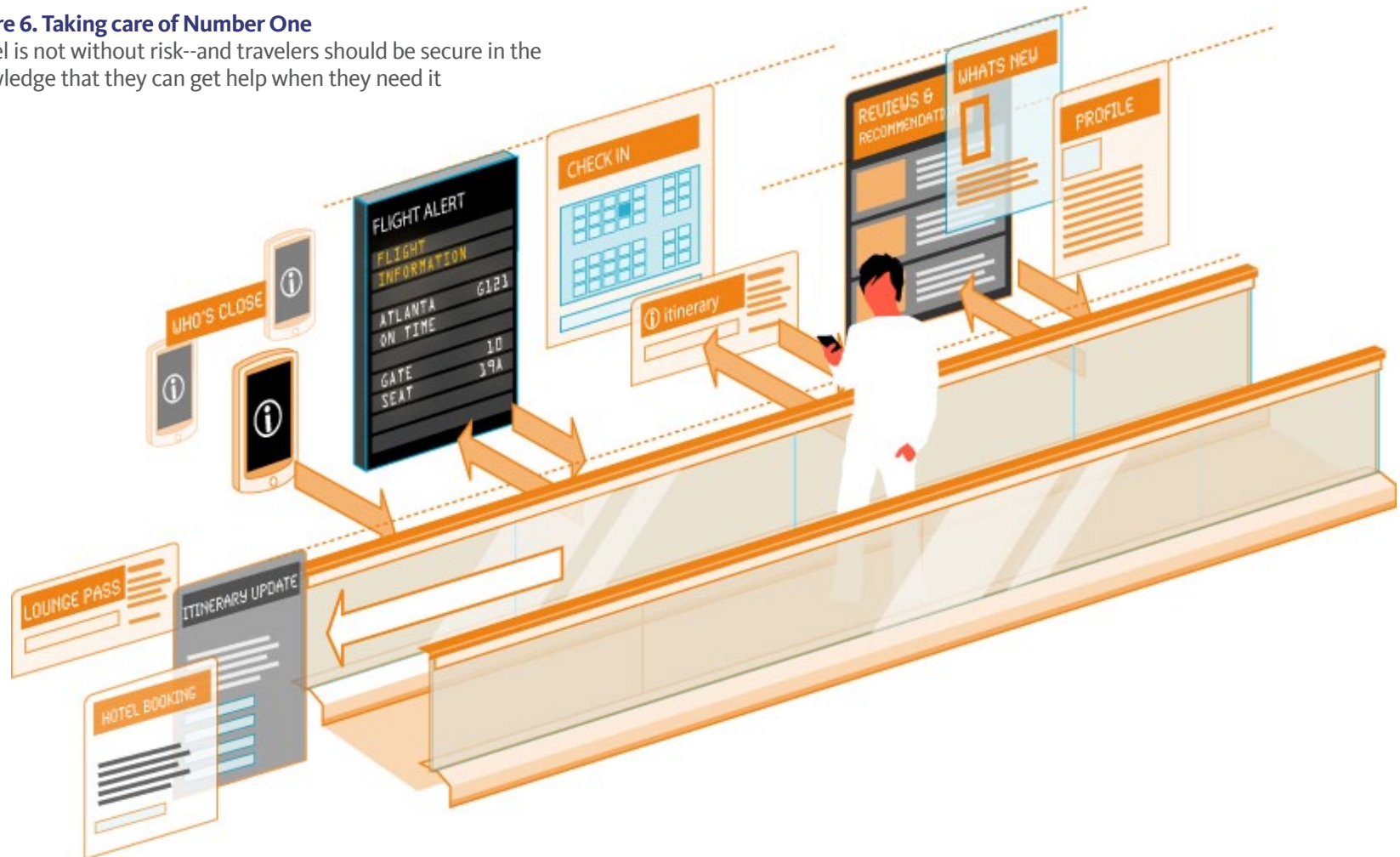
Mobile commerce

Travelers consume many different goods and services while they’re on the road—and sourcing those elements takes valuable time and energy. Smart suppliers are using mobile apps to reach out to travelers at the vital moment, maximizing the chances that their goods or services will be consumed. Examples range from Starbucks recognizing that a mobile user has entered the Washington Dulles airport and alerting the user to a special offer (free bagel, anyone?) at the café on their concourse, to airlines selling lounge access via text message if a traveler’s flight is delayed, or offering the possibility to upgrade while in transit.

MOBILE INNOVATION TRENDS THAT ARE IMPACTING BUSINESS TRAVELERS TODAY

Figure 6. Taking care of Number One

Travel is not without risk--and travelers should be secure in the knowledge that they can get help when they need it



MOBILE INNOVATION TRENDS THAT ARE IMPACTING BUSINESS TRAVELERS TODAY

Automating and expediting the travel process

The paperless e-boarding pass, now adopted by several major U.S. airlines including Continental, American Airlines and Delta, has been quick to take off in the three years it's been operational domestically. Customers who choose the option have their bar-coded boarding passes from the airline e-mailed to their smartphones and proceed directly to security, where screeners scan the phone to match the ID – saving travelers the necessity of printing their boarding pass and then rummaging in their bags trying to find it.



In late 2009, Hilton debuted a mobile app that allow travelers to check in remotely up to 48 hours in advance; now Starwood is testing a keycard using radio frequency identification, or RFID, technology. The hotel has distributed RFID keycards to some loyalty program members, who receive text messages on the day of arrival that disclose the room number. Guests can go directly to the room and tap their assigned card through the sensor on the doorknob to unlock the door.

Zipcar, a car-share service with locations in more than 50 cities in the U.S. and U.K., has an app which turns smartphones into car keys: The car recognizes the approach of the phone and will automatically unlock as the user arrives.

Social apps with road warrior relevance

Leading mobile social networks Foursquare and Gowalla are excellent examples of the fusion of “traditional” attributes of social Web—user-generated information, reviews, ratings and dialogue—with GPS functionality and location-based information.

Both applications allow users to check-in to locations that they visit using their mobile device. Check-ins can be pushed via notifications to iPhones or androids, and by linking accounts, to Twitter and Facebook. Upon checking-in, users may earn points or badges, or receive special offers from the location in question (or other suppliers) relevant to their actual behavior and location.

Users can add tips to venues that other users can read, which serve as suggestions for great things to do, see or eat at the location.

Foursquare passed its 40th million check-in in May 2010; the company says that check-in numbers are now doubling every two months. IHG recently announced they would award additional loyalty points via an aggregator called TopGuest to Priority Club Rewards members who check in through major location-based networks such as Foursquare, Gowalla, BrightKite and Loopt.

How many check-ins are coming from your travelers?
You might be surprised.

MOBILE INNOVATION TRENDS THAT ARE IMPACTING BUSINESS TRAVELERS TODAY

A new toolkit for travelers

Are you having trouble keeping track of all of the apps, tools and communities your travelers might be using in their digital travel toolkit? Here's a quick logo primer.

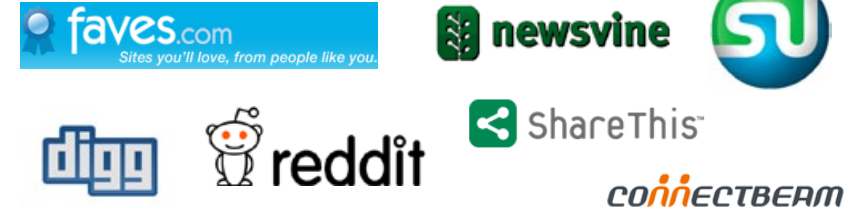
Social Networking



Travel: Location, Destination, Rating



Social Bookmarks



Blogs and Wikis



RSS



Geo-Social Gaming



CHANGING MIND(SET): THE SHIFT FROM CONTROLLING TO INFLUENCING

Travel programs have generally been run on a top-down model—travelers were told what to do and how to do it, end of story. But a shift in mind-set from controlling to influencing is key to the successful exploitation of the cultural forces and technological advances that are reshaping the managed travel landscape.

Program managers will need to expand their conversations with their travel management company, other suppliers and providers and perhaps most crucially with their own travelers. With the TMC, travel managers need to ask how the agency can support the program and its travelers in a new media/app environment. With other product and service providers, who are ceaselessly leveraging new opportunities to target their own end-users (i.e., the corporation's travelers) with information and offers, travel managers need to explore ways to make that two-way communication a three-way communication, bringing opportunities into the scope of the program. With travelers, travel managers need to take advantage of the wisdom of the crowd to evolve the program and explore options for influencing good—or better than good—behavior.

Integrating social media and mobile into your managed program

We have seen that social media practices and tools are already playing a de facto part in corporate travelers' lives. But more important to travel managers is the fact that those social media practices and tools can be used to achieve or surpass travel program goals and objectives by enhancing the traditional corporate travel experience pre-trip, on-trip and post-trip.

The transparency implicit in a social media environment, where information is shared openly, breeds accountability throughout the traveler and stakeholder population and (by extension) the organization. Travel managers attuned to the pulse of that population will find themselves in a position to act and react quickly and knowledgeably to opportunities and issues. In so doing, they will reinforce traveler trust in the program and the company.

How can the use of social media practices and tools help companies achieve travel program goals and objectives?

Incorporating the wisdom of the crowd for a comprehensive, actionable picture of program performance

- User generated content (UGC) can complement more traditional data sources. Does your MIS tell you you're not meeting market share targets with a preferred supplier? UGC might tell you why.
- Social networks foster a sense of investment in the travel process by allowing travelers to contribute to the experience in a way that can have a positive impact on their peers.

Achieving "better than policy" performance by understanding and engaging travelers

- Traveler-level intelligence that identifies individual consumption patterns can give companies and travelers the information necessary to measure performance against objectives or recognize and reward good behavior.
- Social Web is an excellent arena for fostering healthy competition among peers and can become the backdrop for incentive programs that promote behavior changes.

What is the result of an intelligent and carefully considered deployment of social Web within a managed program? A broader-based program constituency in which each audience leverages expertise and input to realize alignment between strategic goals, optimized program management and individual preference.

CHANGING MIND(SET): THE SHIFT FROM *CONTROLLING* TO *INFLUENCING*

How can the use of a mobile platform help companies achieve travel program goals and objectives?

Empowering the mobile traveler

- A well-informed traveler is an empowered traveler. From flight alerts to destination information, companies and suppliers can drive relevant information to the traveler en route at the moment they need it most.
- Although online booking is far from perfect on current mobile devices, self-service, or reduced-touch service, is still a viable option. This improves process efficiency and helps drive down travel transaction costs.
- Mobile platforms give the traveler contextual awareness: What is happening and who is near me where I am right now?

**Optimizing and validating travel and travel-related planning and purchasing**

- Program management can focus on getting information to travelers at the moment they need to influence a purchase, thereby structuring or optimizing impulse buys within policy (see Figure 7).
- Facilitating planning, purchasing and expense management on mobile devices brings the total cost of trip far closer to complete transparency.
- Eliminates tickets/documentation

Supporting duty of care initiatives

- Travel is not without risk—and travelers should be secure in the knowledge that they can get help when they need it. From major crisis to simple disruption, the traveler is connected to their company and their travel team.

What is the result of a mobile strategy that merges program requirements with user-friendly technology? Empowered, connected travelers free to create travel experiences that fit their individual preferences and align with travel program objectives.

Figure 7. Streamlined purchasing

Travelers consume many different goods and services while they're on the road



What can your managed travel program gain from...

- **Social Web?**
 - *Valuable intelligence* – Travelers are excellent eyes and ears for maintaining the quality of a travel program and providing useful advice, such as the best way to transfer from an airport to downtown.
 - *Authenticity* – Peer reviews of travel suppliers carry much more conviction than official information from the supplier or even the travel manager.
 - *Reinforced sourcing* – User-generated content is also extremely useful for sharing with preferred suppliers, and not only to improve customer relations. It could ultimately be used in negotiations.
 - *Research pool* – Travel managers could also use a network to float ideas among travelers. By showing that they have canvassed opinion in advance, networking can win buy-in.
- **Mobile?**
 - *Travelers equipped for life on the road* – Mobile apps can help travelers stay connected, organized and informed.
 - *Influence* – Take advantage of knowing where your travelers are to influence purchasing behavior at the necessary moment.
 - *Reassured travelers* – The travel team is just a text away when a crisis (or even a major inconvenience) strikes.
 - *Green cred* – Why print documents when they can be viewed and used on mobile devices?

Let the games begin

Scorecards and gaming systems can encourage travelers to “compete” against policy and/or their peers to earn credits or bonus points. Motivated travelers, properly incentivized, won’t just meet travel management goals and objectives—they will exceed them. Win-win...

Here are some behaviors to consider tracking and rewarding:

- Reading the policy guidelines
- Booking preferred suppliers
- Finding cheaper fares/room rates
- Never changing a ticket
- Not checking their bag for a short trip
- Using off-airport parking
- Reducing total cost of trip after using trip modeling
- Taking a free shuttle or public transportation to the hotel
- Asking for a room on the 4th floor next to an exit door
- Booking a hotel with free Wi-Fi
- Using the gym while on the road
- Rating hotels/car rental companies on the company social network
- Completing expense reports 48 hours after the trip

SUPPORTING PLAYERS: WHAT ROLE SHOULD YOUR TMC PLAY?

The increased blending of personal and professional networks by corporate travelers, and the ubiquity of advanced, personalized technology, offer an opportunity to redefine the relationship between the corporation, the traveler and the travel management company.

Travelers will effectively become members of a larger community, drawing insight from the experiences of their peers while the corporation has a platform to interact with their community of travelers and more importantly, listen and watch first-hand what travelers have to say about the program, suppliers and services offered—or needed.

In connecting the company, the traveler community and the individual traveler, the TMC can generate a new set of data points that can be used for intelligence and insight into a corporation's spend, procurement opportunities and strategic objectives.



SUPPORTING PLAYERS: WHAT ROLE SHOULD YOUR TMC PLAY?

“Future perfect”

How might TMCs and program management use mobile apps and social Web to touch the traveler cycle AND support travel program objectives in the future?

Inspire

- Feature business- and destination-rich content
- Suggest side trips to see business colleagues who will be nearby

Shop

- Show in-policy flight/hotel/dining options by need state (closest to convention center, best gym, best bar for client meetings, etc.)
- Incorporate niche, experiential content from curated peer experts and make it mobile-enabled
- Offer host of predictive and user-generated information (i.e., on-time ratings, rankings, peer reviews) and price assurance to validate purchasing decisions
- Enable suppliers to promote their brand, products and services to a “captive audience” to reinforce preferred programs and validate good procurement decisions

Book

- Send increasing fare alerts for key city pairs
- Offer mobile-enabled booking and changes

Pre-Travel

- Support sharing of travel plans and user-generated content with colleagues, assistants, family and friends.
- Provide subscription opportunities for helpful trip destination reminders, tips from peers, weather alerts, itinerary sharing with family, selected internal and external business associates
- Facilitate group pre-event planning and discussion and polling features

Travel

- Update itinerary sharing, real-time service monitoring and response
- Facilitate introductions to other business people in area who have similar fields of interests
- Suggest last-minute opportunities for local events/culture
- Influence point-of-purchase decisions, savings opportunities
- Enable traveler to “like” and “favorite” and “leave tips” at specific points throughout trip
- Facilitate location- or itinerary-based behavioral messaging (“Welcome to Atlanta. Take the Marta from the airport to the office – not a taxi!”)
- Connect travel team with traveler in case of emergency or crisis (i.e., set up #tags for disruption event alerts and other urgent information sharing)
- Enable traveler to send a non-urgent “locate me” message for concierge services, or an emergency SOS message for immediate assistance.
- Offer recovery travel options in the event of flight delays or cancellations, that might range from a new flight or hotel room to a discounted lounge pass to help them stay productive during a delay
- Auto-capture receipts and build out expense report through mobile device

Post-Travel

- Enable sharing of ratings/review for entire trip experience with peers as well as family/friends
- Opt-in for future deals on places traveler stayed
- Support instant annotation and submission of expense report

LOYALTY THROUGHOUT

- **Harvest traveler-generated content (such as ratings, trip purpose, etc.) to provide strategic insight and actionable information to program management**
- **Capture “traveler DNA” (traveler-level intelligence that identifies individual consumption patterns) to measure performance against objectives or recognize and reward good behavior**

HOW CAN TRAVEL MANAGERS USE SOCIAL WEB TO FEEL THE PULSE OF THEIR TRAVEL PROGRAM?


It may be easier than you think to begin leveraging social Web, including internal social enterprise tools and external social networks, to gather feedback and encourage crowdsourcing. We recommend creating multiple avenues of communication (don't forget Facebook and LinkedIn). But what comes next?

- 1. Find out where your organization's social forum is (or could be)**
 - Do you have an existing social enterprise tool or a social functionality in existing corporate tools?
 - Do you have an intranet site that offers a content RSS feed?
- 2. Exploit existing opportunities or create new ones**
 - As an entry step, consider creating a content mashup site for travelers that brings important and relevant information from a variety of sources to their fingertips
- 3. Encourage or incentivize participation and contribute regularly**
 - Tweet important aspects of your travel program
 - Start travel program-related conversations
- 4. Be receptive to open discussion and feedback**
 - Engage your community on topics that are important to your strategy
 - Build a relationship with your travelers by communicating openly and bi-directionally with them
- 5. Update electronic communication policy & employee confidentiality agreements**
- 6. Set up an informal "watch station"**
 - Make a list of sources and searches you perform regularly
 - Check Twitter keywords, search Facebook for real-time field info on emerging trends
 - Uncover the tools that travelers are already using to solve their problems or maximize their efficiency on the road



HOW CAN TRAVEL MANAGERS USE MOBILE TO SUPPORT THEIR PROGRAM OBJECTIVES?

Take full advantage of pre-existing technologies and habits of your program constituents to start getting actively involved in this area. Employees are using mobile applications for travel purposes today, whether the travel department likes it or not. The need is particularly urgent if your company has a youthful workforce which is increasingly accustomed to using technology to manage itself.

- Understand your company's overall mobile objectives and capabilities. Talk to your IT department and learn which mobile devices are used within the organization.
 - Become your travelers' advocate with the IT department. Mobile phones have moved beyond their initial functions as voice/e-mail tools and are now multi-faceted travel tools.
 - Help your organization understand what new costs may be on the horizon—such as bigger enterprise data plans or “app allowances” that permit travelers to customize their mobile devices to their travel lifestyles by reimbursing them for certain tools or services. Some of these costs could be offset by working creatively with suppliers to establish advertising programs within the mobile sphere.
 - Ask and observe your leading-edge traveling population. Find out how they are using their mobile devices to enable their corporate travel experience—they are the best indicator as to what the situation might look like in a few years.
- 
- Let the market mature a bit—a flock of new innovators and a relatively young area of the business means that the true winners are now just emerging.
 - Try to select applications that are platform-independent, especially if your travelers use, for example, a combination of iPhones, iPad, Kindle, BlackBerries and Android-capable devices.
 - Proceed with caution, especially when rolling out the strategy multinationally. Although it makes sense to have a global mobile strategy, the differing technologies and cultural attitudes mean there will have to be considerable variations in each market.
 - Work closely with your TMC, both for advice and to put the necessary processes in place.
 - Engage traditional and non-traditional suppliers in a dialogue to see how their mobile applications can be brought within the scope of your program.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO SOCIAL WEB AND MOBILE POSE FOR THE MANAGED TRAVEL PROGRAM?

While social Web and mobile have the potential to dramatically enrich the managed travel program, they are not without potential complications. But it is worth noting by way of context that the risks we discuss below are similar to the risks presented by enterprise e-mail many years ago—and that most of them can be mitigated by updating electronic communications policies.

The loss of control implicit in adopting an influencer stance can be intimidating; and social Web presents particular challenges that need to be confronted. Travel managers will often voice concerns that opening the floodgates will result in a negative impact on productivity, a spate of “company bashing,” highly public complaints about various aspects of the program or simply an overwhelming quantity of commentary to keep up with.

These fears should not be minimized; travel managers also need to be realistic and cool-headed.

Employers need to be upfront with employees that they have no right to privacy with respect to social networking, and that they reserve the right to monitor employee use of social media regardless of location (i.e., at work on a company computer or on personal time with a home computer). Employees should also be made aware that company policies on anti-harassment, ethics and company loyalty extend to all forms of communication (including social media) both inside and outside the workplace. In other words, people need to remember that bashing one’s organization/boss/co-workers online can lead to consequences at work.

That said, social networking has to be seen to be self-regulated, otherwise it quickly loses credibility among users if they perceive interference from on high.

Mobile presents its own series of challenges:

- *No strategic vision* – At present, almost all mobile travel applications are targeting the end user, i.e., the traveler. As yet there is no application which comes anywhere near addressing the entire cycle of the travel process.
- *Geographical limitations* – To date few travel-based applications have achieved a global reach. There are many regional differences, not only in the applications themselves but in the behavior of users.
- *The battle of managed travel programs vs. unmanaged suppliers* – Travel managers will need to find applications which push information about preferred suppliers to the traveler on arrival rather than allowing them to make totally unguided decisions. Travel managers will therefore need to source applications to which they can apply policy filters and workflow processes. They will also need to ensure mobile transactions can be synchronized with those made through travel portal and offline channels.

Despite these risks, travel managers need to understand that it is virtually impossible to keep travelers from discovering and using the most convenient and helpful travel mobility tools. If your program does not acknowledge certain tools as valuable and take steps to enable them, you risk either being completely out of touch with what your travelers are doing, or—if you restrict the tools they can access—putting them at a disadvantage against “civilian” travelers.

Not engaging with social Web and mobile to at least some degree is, therefore, not an option for most forward-thinking travel programs. But that engagement needs a clear understanding of the hurdles the program might face.

CONCLUSION

Properly deployed, social Web and mobile technology can help keep travelers informed and aware, offer newly personalized corporate travel experiences and feed vital information into the corporation's program management framework and processes. The result is a virtuous circle of understanding, awareness and improvement: Satisfied and engaged travelers will be more inclined to support program objectives, while program managers can track and target areas for amelioration if necessary. And the march of managed travel evolution moves forward.

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About BCD Travel and BCD Holdings N.V.

BCD Travel, the world's third-largest travel management company, is owned by BCD Holdings N.V. A Dutch family-owned company founded in 1975 by John Fentener van Vlissingen, BCD Holdings is a market leader in the travel industry. The BCD Holdings companies are BCD Travel (global corporate travel management), Park 'N Fly (off-airport parking), TRX (travel transaction processing and data integration), Airtrade (consolidating and online travel), VakantieXperts (leisure), Vayama (online travel USA) and Parkmobile International (mobile parking and traffic applications). BCD Holdings employs approximately 13,000 people and operates in more than 90 countries with total sales, including franchising, of U.S.\$ 14.8 billion. For more information, visit www.bcd-nv.com.

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