

5 things you always wanted to know about your company's travel spend

By Oz Desai

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Is your company still relying on Excel worksheets or - dare we say it - using pen and paper to calculate travel expenses? If so, you're not alone. According to Certify, a US-based travel and expense company, 49% of companies today are still using manual systems for their expense reporting.



Witthaya Prasongsin via [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

This is a scary thought considering the fact that business travel forms a big part of a typical company's budget and that business travel spending worldwide is even expected to reach \$1.7tn (R25tn) by 2022.

Reporting is an important tool to help your company identify areas where efficiencies can be made and costs can be cut. If you work with a travel management company (TMC) or other travel partners to book your travel, the easiest way to gain a clear overview of your spending is to ask for a few key reports per month. That way, you can summarise the most useful data and won't be overwhelmed by figures.

Below are five questions most travel bookers have always wanted ask, and which could easily be answered by requesting the right report from your TMC.

1. How much are your travellers spending?

A high-level overview report will give you a clear overview of how much your company is spending on travel as compared to previous years.

Overviews should show information such as your top airline, top traveller, average hotel and air ticket spends, as well as how much the company has spent overall in the last month or year.

2. Which are the top 5 airlines your employees use?

By identifying which airlines you are spending the most on, you can spot areas where your company could make changes to its travel policy. It will also highlight where you could negotiate improved corporate rates with your suppliers or switch to

better value airlines.

To get even more value from your travel spend you could also join any loyalty schemes offered by your top suppliers. This will give travellers access to freebies and upgrades that will enhance their travel experience.

3. Which employees spend the most on travel?

Comparing your top travellers by spend and number of tickets will help you to spot which of your travellers are travelling the most, how many tickets they're booking and how much they're spending.

A report on your top 10 travellers by air could help you to identify anyone travelling too much or not adhering to your travel policy. You might want to look at information such as if your top travellers are from the same department or what fare class they are booking in order to identify areas where savings could be made.

4. What percentage of bookings are made online?

If your travel bookers or travellers use an online booking tool then it's important to compare the percentage of bookings made online versus offline, as online bookings generally have lower transaction fees.

These numbers can be further broken down by air, hotel, car and rail bookings, allowing you to identify potential savings opportunities by moving to online bookings. Encouraging or incentivising your staff to make more online bookings will improve your overall online adoption rate, too.

5. What are your company's most booked flight/city pairs?

Knowing your most booked flight/city pairs allows you to easily see which routes are the most popular with your employees. Evaluating the number of business trips taken to each region will enable you to plan ahead and perhaps save money by consolidating your business travel, thereby reducing the number of journeys required.

Asking these kinds of questions is important, as the answers will help inform your travel programme. However, it's also important to be able to gather this information in a simple, easy-to-use and efficient manner.

ABOUT OZ DESAI

With a proven track record in business management and finance, Oz Desai heads up Flight Centre Travel Group's dynamic Corporate Traveller brand in South Africa. Having worked in a retail travel, management and finance environment within the Flight Centre group, Desai's first-hand experience brings great depth to the role of positioning Corporate Traveller as the preferred provider of travel solutions to corporate South Africa.

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