New Technologies:

Travel Managers’ “allies”

Today, new tools are increasingly common in travel management. Sometimes viewed as a remedy by travelers and travel managers alike, we’re asking to which end they can actually be useful. When can they be considered “allies” for travel organizers? How can processes be simplified, averting unnecessary complications?
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Who is Who Travel managers interviewed

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Foreword

The world of business travel is constantly evolving. New products and services are launched by providers from the supply chain — especially airlines, hotels and railways — with a significant impact on commercial practices, as well as on logistical and organizational aspects. The destinations once used as a benchmark by companies operating in Italy are now changing as a consequence of the increasing security issues, the cyclical trends and the instabilities of the economical and geopolitical map.

Habits are changing and so is the way we travel; the passion for travel is now widely shared — often transforming employees on a business trip into expert and demanding travelers — and the hyper-connected world we live in means we’re always connected to the internet and able to work through our mobile devices. On one hand, technologies present new opportunities, new tools and new functionalities that open up increasing possibilities for travelers and travel organizers. On the other hand, they need careful and mindful management.

It is not by accident that a recurring hot topic is the management of new technologies for travel. Companies are indeed looking forward to new prospects opening up in the fields of data analysis, communication with travelers and so on, but at the same time they are asking us for guidance with the many possibilities, in order to efficiently integrate the different tools into the company workflow.

This is why we decided to dedicate a series of in-depth studies to these themes - extensively discussed during several educational focus groups held by CWT in 2015 — and to publish the experiences and points of view of specialists and corporate travel managers, along with case histories and CWT data.

The present CWT White Paper aims to help travel, purchase, IT and HR managers optimize travel management through the adoption of the newest technological tools. First, we are going to focus on the different steps of technological choice and consequent integration, often neglected or not properly surveyed. Second, we move to the most useful tools for travel managers, with a focus on reporting activities, business intelligence and communication with travelers. Having access to data is critical to the decision-making process. Similarly, motivating employees with the right messages is prerequisite to successful business travel management.

Sharing too is a key factor for the successful choice and integration of technological tools: within the company (HR, IT, purchase, administration and accounting, travel management, etc.), with travelers, and with suppliers and partners (such as TMCs) responsible for the tools’ effectiveness. This White Paper and related subsequent ones — which will also be dedicated to technology — are intended to encourage the sharing of experiences and open a debate among the professionals involved. Feel free to send us your feedback and questions: we treasure every contribution to the discussion.

Enjoy your reading, and keep up the good work!

Loretta Bartolucci

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The availability of new tools - developed by TMCs, online booking systems such as GDS (Global Distribution Systems), or other experts - is becoming a steady support to travel processes. Tools can be seen as the remedy for all evils, able to streamline processes and reduce expenditure. However, reality is far more complex and many companies often find themselves with a plethora of tools bought over the years, some of which are only partially used - if not completely unused - while others are scarcely integrated or personalized to the point that every new release requires a long time for adjustments. It’s important to carefully assess your company’s needs before choosing a tool that will meet these needs.

The many benefits of automation

The world of travel is one of the most rapidly impacted by technological improvement, which operates as a significant growth factor, incessantly providing new services, improving the offer and making possible what was not even thinkable until a few years ago. Suffice it to say that in less than a century the aviation industry passed from small experimental aircrafts to modern planes made of carbon fiber. Air traffic is constantly growing, to the point that 65,000 flights are operated every day in the world. This exponential growth in the transport industry was made possible by, and at the same time demands, appropriate technical solutions, considering that the sector could not work without an advanced technological infrastructure.

The major market players - GDSs, travel management companies, IT services companies - have been making significant investments to offer innovative services and interesting opportunities to their clients, indirectly improving their competitiveness, too. However, an outdated corporate culture, along with the time and cost required to implement the new technologies, can sometimes discourage companies from embracing innovations that offer significant benefits.

For several years corporate travel managers have been working on solutions to optimize travel management - says Massimo Musio, facility manager of Vitrociset Italy. Discussing the theme with the
fellow field experts, I wish to draw attention to one of the most critical challenges we have to face: the proper transfer of technological innovations into complex and sometimes very structured companies, which may struggle to keep the pace with the market.

The key for a technologic choice to be approved within a company can be found in the pragmatic analysis of the possible benefits.

The greater attention dedicated by corporate management to spending issues in recent years has given us a significant boost when persuading them to embrace innovation, because we can highlight its economic benefits - explains Debora Piovesan, travel & event manager of Daichi Sankyo Italia. What’s more, all corporate functions can be positively impacted by the technological upgrading. In the decision making process for the adoption of an online booking tool, for instance, we gradually engaged all the functions involved (besides travel, finance, IT, human resources, purchase and general affairs), showing the positive impact of a single supplier and a single OBT. This way the project was approved with the participation of everyone.

Elsewhere, the automation of the processes is a consequence of explicit corporate choices, as in the case of IRI Group. The American multinational, which specializes in market research and consultancy has radically changed the organization of work: thanks to the promotion of smart working on a wide scale, employees spend on average 1 to 4 days a week working from home.

This choice, based on common goals and on a relationship of trust between the company and its employees, meant the complete rearrangement of business activities, travel included, explains Francesca Ordanini, travel manager of IRI Group. The tools used to date - basically the recourse to the in-house travel department - have been evolving consistently with the new corporate vision. With consultancy from CWT - says Ordanini - we have integrated a tool for travel reservations and the respective authorization processes into our existing systems used for the management of spending and administration. In the spirit of smart working, our colleagues have been given responsibility to make choices (such as leaving for domicile trip from home instead of from their work location). All we ask is that they adjust their travel needs to ensure cost-effectiveness.

What to automate?

Nowadays almost every aspect of business travel can be conveniently managed through corresponding digital solutions: travel requests, service bookings, expense management and data analysis.

In addition to their economical payoff, automated tools have a great impact on travelers - to help them plan their mission in an easy and efficient way - and business travel organizers - made possible through easily standardized operational activities.

Travel managers are usually occupied with operational activities, as well as with monitoring and managing tasks - points out Dario Bongiovanni, consultant and field expert who took part in a topic-related training event recently held by CWT. If they have more time to dedicate to monitoring than to operational activities, the processes are well-structured, and the travel managers are free to actually manage; if, on the other hand, the operational time is greater, strategic choices risk becoming overshadowed in order to keep up with operations that should ideally be transferred to the TMC or performed through the proper technological tools.

But which processes can actually be automated? Nowadays almost every aspect of business travel can be conveniently managed through corresponding digital solutions, although with different levels of automation and coverage of the service in an end-to-end logic. Along with travel requests, service bookings, expense management and data analysis, technology has notably streamlined several activities requiring human contributions, such as the approval process, accounting and administration operations. Every company needs to find out which activities could benefit the most from automation, and which technological solutions best fit their needs, in line with the corporate culture and structure.
Online booking tools are, for instance, a widely-discussed subject these days: thanks to their friendly interface, they enable travelers and bookers to effortlessly reserve travel with only a few clicks on a pc or laptop, at any time and from any place. OBTs also improve the tracking of expenses, the localization of travelers, the compliance with the travel policy, and by consequence generate a significant cost reduction.

So, are they indispensable? Not necessarily so: it always depends on the specific situation. «We have a highly complex and articulate travel structure, and the details of our journeys are usually complicated, so a single technological solution by itself can hardly satisfy all of our needs - says Cristiana Fratticci, travel manager of Salini Costruttori. When considering, along with complex journeys, the need for approvals, healthcare practices, and the optimization of times and stopovers, the necessity of a specialized travel consultant becomes undeniable. So, the best technological solution for us might be a travel tool that can quickly communicate all the data of the trip, and make it immediately available in digital format».

The opportunity to resort to self-booking tools might also be questioned in view of strictly strategic motivations, as pointed out by Daniele Sanvito, HR Admin & Payroll Coordinator of Fastweb Italia: «Self-booking tools are not necessarily the best way to reach our goals. Sometimes the traveler lacks the insight to make a choice that supports the best interests of the company, or we simply may deem it not convenient to demand these strategic choices of the traveler». In other cases, however, online booking tools can actually deliver what they promise, explains Elisa Arensi, travel manager of Generali Assicurazioni: «We have been committed to promoting the culture of consolidation within our group, and have been acting to have the same referential agency, the same policy and the same set of travel management tools in every company of every country. We strongly believe in innovation, and in the choice of technology that enables us to respond to our needs and give us added value. «For instance - adds Arensi, once we used to make reservations through offline channels (e-mail and phone), with long and uneconomical procedures. In 2015, after the transition to the new TMC (CWT), we implemented a new online booking tool designed to automate and streamline the request process: it was at first enforced only in Italy and Germany, but we have plans for its adoption in Hong Kong, Czech Republic and Brazil by the first half of 2016».

Processes can and should be automated. According to Dario Bongiovanni, the automation of one or more travel management procedure/s should be seriously taken into account when:

- Saving margins on direct costs are about to dry up (negotiations over flight and hotel rates have already been optimized). The optimization of management and corporate effort might be advisable for cost-efficiency;
- The value for money of services is lowering, and there is no room for improvement;
- Travel is not recognized as strategic, even when it represents a significant expense item among non-core purchases;
- The company doesn’t have an overview of global travel management costs, because it impacts on many corporate functions and the passages are not completely integrated;
- The buying behaviors of travelers are not known in sufficient detail;
- The performances of suppliers are not properly assessed.

In all these cases, the revision of procedures and the use of specific tools might be the answer.
1.3 Many families of tool

So by taking a more pragmatic approach, which tools can bring benefits and fit your company’s needs? To answer these questions we have to keep in mind that the market is very complex, featuring extremely diverse patterns of management, pricing and functionalities.

«Unfortunately, we suffer from a lack of technical standards, IT protocols and methods shared by all the market players - says Massimo Musio of Vitroiset. The different suppliers often propose to us highly diversified tools and models, which are really hard to compare, let alone choose. Through not being fully aware of what they are about to purchase - and of what they actually do need - some companies may end up buying the wrong tool, or a tool that is unsuitable for the intended use: »Often, tools are not used for the purpose they have been bought - points out Bongiovanni - and companies alter them radically, even for the original purpose they have been designed to achieve.»

Excessive personalization of a tool should be avoided where possible: not least because personalization is going to be repeated at every new release. There are three main suppliers manufacturing tools for monitoring and managing business travel processes: travel management companies - such as CWT - who are developing applications that can be integrated with the ERP of the company and its suppliers, the GDSs, who are providing an ever-increasing range of services, along with booking systems for flights; and independent third parties, who are submitting managerial tools with several functions. Tools can then be sorted by their main functions: we can distinguish tools for the organization of information flow among travelers, travel arrangers and possible referential TMC; tools allowing the users to actually book the main services; tools for a door-to-door monitoring of the trip (from the exact point of departure to destination, including taxicabs and public transportation); and tools for the management of expenditure.

Moreover, each one of these tools can feature different pricing patterns and models. So, in order to appraise the best-fitting solution, each company should start considering its own purchasing behavior and analyzing the internal demand, while also keeping in mind that the pricing model needs to be aligned with the one already enforced with the TMC, if that is the case. Knowing how many people are traveling with respect to the total corporate population, how many expense accounts are released per year and by who, which routes are most frequently covered and bought and through which channels, etc., can indeed be useful to gain full awareness of the corporate needs and hence of the most suitable solutions.

«When choosing a product, you should always be suspicious when someone claims to sell THE best product on the market: there are no one-size-fits-all solutions - warns Dani Bongiovanni. Likely, you should be suspicious when someone proposes a fast and easy implementation, on the Plug & Play model. Every possible fallout and every need should be assessed and adjusted in order to find the best fitting solution, to be discussed with all the stakeholders involved, including your TMC.»

1.4 Integration: times and phases

Once it’s understood what can usefully be automated, and which solutions are available on the market, we have to face the most critical phase, which is the choice of the technology to adopt and its integration into the company system. More often than not, these phases are hastened and managed without proper surveys. Yet, it is only through a thorough gap analysis of the needs, feasibility studies, and the evaluation of the impact inside and outside the company, that the most appropriate and profitable mid-and long-term choices can be made.

The starting point is the preventive mapping of the existing applications and processes, to understand which aspect/s need to be optimized, which one/s can be managed through one of the tools available on the market, which tool/s can be integrated and what fallout/s on the whole travel management process are to be expected. The consequences on the travel policy, the impact to travelers, required payment systems and administrative reporting should all be considered, to mention a few.

«The early stages of assessment must be in-depth in order to give a fairly detailed overview of the company situation - points out Loretta Bartolucci, Senior Director Sales, Marketing & Advanced Client Solutions of CWT Italia.»

Travel management tools can be grouped according to their functionalities in some big "families": Here they are:

- **Travel Tools.** Tools to support requests for travel services, by email or structured forms designed to speed up and track travelers’ requests to the internal travel department or your TMC. They can be integrated with other ERP systems (such as SAP), for the management of personal data and the profiling of passengers.
- **Online Booking Tools.** Systems for the online booking of some travel services, not to be mistaken with websites or aggregators for the purchase of flights and hotels: these tools still need the support of a TMC (for the release of tickets), and help ensure compliance with the corporate policy. OTBs for the automation of registry and profiling operations are designed first and foremost for the management of simple, point-to-point trips; for more complex itineraries, the consultancy of a travel agent is still required. OTBs are often used by the internal travel department of the company, by travel arrangers or assistants.
- **Self Booking Tool.** Online booking tools that enable the single business traveler to research and confirm the reservation of travel.
- **Door-to-door.** The new frontier of self-booking tools starts from the point of view of the traveler. Considering the exact point of departure (home or office) and the place of destination (hotel and place of the meeting which justifies the trip), they keep track of every transfer and of the necessary services (such as taxis and public transportation), and include an evaluation of related times and costs.
- **EPA - Expense Process Automation.** These tools automate the management of expenses, from assessing compliance with the travel policy, to the audit and recording of receipts, including accounting operations.
- **BTMS - Business Travel Management System.** These systems are used for the end-to-end management of travel, including personal data and profiling of passengers, reservations and expenses after travel.
In brief, we have to figure out where and how travel data is managed and which tools are already in use before we can understand how to innovate, what can be done and what is better to be postponed, because of limits that at the time can be insurmountable for several reasons.

The first step of a project for the adoption of a new tool is a careful survey of the company equipment and processes: «Arriving to improve the management of business trips with the transition to a new TMC (CWT), we began with the analysis of the existing situation - explains Roberto Laffranchi, Group Travel Manager of Coesia. Then we decided to automate the request and reservation processes through a travel tool completely integrated to our management system: the objectives included the improvement of the quality of data, with a reduction of the margin for errors, the optimization of reporting analysis and accountability management, and the streamlining of monitoring and authorization processes.

«Especially because of the automated integration of the data flow between the management system and the TMC system, the requests now proceed in an automated, rapid way, adds Laffranchi. So much so that the adoption rate comes close to 100%, while use of other channels must be justified and strictly episodic. We achieved enough integration to streamline the management processes, reduce times and fees, and generate savings».

Another example is Barilla, where the same approach to travel management was adopted, in parallel with the introduction of a new self-booking tool. In the words of Davide Stocchi, Facility Management Department: «We began mapping the status quo in 2009, firstly noting the coexistence of many agencies and the lack of uniformity among data - if not their complete absence. So, we decided to resort to a single TMC (CWT) in all 26 countries, a single global travel policy and the same online booking tool in all countries, which we also use to manage employee expenses.

The support of CWT was critical during this process - explains Stocchi - both in strategic and operational terms. CWT gave us a market benchmark, and introduced us to the market players which best matched our needs. After an exhaustive assessment of the options, we singled out a tool for the integrated management of the expense account with proper coverage of the countries we were most interested in.»

When introducing a tool, however, you might have to come to terms with two opposing attitudes: excessive requests and expectations on the one hand, and resistance to change on the other, “because we have always done it like this”. If we focus only on the reduction of the fees but we ignore the inner processes, - suggests Massimo Musio of Vitrocost - we may fail to recognize where the causes of inefficiencies and losses of savings lie. So we cannot amend them, and the innovation brought about by the new tools is useless.

We also have to appraise whether the tool we intend to buy is flexible and needs to be implemented within defined standards, or whether it can/must be personalized, with an evaluation of the possible fallout of any variation. Similarly, sharing the market best practices (that a good consultant or a good TMC needs to know) can be useful in order to avoid mistakes. The time spent on implementation - and the inherent time for the return on investment - deserves a special focus: the integration of a self-booking tool into the company management system and in the expense report system might need up to 6/10 months.

In a few words, it is a truly complex project that needs to be approached with the same strictness and method devoted to other important company actions; such as the launch of new products on the market.

The involvement of impacted departments is important up until the first phases, as is the involvement of the preferred TMC, since they will have to manage the integration of the new tool (even when provided by a third organization).

We designed a quite complex integration process, involving many internal departments, such as IT, accounting, HR, purchasing and travel departments, as well as external consultancies both from the TMC and/or other existing management tools, explains Laffranchi of Coesia. Only a careful, progressive transition can guarantee a thorough control of the processes and a prompt correction of mistakes. Keeping that in mind, certain companies engage travelers from the first phase (e.g. tool choice and implementation), for example Arensi from Generali: «The process of study and integration of the online booking tool in Italy was quite complex and involved several functions, such as procurement, administration, finance, accounting, IT, the corresponding functions of our preferred TMC (CWT), and last but not least, some key users acting as pilot users.

Then we integrated the data flow between the OBT and SAP - adds Arensi - so that the travel request uses the channel of the existing managing system, while the OBT automatically recognizes the personal details of the record, the pertaining cost center, the authorizers and the other required data. This way, thanks to a fully-automated daily update, the new information is aligned with the data recovered during the accounting stage, with significant economic and procedural benefits.»

Every new tool should indeed be integrated gradually, where every step has a growing impact: we recommend to start off with a test phase involving the adoption of the tool by a small group of selected users; to verify the tool meets your travelers’ needs; and to gather performance indicators; to introduce improvements that emerge from the first phase; and to enlarge the user base and fine-tune the service with small adjustments. Audits should be scheduled at fixed periods (every 6 months/ year).
1.5 Change management: the importance of attitude

Whichever tool you end up choosing, the transition needs to be supported with policies and actions structured to facilitate the adoption of the new rules and procedures. This process is what we all recognize to be change management. In other words, the users must be helped while coping with the procedural, rational and emotional aspects of change through the necessary information given in a plain, straightforward way. A progressive implementation program, for instance, with proper channels for feedback and care. Every change then needs to be adapted to the corporate culture. Help can come in the form of simple user manuals, training courses for small groups, and a communication in advance, especially considering that reluctance to change has many psychological reasons.

When facing complaints and resistance, we have to focus on the efficiencies of the tool instead of on personal blocks - says Bongiovanni. We often hear that the online booking tools are tricky, however they are not very different from web portals for leisure travel our business travelers skillfully use to arrange their personal vacations. Five clicks are enough to complete a reservation with a self-booking tool: far fewer than any online booking portal would require». As a matter of fact, digital tools are sometimes frowned upon because mistakes or vulnerable situations traveler should be involved in the assessment process and informed about the motivation that led to the choice of that very tool, so that he can become at first an endorser, and then a strong supporter of the new technology. «Self-booking tools certainly come with many benefits, such as the acceleration of traveler-agency communication and of the authorization process, so we are considering the transition - says Sara Pavesi, travel manager of Sky. However, the success is strictly connected to the acceptance of a shared corporate culture, and avoidance of employees questioning valid tools and rules once they have been accepted and implemented. Usually, many employees are required to travel, so they are more entitled to express opinions and criticisms in comparison with other corporate activities. This is why the implementation of every tool requires a suitable communication and training plan.

The internal change management process was at the core of our implementation strategy for the OBT - says Arensi from Generali. Before actually launching the tool, we studied a communication plan with targeted actions on groups of travel arrangers. We promoted ad hoc communication sessions, and created training materials designed to help the users cope with the new ways of working. The OBT was implemented in July 2015, but mass use started from September. «Our adoption rate target was initially set on 25% - adds Arensi, but in the first three months we recorded an even better 40%, above the industry average. Moreover, after the initial adjustment, we got positive feedback from the users (through the appropriately arranged tool), so we are quite content with the changes. Barilla went through a similar experience when implementing the new travel policy and self-booking tools: «We focused on sharing key innovations in travel management with travelers - Stocchi from Barilla adds ».

The new policy was published on the intranet and properly communicated. We also delivered several hours of training sessions for small groups to share the sense and the value of the main updates and to educate our travelers on use of the OBT. Such vision allowed results to equal expectations: «Our adoption rate target was at 80% within the first two years, but we had already achieved the 85% by the end of the first year. This excellent result has corroborated our choices. In addition, the tool contributed to streamlining administration and accounting processes, thanks to the automation of expense management, which releases the company from obsolete standardized operations, reduces the margin for errors and speeds up the re-crediting (up to 2/3 days).»

In conclusion, we have to keep in mind that digital tools can automate many processes. However, the motivation and collaboration of users is still fundamental to ensure best use and to achieve the expected results. Change management is a critical stage worthy of investment.

**Mistakes to avoid**

We can single out a series of typical mistakes or vulnerable situations to be aware of when starting to automate business processes. Dario Bongiovanni underlined some of these for us:

- Tolerate inefficiencies in the automation of the existing process to not disturb the internal balance;
- Try to transfer the existing set of forms to the new systems;
- Set too low rate targets, or schedule too long times for the adoption;
- Plan too short times for the adoption programs (Plug & Play model);
- Favor economic benefits over needs for monitoring and management, functionality and efficiency;
- Underestimate the importance of change management for the involved employees.

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Chapter 2

From reporting to business intelligence

Getting down to the technology that can help travel managers and organizers the most, a priority is analysis of spend through automated reporting—recently also significantly improved. Corporate travel managers do indeed need to plan in advance and strictly monitor budgets throughout the year, in order to have convenient scope of action in negotiations with the suppliers and to engage the travelers to get optimization. Besides, the new frontiers of travel management require an end-to-end vision, able to cover the whole trip to reveal the total cost of travel. To do so, travel managers first and foremost need to have access to complete and updated travel data.

2.1 From Big Data to Smart Data

In the last few years, the volume of information released by private and public sources (research centers, companies, universities, stock markets) and made accessible virtually to anyone online has been growing at a staggering rate; just like the amount of data companies have to digitally record and file. The main challenge is to find such data, analyze and use it. To that end, companies and organizations from any industry have been setting up endless meetings, events and articles that look into the subject of using Big Data to best effect. The aim is to have Smart Data, as this is the data worthy of analysis. Smart data has many possible applications, both in general and in specific terms. Several market studies are based on the use of Smart Data for analysis and forecasts: for instance, the survey CWT Travel Price Forecast conducted every year by Carlson Wagonlit Travel gives insights on the trends of travel costs for the new year, to help companies budget. However, companies must have at their disposal valid and updated data about travel spend—ideally available online, as well as reporting tools in order to share actionable information within the company. For instance, thanks to key indicators based on clear objectives, every user can compare fixed targets and actual performance, investigate different levels of expense and purchase patterns across departments, and keep track of the trends over the years.
2.2 A Leap Forward in technology

Aware of the need to have simple-to-use yet more advanced reporting tools, CWT conceived a new proprietary tool for business intelligence.

CWT AnalytIQs was created in collaboration with the travel managers of prominent multinational companies from all over the world, who were actively involved in the design and testing. It was created to be a market benchmark, able to give travel managers even more thorough and detailed control over expenses and the whole process of business travel.

*I am glad CWT engaged its clients through a forum designed to define CWT AnalytIQs - commented Cindy Morse, Corporate Travel Services Manager of Shell Oil Company.* As pilot user, I had a chance to verify first-hand the usefulness of its functionalities, which can lead to significant steps forwards.

The new tool is the evolution of the multi-awarded CWT Program Management Center - Best Reporting System for two consecutive years at the Italian IMA Awards, whose scope and functions have been broadened in a business intelligence perspective. We are proud to say that the CWT flagship product represents a major leap forward from the technology available on the national and international market to date.

«CWT AnalytIQs was built for and with the travel managers - explains Alessandra Pisanu, senior Director Program Management of CWT Italia. We had very positive feedback: the tool is truly revolutionary in that it changes the way we collect and analyze travel data, shifting perspectives from a simple series of numbers and statistics to a more complete and dynamic picture, which can really make a difference in monitoring and managing the travel expense».

Business intelligence has the peculiar capacity to enable flexible and even more detailed analysis, as well as “smart” data reading.

First and foremost, the tool covers a wider range of data, including not only the customary travel information, but also data from different sources, such as expense accounts, credit cards, supplier information, traveler profiling, unused tickets, and even bookings made through other channels. Among its most helpful features, flexibility and customizability stand out, since they allow targeted analysis - for instance on single items of expense, countries, company departments, or time lapses. Moreover, thanks to the automated near real-time update - including the tickets issued and booked all over the world - business travel managers can always count on fresh data to fine-tune their strategies and plan corrective action.

However, highly advanced technologies can sometimes be tricky to use: keeping that in mind, CWT paid special attention to the handiness of CWT AnalytIQs. Even for beginners, the control dashboard is clear and concise, with a friendly interface and the functionality to rapidly create graphs and charts that are easy to share in PPT or Excel format.

**The strengths of CWT AnalytIQs**

- **User-friendly interface** - extremely easy to use, the tool requires only basic IT/statistics skills;
- **Detailed traveler tracking** - travelers can be located at any time using the country, airline or even single flight or hotel search functionality;
- **Global coverage** - all around the world, with specific analysis for geographical areas or single countries.

**News 2016**

The tool has already been gradually implemented across CWT clients, and new functionalities will enrich it even further in 2016:

- **Chat functionality** - to share experiences in a community dedicated to business travel managers;
- **Monitoring of travel policy** - tickets for travel services bought outside the travel policy will be highlighted in near real time on the home page of the dashboard;
- **Integration with the CWT Program Messenger tool** - for automatic message sending related to your travel policy;
- **M&E coverage** - ability to monitor expenses for meetings & events.
«CWT AnalytIQs is a product that my workmates and I can consult every day, thanks to its extreme handiness - points out Rita Visser, Global Travel GPO Director of Oracle. I think that what makes it a great tool is the near real-time data and the range of insights that allow the user to focus on what he/she needs, when and how he/she wants it. Moreover, the level of detail of the available data preludes to the construction of thorough strategies both in specific geographic areas and for a single country».

The traveler tracking function enables business travelers to be located at any time to promptly contact them in case of emergency.

In addition and from a business intelligence perspective, the tool enables integrated benchmarking thanks to the ability to compare performance of your company’s key parameters with top performers and average CWT client data.

The new reporting tool is simple and intuitive, the perfect solution to manage big volumes in a complex corporate reality - says Roberto Lafranchi from Coesia: relevant information is highlighted to be spotted at a glance, KPIs can be customized, and the independent benchmarking with similar market competitors provides a useful external yardstick. But there is more: the tool proactively spotlights the areas to improve, with some operational suggestions, it supports what-if scenario analysis to prevent contingencies; and finally, in the ever-social world of today, it will also allow the easy sharing of experiences within a community dedicated to business travel managers.

«The data analysis we have previously conducted via CWT Program Management Center is going to become even simpler thanks to the new CWT AnalytIQs tool. Along with its completely refurbished, easy-to-use interface, it features important functions such as benchmarking against similar organizations, a dashboard with automatic display of different KPIs, and accurate diagrams to streamline tasks».

Elisa Arensi, travel manager of Generali

«CWT has recently presented the new release of their reporting tool, and we are truly excited about it - adds Alessandra Bresciani from Kedrion. With a view to set new goals for us to achieve, we found particularly interesting the possibility to benchmark the performance of our company with CWT’s other clients, in full respect of data privacy. Of course, technology can just give us hard data that we have to be able to read and interpret. To that end, travel managers need to constantly improve their skills, especially in the fields of technology and statistics. On the other hand, TMCs appear to be strengthening their advisory functions: business travel managers benefit from the support of expert consultants who - also sharing the experiences and the best practices from other countries - assist them in the analysis of expenditure trends, travel behaviors, processes and travel policies. Specialized consultancy makes it easier to find new strategies for improvement, regarding both traditional items of expense and the newer, still scarcely considered, ones. As confirmed by Debora Piovesan from Daiichi Sankyo: «Our approach to reporting has been changing over time: if once we used to rely on the annual or periodic analysis supplied by the agency, now the new tool from CWT enables us to get advanced, independently personalized reports. However, the contribution of the TMC in its advisory function still remains critical to help us focus on the items of expense and on which trends to optimize.»
2.4 From numbers to optimization

Reporting tools are thereby becoming critical for travel managers to achieve savings, through greater control of expenditure. As pointed out by Bresciani from Kedrion: «The optimization of business travel often preludes to savings, too. With this goal in our mind, we constantly update our travel policy, while devoting time to accurate reporting analysis».

Thanks to the personalization of reports, companies can abstract the data they are most interested in, for instance to correct traveler behaviors or to create preferential patterns towards preferred suppliers and operational procedures to achieve objectives.

«Our analysis of air spend, which is the biggest item in our business travel budget, takes the reference fees as a benchmark to be compared to the savings, adds Bresciani, but then it also considers the evolution of the average price of tickets in the course of the year. missed savings for domestic, continental and intercontinental flights are highlighted. In its reports, our travel agency highlights this data using specific codes of non-acceptance to help us have a clearer and more realistic picture of the purchasing behavior of our travelers. By analyzing such data we can identify our strengths and our areas for improvement. Another important innovation brought forth by the tools is near real-time updates, which include expenses for the tickets booked but not used: «We have always paid special attention to advanced bookings when using the previous version of the tool - explains Cindy Morse from Shell Oil Company. But the availability of all reservations in near real time gives us a clearer overview of the actual costs of booking procedures, and facilitates corrective action».

Business Travel 3.0, 4.0, … back to the future?

New technologies such as mobile apps and business intelligence tools – absolutely unthinkable until a few years ago – have been deeply and quickly changing business travel. But which tangible benefits are they bringing forth? What impact will this change have on companies? We put these questions to Loretta Bartolucci, Senior Director Sales, Marketing & Advanced Client Solutions of CWT Italy.

In which areas has technology had the greatest impact on business travel, and proven itself particularly useful?

«Technologies are undeniably redefining day by day the way we manage and live business trips. On the one hand, travelers are offered the information they need at a growing speed, as they are becoming more and more independent and skillful in the management of the main activities connected to business trips. On the other, business travel organizers can count on more data and in-depth analysis to monitor expense and interpret the behavior of travelers, this way gaining greater control.»

«In summary, processes are streamlined and optimized, and the traveler, always at the center of services, is given new tools and encouraged to give his/her feedback, which is attentively considered: so, if it is true that companies ask for more compliance with the travel policy, it is also true that they are constantly listening and committed to fully satisfying their employees during their business trips. In conclusion, as long as processes are properly integrated with the company’s existing processes in as personal way as possible, we can say that technology can really have a positive impact for all involved».

How are you preparing to face the challenges of tomorrow’s market?

«Innovation is in our DNA, and always at the core of our strategies: we are currently committed to the creation of an international team called Corporate Innovation, which is fully dedicated to creating partnerships between key players in the travel industry – both old and new – in order to develop new technologies and products for the benefit of our clients and of the whole sector.»

«CWT can also count on global experience with a range of clients, which enables us to be ahead of the times: we have been introducing many innovative solutions to help companies manage the whole business trip, end-to-end. The integration of our systems with the ERP of the client company, and tools provided by third parties (e.g. for the management of expense accounts or authorization procedures) are complex operations, but they can really make a difference for our clients.»

The last technological innovation you introduced?

«Clients can now make hotel bookings via our app CWT To Go. In future, it will also be possible to book flights too.»

Analyze EXPENSE through a tree: the effective method provided by CWT

Travel and Expense (T&E) represents a significant share of business costs, so controlling it is crucial to business operations and success. However, the complexity and sheer volume of T&E information makes it challenging to process, manage and interpret. CWT has developed a new, strategic approach to support companies in the analysis and reading of their expenditure, introduced in the White Paper T&E Decision Tree.

The T&E Decision Tree gives an immediate overview on the most fitting reduction strategies. It uses algorithms specifically elaborated to organize data by asking three simple questions: which services and products have been purchased, how and why? The emerging categories of expenditure are the following:

- Basic travel services purchased via TMC, including air, hotel and car rental;
- Extra spending for auxiliary services during the trip, such as meals, taxis or parking;
- Non-trip spending (Non-Trip);
- Spese per servizi ausiliari occorse durante la trasferta, come past, taxi o parcheggio;
- Spese non legate al viaggio (Non-Trip).

Besides giving a strategic perspective of your global T&E spend, the flexibility of the model enables the management of subcategories of spending. The T&E Tree simplifies the identification of the areas to improve, the appraisal of the total cost of travel and the reduction of auxiliary spending, extras and Non-Trips.

CWT T&E Decision Tree White Paper is available on CWT website for free download.
Technological innovations support business travel managers in the pursuit of important targets, such as spend monitoring, optimization of costs, and automation of processes. However, another area where improvements could and should be made is communication with travelers. Supplying your travelers with the most useful and important information through the channels they have within reach at that moment in time is becoming a more critical task, along with personalized customer care in the event of an inconvenience.

On the one hand, correct information can allow travelers to organize their trips in a simpler and faster way, assisted with all the services they need; on the other, it helps them be more compliant, using approved tools and following the established rules to the benefit of all.

Many ways to communicate

Today, communication with travelers would not be conceivable without multi-channel access granted 24/7 via any device, and above all without digital and web-based tools. However, there are still many examples where information is still shared via printed manuals and guides - hard to find at the office, let alone when on a business mission.

So, a good travel portal - to be integrated with your company’s intranet or the internal managing systems of the company - must have a substantial section dedicated to information, including flight and rail timetables, updates on visas, security standards and health practices by country; as well as tourist information, current rates of exchange and further useful links.
The novelties of travel, along with useful information about strikes, health hazards or bad weather can be shared via periodic newsletters - usually managed by your TMC. To be able to get in touch with every traveler at any time, a complete, up-to-date traveler profile is required. Tools like CWT Portrait, for instance, enable the recording of all personal data, contact data and travel preferences (from food to health, including customer loyalty programs) of each and every business traveler. These are easily extracted in an automated way, and made quickly available on other corporate tools as well. «Thanks to CWT Portrait we can get in touch with the travelers in case of need, this way increasing Safety & Security, while giving them their preferred travel services», points out Loretta Bartolucci.

Of course, data is covered and protected through specific safety protocols which give access to authorized personnel only. «These days, data privacy and protection is indeed a very delicate and debated subject (it was actually the topic of a recent CWT White Paper titled Data Privacy and Information Security), and only the most secure agencies can guarantee adequate standards», adds Bartolucci.

A great way to get in touch with travelers these days is via smartphones: according to the CWT survey Tap into mobile business travel - 65% of business travelers have a company device giving them their preferred travel services, and safe access to travel information. Compatible with iPhones, Blackberry, Android platforms - including Kindle Fire - iPad and Window Phones, in different languages (English, Italian, French, German, Spanish) Functionalities of CWT To Go include:

- Automated alerts on booked flights (in case of delays, changes, cancellations or gate changes) by email or text message;
- Display of synchronized information about the travel itinerary with regard to the reserved flights, hotels and car rental, including off-channel bookings (booked without the help of CWT);
- Ability to check-in via your mobile with a number of airlines (more than 250);
- Information about the destination, including weather forecasts, maps, amenities (such as restaurants, bars, places to visit), currency converter and an indicator of time zones;
- Easy monitoring (by iPhone) of workmates on a trip (up to 25) for company travel arrangers.

NEW! The ability to search and book hotels via the app, choosing from more than 467,000 venues.

A single app fully dedicated to business travel

The innovative CWT To Go gives real time information and safe access to travel information. Compatible with iPhone, Blackberry, Android platforms - including Kindle Fire - iPad and Window Phones, in different languages (English, Italian, French, German, Spanish) Functionalities of CWT To Go include:

- Automated alerts on booked flights (in case of delays, changes, cancellations or gate changes) by email or text message;
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- Information about the destination, including weather forecasts, maps, amenities (such as restaurants, bars, places to visit), currency converter and an indicator of time zones;
- Easy monitoring (by iPhone) of workmates on a trip (up to 25) for company travel arrangers.

3.2 Promoting compliance

So travel managers can count on many tools for communication, however it’s important to know which are the most effective and appropriate according to the recipients of the communication, and to the communication itself. Especially worthy of improvement is compliance with travel policy, where significant results can be achieved working with the travelers. However, as pointed out by many surveys, simply dictating what is and isn’t allowed is not enough: the more travelers can relate to the communication, the more likely it is they will comply with policy and achieve business targets.

«It must be noted that travel behavior can significantly vary depending on traveler knowledge of the travel policy - points out Geraldine Valentì, Senior Director CWT Solutions Group EMEA (a CWT division dedicated to offering specialized consultancy to client and non-client companies, to optimize business travel). Hence, some essential rules must be followed: the travel policy needs to be clear, well-structured and succinct, it must be effectively communicated to all the parties involved and it must be strengthened over the course of time. The actions must be structured around four key incentive levers. At first, all the personnel involved at different levels must receive appropriate training on the travel standards by means of dedicated meetings (especially when new releases are about to come), or simple manuals easily found on the company intranet. Communication must be reinforced through different channels (banners, emails and signage) in a catchy, concise way. Thanks to technologies designed to enhance and strengthen the interaction skills, two more strategic areas can be automated: motivation and traveler care.»

We are considering the adoption of the CWT Program Messenger tool to stage temporary communication campaigns focused on specific issues, such as compliance with advanced booking, to reinforce some key messages in a targeted strategy.

Elisa Arensi, from Generali
Choosing the right hotel

Compliance with travel policy and choice of preferred suppliers is particularly critical in the hotel domain. CWT fine-tuned a truly innovative tool, designed to help travelers select the hotel that best suits their needs, while improving alignment with policy. CWT Hotel Intel is a “company social network” offering a method to collect traveler feedback and share honest and reliable reviews: made by business travelers from the same company and with similar profiles, the reviews are based on actual experiences.

The benefits for the company can also be measured in terms of negotiations, since the reviews help to understand which services the hotels should improve or introduce. Moreover, steering the reservations on preferential hotels, the company gets a new leverage for negotiations, as confirmed by big companies such as L’Oréal: their positive experience with this tool is the subject of the interview with Corinne Delbreil, available in the video on CWT website.

«We strongly believe in CWT Program Messenger, especially because it is an excellent means of immediate communication with the travelers - explains Alessandra Bresciani from Kedrion. We can easily remind them to make advance bookings in line with the travel policy, fixed expense limits, and/or via the approved booking channels. So, the actions of communication, far from being an abstract principle, do have a direct impact in determining significant changes in the choices of the travelers, and in the savings consequently generated. Thanks to automated messages sent to remind travelers of the importance of advanced bookings, the percentage of flight bookings made within 14 days of travel has increased from 5% to 26% for domestic flights, from 43% to 50% for international flights, and from 72% to 80% for intercontinental flights in the first 6 months of use of the tool, with direct benefits on finance.

In addition, CWT Program Messenger can also be used to get in touch with the travelers before the trip - adds Bresciani - to remind them both of the procedures to guarantee their own safety in every destination, with suggested health and hygiene standards, socio-political situation, climate conditions, etc., and the emergency numbers for any critical situation or health contingency.»

Dedicated tools such as CWT Program Messenger enable the automatic sending of personalized messages (by email or SMS) connected to the choices made by the travelers, to give positive feedback - when the choices are beneficial to the company, or a warning when they are made out of policy.

3.3 From words to numbers

Specific channels and forms can be adopted in order to streamline and enhance communication and reminders. The following case study, provided by Geraldine Valenti of CWT Solutions Group reveals how a multinational company made savings on a mature travel program.

»After applying Big Data analysis to segment travelers by similar patterns of behavior, we discovered that 15% of travelers were responsible for 50% of total spent: so, at first we focused our efforts on them - says Valenti. Then we promoted a program of communication designed to focus on differing objectives, geographic areas, tools and business goals. For instance, the assistants from Asia showed a preference for emails focusing on restrictive rates, while in Western Europe we mostly used text messages and apps to endorse alternative airlines; to reduce the total number of trips in Northern America, we favored videos and tools for internal communication. The whole changes we achieved in purchase behaviors, such as the good habits of advanced bookings and use of preferred airlines and hotels, allowed the company to get $300,000 of savings.»

CWT Program Messenger achieves an average 4-7% of savings in the first year of use, but the results improve as the targets get clearer and the instruments are better calibrated and customized.

For instance, a global client of CWT aimed to improve the adoption rate of the implemented online booking tool (the rate was stuck at 25% four years after implementation), without making it mandatory. Thanks to an incentive campaign promoted by CWT Program Messenger, the adoption rate doubled in the course of 18 months, which brought $750,000 of savings on the total expenses for travel.

Another case history worthy of mention is that of a financial company facing an annual travel expense of 10 million Euros: they aimed to reduce the average expense for domestic flights, deemed excessive. After only six months of using CWT Program Messenger, booking times improved by three days which achieved a total saving of 55,000€.

Reinforce knowledge to improve compliance

For business travel management to be successful, a travel policy designed to monitor expense, improve safety and incentive the use of preferred suppliers must be reinforced with travelers.

CWT Program Messenger helps companies improve traveler alignment to travel policy through the automatic sending of emails to travelers and/or to the person in charge when the travel reservation is non-compliant with company rules. The main benefits are:

- Better internal communication regarding the travel policy;
- Greater compliance with, and use of, preferred suppliers;
- Cost reduction, thanks to the improvement of compliance with the travel policy and increased use of preferred suppliers;
- Increased productivity. The automated warnings in case of non-compliance with the travel policy allows significant time savings.
3.4 Let’s play to... motivate!

While the trend of consumerization mentioned in the first chapter brought travelers to demand more centrality and more user-friendly travel management tools, digital technologies enlightened new ways to motivate the employees: not only to comply with the travel policy, but also to make the best choice. Positive reinforcement, as opposed to obligation, has proven itself a rewarding strategy. Employees are involved in gaming tactics to create internal competition that result in awards being presented - known as Gamification.

Rather than appealing to the “sense of guilt” of the employee or on rigid standards, we exploit game strategies, such as competition, recognition and reward, to motivate our co-workers to take the best possible decision for the company. Through gamification, the focus on travel behavior reaches a higher level: from the promotion of compliant decisions, to super-compliant.

Consider a trip to a city where the maximum budget for hotel amounts to 100€: the traveler who spends 100€ is compliant; while the traveler who, when faced with the cost options of 100, 90 and 80€ picks the lower fee is super-compliant, and will be accordingly awarded with score points and reinforcement messages.

We are the first TMC to introduce gamification in business travel, but we strongly believe that the market is ready to adopt it, also under the incentive of the many benefits it can generate - says Vincent Lebunetel, vice president Corporate Innovation, CWT. In fact, companies can achieve the engagement of travelers in innovative ways, give incentives to reward compliance with the travel policy, and get significant economic benefits for the company.

The program of gamification is managed by means of a user-friendly online platform, where the performance of single travelers or groups of travelers can be seen, along with the most virtuous actions divided by purchase of air tickets, hotels or other services, the score acquired and the total amount of savings achieved.

Another critical factor is the definition of the ground rules, including the list of participants. These rules are always to be custom-made: at CWT we established sixteen possible KPIs (key performances indicators) alongside the client around which the motivational mechanism revolves, to help them achieve desired business goals.

3.5 Three-digit savings

In order to fully understand the possibilities of gamification, you might want to consider the case of an international project conducted by CWT Solutions Group, the division of CWT which specializes in strategic consultancy. An eminent multinational online reseller wanted to find new sources of savings. However, notwithstanding the maturity of their travel program (about 100 million of annual travel expense and 1,600 frequent travelers) they were struggling to find the most effective actions.

We began segmenting travel expense to distinguish different behaviors - says Teemu Tuomarla, Manager and Gamification Specialist of CWT Solutions Group Nordics EMEA. This way we found out that the travelers with the highest potential for savings where the frequent travelers (5-19 trips per year), who showed strong loyalty to their preferred airlines, especially in three countries. In addition, 15% of the travelers were responsible for 40% of the expense.

So we suggested the adoption of a gamification platform, identifying 100 travelers to involve in a pilot program for three months, with three main goals: to improve the use of the online booking tool, to establish the custom of advanced booking, and to promote the choice of the preferred suppliers to whom the company is bound by profitable commercial deals. The gamification tools included the release of a leaderboard, or a chart of the best performing travelers classified by the most “virtuous” choices to promote: competition among the participants; integration of the platform with the incentive programs already adopted by the client; streamlining of the management of the program; achievement of interesting prizes; and production of frequent and detailed reports to monitor the improvements in the behavior of single travelers.
Improvements in these areas generated up to 242€ annual savings per traveler: the 100 travelers involved generated 24,200€ of savings (minus the cost for the implementation of the gamification program).

The more travelers you engage with gamification, the greatest potential savings you might get, depending on the specific improvement areas and targets of every company. «This is one case where the project is worthy - concludes Tuomarla. Assuming 550 travelers were involved, the same client could have got up to 133,100€ of annual savings, and with 1,600 participants (the total number of company travelers), the potential savings could have reached 387,200€.

In conclusion, new tools can really make a difference in business travel management, and they are indeed valid “allies” for travel managers. Provided that the complex processes of choice and implementation are tackled in line with a structured strategy and with proper focus, with adequate timings and monitoring tools, and in an uninterrupted dialogue with the final users - travelers and travel arrangers, as well as with the providers - TMCs, technically responsible for their success.

Within the first three months from the adoption of the gamification strategy, the client streamlined expenditure management and reduced incremental savings. «Travelers involved showed greater compliance with the policy and better purchase behaviors - says Tuomarla. In particular, the use of the online booking tool has raised by 6.5%, travel bookings are made 14 or more days before departure, and the use of preferred airlines and hotels has improved.

The rules of gamification

Here we suggest a list of criteria to keep in mind in order to activate a successful gamification strategy:

Focus on the traveler: in the past, the majority of efforts to improve compliance used to focus on the benefits for the company. While achieving the business targets is still the priority, gaming procedures must be designed to focus on the benefits for travelers, to enhance their motivation.

Communicate the policy: to increase knowledge of the company travel policy, this must be clearly expressed, conveyed and made available on different devices;

Establish what to improve: identify the virtuous behaviors to incentive and monitor the improvement of quantitative targets over established periods of time;

Everybody matters: gaming is not reserved to a specific group of employees; all personnel should be engaged, without excluding groups of people, and the game program should be fine-tuned to meet everybody’s taste.

Include videos and pictures: multimedia content, social media and new technologies must be included in a valid, present-day system of gaming.

Who is Who

Elisa Arensi
Group Strategic Sourcing - Global Travel Category Manager of Generali Assicurazioni.
The young manager graduated in Foreign Languages at the University Cattolica di Milano, has been working with Generali for less than a year, coming from experiences in multinational companies focusing on procurement. CWT is the chosen TMC for Generali in Italy, as well as in other countries.

Cristiana Fratticci
Group Organization and Corporate Functions - Ufficio Viaggi Salini Impregilo. Working for the Salini Impregilo group for more than twenty years, now in the Human Resources & Organization Board, Fratticci specialized in travel management and has been continuing to invest in her education, taking classes at the European University for Tourism and at the Business Travel School of Roma.

Roberto Laffranchi
Group Travel Manager of Coesia. After studying and working in the UK, he worked with several business travel agencies, including CWT. At the moment he is group travel manager for Coesia, a function he has been called to fill three and a half years ago. CWT is the current TMC for the Coesia Group in Italy and in other countries.

Massimo Musio
Facility Manager of Vitrocsit.
After gaining experience in the hotel sector (family business), he joined the purchasing department of Vitrocsit in 1989. He has been occupying his current role since 2007. CWT is the current TMC for Vitrocsit.

Sara Pavesi
People Services Specialist Sky. Travel Manager at Sky for less than a year, she was employed by Expo 2015 for the coordination and organization of the Services Center for Participants. CWT is the current TMC for the Group Sky PLC, in Italy and other countries (such as the UK and Germany).

Debora Piovesan
Travel & Event Manager Daiichi Sankyo. Business travel supervisor and company event manager, she has been working with the company for 12 years, after a degree in Foreign Languages at the University of Venice. Also active on the associative front, Piovesan is Global Vice President of UNICEO. CWT is the current TMC for Daiichi Sankyo in Italy and in other countries.

Davide Stocchi
Facility Management Opt. Barilla. A degree in Business and Economics, Stocchi has been working as Facility Manager on the Board of Human Capital Group, in charge of corporate travel and car fleets for more than ten years. CWT is the current TMC for Barilla in Italy and many other countries.
Con la nostra travel app CWT To Go™, i viaggiatori d’affari possono prenotare in pochi secondi uno dei 467.000 hotel disponibili - incluse le strutture preferenziali dell’azienda - direttamente dal proprio dispositivo mobile.

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