
A GUIDE FOR CORPORATE TRAVEL MANAGERS

HOW TO LEVERAGE EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN TRAVEL MANAGEMENT





INTRODUCTION

Today, corporate travel managers take on a multifaceted role beyond organising travel plans. They are responsible for designing and enforcing corporate travel policies, meeting budgetary targets and boosting employee satisfaction.

This responsibility comes with several persistent challenges:

- Balancing employee preferences with compliance with corporate travel policies.
- Addressing last-minute changes or unexpected disruptions to travel plans efficiently.
- Accurately tracking and managing travel-related expenses to increase financial accountability.

Emerging travel management technologies have further reshaped the role of travel managers, introducing new objectives to their already demanding responsibilities, for instance:

- Keeping up-to-date with tools that streamline operations and reduce administrative burdens.
- Improving the employee travel experience with more efficient booking systems and reimbursement processes while maintaining budget control.

This white paper explores emerging technologies in the travel industry and provides some actionable strategies to boost programme efficiency. It also includes a real-world example of a successful cost-saving initiative, giving corporate travel managers practical insights for addressing key challenges.

EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

Tools in travel management are transforming how businesses operate.

Notable innovations include:

- Centralised hotel and rail booking systems
- Consolidated reporting
- Expense management platforms
- Carbon reporting tools
- Ticket splitting
- Solutions for complex bookings for large group projects
- AI-powered travel management platforms
- Mobile travel apps



These technologies help organisations maximise efficiency and cut travel costs when implemented thoughtfully. Below, we look more closely at the most impactful tools and their real-world applications:

CENTRALISED HOTEL AND RAIL BOOKING SYSTEMS

Using technology to centralise hotel and rail bookings addresses many inefficiencies inherent in traditional travel management processes. Manual booking procedures, whether handled by travel managers or individual employees, introduce several challenges that can disrupt operational efficiency and make it harder to comply with corporate policies:

Time-consuming and inefficient searches

It's reported that 83% of business travellers say it takes more than an hour to book a business trip, indicating the complexity of the process.

In the search for suitable options that align with both employee preferences and company policies, corporate travel managers have to search multiple websites if they're fulfilling the task manually. This involves individually checking prices, availability, amenities, travel schedules and policy compliance across various sources. Such fragmented efforts make the process labour-intensive, tedious and highly inefficient.

Data entry errors and recordkeeping

Once suitable options are identified, travel managers must manually input booking details into spreadsheets or internal systems, including the traveller's names, travel dates, confirmation numbers and payment information. This consumes valuable time and increases the risk of data entry errors.

Human error is a persistent risk in manual data entry within business travel management. Studies indicate that error rates typically range from 1% to 5%, depending on the data's complexity and the personnel's experience. This means for every 100 manual entries, there could be one to five errors. In a business travel context, these errors could result in incorrect bookings or discrepancies in financial records.

APPROVAL DELAYS AND MISSED SAVINGS

Corporate travel managers often need authorisation from department heads or financial controllers. This step can be delayed due to communication gaps or incomplete information (as mentioned above), which could result in missed opportunities for cost savings, such as early booking discounts or special rates.

THE SOLUTION

An integrated, all-in-one booking platform provides a robust solution to the aforementioned challenges associated with managing hotel and rail bookings. By consolidating both into a single system, travel managers can streamline operations, thereby reducing administrative burdens.

These platforms leverage advanced filters to streamline the selection process, presenting corporate accommodation and rail travel options that meet budgetary constraints and adhere to company travel policies.

EXPENSE MANAGEMENT PLATFORMS

Businesses that operate without a travel management tool spend an average of 13.6 hours per trip processing travel-related expenses. This includes time spent by travellers, approvers, auditors and accountants.

This is because traditional [expense management](#) systems share many of the same inefficiencies as the manual booking processes outlined above, relying heavily on outdated methods such as:

- Paper records
- Physical receipt submissions
- Spreadsheets
- Extensive data entry



These manual processes are time-consuming and prone to errors, creating inefficiencies that hinder operational effectiveness. Fragmented expense management workflows often involve individual employees or departments submitting travel expenses independently. This lack of centralisation makes it challenging for organisations to monitor and control overall expenditure effectively, increasing the risk of budget overruns, policy non-compliance and missed opportunities for [cost savings](#).

Expense management platforms provide a transformative solution to these challenges by digitising and automating the entire process. These tools enable real-time expense tracking while eliminating the need for physical paperwork. With features like receipt uploads, employees can quickly submit claims directly through the platform, streamlining the process and significantly reducing administrative overhead.

Moreover, such platforms allow organisations to customise and enforce expense limits at both the employee and departmental levels. This functionality provides tighter budgetary controls and greater compliance with corporate policies.

Furthermore, the adoption of cloud-based expense management technology seamlessly integrates [expense reporting](#) with other travel management systems, including accommodation and [rail bookings](#). This cohesion automates workflows and offers valuable insights into spending patterns. Enabling companies to make more informed, data-driven decisions that optimise current expense management practices and support more effective future budgeting strategies.

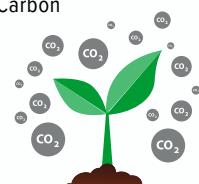
CARBON REPORTING TOOLS

Business travel is often a major contributor to a company's carbon footprint, with transportation accounting for [27% of greenhouse gas](#) emissions in the US alone. For instance, [PwC UK](#) identified business travel as their largest source of carbon emissions, even as they strive to cut it by 50% by 2030. This underscores the substantial environmental impact of corporate travel and the urgent need for change.

As companies increasingly prioritise environmental and [sustainability goals](#), reducing carbon footprints has become a strategic focus. However, implementing sustainable travel practices is not without challenges, as these efforts often come with higher costs and added administrative complexity for corporate travel managers.

A practical solution to these challenges is the adoption of travel management platforms equipped with [carbon reporting tools](#). These platforms enable companies to track and report on the carbon emissions generated through travel bookings, providing detailed data on the environmental impact of accommodations and transportation options.

This data empowers travel managers to make informed choices aligning with organisational sustainability goals and employee needs. In addition to improving decision-making, these platforms simplify compliance with environmental reporting requirements, such as the Carbon Sustainability Reporting Directive and other industry standards.





By automating data collection and reporting processes, these tools significantly reduce the administrative burden on teams, supporting compliance with regulatory frameworks while freeing up resources for other priorities.

Furthermore, leveraging such technology enables businesses to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability tangibly and transparently. By showcasing measurable efforts to reduce carbon emissions in alignment with their environmental policies, organisations build trust with stakeholders and partners and strengthen their corporate social responsibility initiatives.

TICKET SPLITTING TOOLS

Cost efficiency is a priority for all travellers when booking rail travel. However, traditional methods such as booking tickets directly through train operator websites or purchasing in-person at rail stations can be time-consuming and costly.

Advanced travel booking platforms address the complexities of corporate travel by integrating tools designed to optimise costs and simplify the booking process. One such feature, split ticketing, is pivotal in securing competitive travel rates.

This involves breaking down a single rail journey into multiple segments, each with its own separate ticket. So, instead of purchasing a single ticket for the entire trip. For example, if a direct journey from Point A to Point C costs £50, split-ticketing may suggest purchasing tickets for Point A to Point B and Point B to Point C separately, which might reduce the overall cost to £40.

HOW DO TRAVEL PLATFORMS IMPLEMENT SPLIT TICKETING?

Travel booking platforms equipped with split-ticketing technology automatically search for cost-saving combinations by:

- 1 **Analysing routes:** The platform evaluates the full journey and identifies logical stops where splitting tickets is feasible.
- 2 **Calculating costs:** It compares the cost of a direct ticket with multiple tickets for the same route.
- 3 **Providing options:** The platform offers users split-ticket options alongside standard fares, allowing travel managers to choose the most cost-effective solution.

The benefits of split-ticketing:

Benefit	Description
Cost savings	Businesses can significantly reduce travel expenses by leveraging lower fares.
Automation	Platforms handle complex calculations and comparisons, eliminating the need for manual research by travel managers.
Compliance	Split ticketing options are tailored to align with company policies, adhering to budgetary constraints.
Convenience	Savings are seamlessly integrated into the booking process, saving time and simplifying travel planning.

OTHER RAIL TRAVEL MANAGEMENT FEATURES

In addition to cost-saving benefits, these advanced solutions provide robust administrative capabilities to increase transparency and efficiency. The platforms can maintain detailed records of all rail bookings, categorised by employee and department. This provides complete visibility into travel activities, allowing organisations to monitor spending, track compliance and hold departments accountable for their travel decisions.

Moreover, these platforms enable travel managers to implement and enforce approval workflows. This makes sure that all trips are reviewed and authorised by the appropriate managers before tickets are booked, reducing the risk of unauthorised travel and unplanned expenses.

STREAMLINING LARGE-SCALE CORPORATE TRAVEL BOOKINGS

Managing large-scale travel bookings presents its own set of challenges. Travel managers are often required to secure accommodation directly at or near the work or event location to improve efficiency. For instance, construction crews may stay in temporary housing near a job site, while employees attending corporate retreats might be booked in hotels connected to the venue.

This process becomes even more complex when handling group bookings for meetings or conferences, as it involves coordinating accommodation, transportation and amenities for multiple attendees simultaneously.

To effectively manage such intricate travel needs while saving time and reducing costs, businesses can adopt a combined approach that integrates advanced travel management software with the expertise of corporate travel teams:

THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY

Advanced travel management platforms simplify the booking process by:

- Centralised travel and accommodation options: Easily compare and book from a wide range of choices in one place.
- Automated approval workflows: Speed up decision-making with pre-set rules for approvals, reducing delays and manual effort required.
- Detailed cost insights and savings analysis: Access real-time data on expenses and identify opportunities to optimise budgets effectively.



THE VALUE OF EXPERT TRAVEL TEAMS

Complementing technology, experienced corporate travel teams bring essential expertise to the table.

These teams can:

- Source, negotiate and contract venues and travel packages tailored to specific project needs.
- Produce consolidated invoices that provide detailed breakdowns of spending and cost savings.
- Arrange value-added services such as optimised [check-in times](#), parking arrangements and meal packages to elevate the travel experience.

By combining the convenience of technology and the experience of expert travel teams, businesses get the best of both worlds for managing their large-scale bookings.



STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATING THE RIGHT TRAVEL MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY

Selecting and implementing the above travel technologies requires a strategic, well-informed approach to align with organisational priorities and long-term objectives. This section outlines key strategies for successfully incorporating travel management technology to deliver measurable outcomes and sustained value:

ALIGN WITH ORGANISATIONAL PRIORITIES

Before investing in new tools, travel managers need to assess their organisation's current travel management challenges and how technology could address them.

By focusing on areas such as improving the employee travel experience, policy compliance, improving booking efficiency and reducing overall travel expenditure, organisations can align technological solutions to their needs for a more substantial return on investment.

The table below highlights critical focus areas, associated challenges and relevant statistics to support decision-making:



Focus area	Key challenges	Relevant statistics	Implications
Improving the employee travel experience	Providing a positive travel experience to boost morale and productivity without drifting from the budget. Aligning travel perks with employee motivation.	88% of millennial business travellers report that job-related travel affects their overall job satisfaction. 83% of business travellers consider travel "important" or "very important" to their job success.	Positive travel experiences increase employee satisfaction, so it's crucial to actively seek technology that aligns with employee preferences.
Compliance with company travel policies	Addressing gaps between policy awareness and adherence. Implementing effective enforcement mechanisms.	Two-thirds of travellers deviate from company policies, often for client-related needs. 95% of travellers know where to find policies, but only half are satisfied with them.	Travel policy compliance improves when communication is clear, policies are easy to understand and employees have access to intuitive, user-friendly tools that allow them to put the policy into action.
Improving booking efficiency	Reducing stress and inefficiencies in the booking process. Leveraging real-time data to improve decision-making.	47% of travel managers report increased stress due to manual booking processes. 98% of travel managers cite the lack of real-time data as a significant obstacle.	Automating booking processes reduces stress and saves valuable time, while real-time data provides the insights needed for better decision-making. Together, these benefits underscore the essential role of travel technology in streamlining operations and boosting efficiency.
Reducing overall travel expenditure	Managing rising travel costs due to inflation and increased demand. Implementing cost-saving strategies like split ticketing.	73% of travel managers expect a 14%-15% increase in travel spend for 2024. 41% of travel managers cite inflation as a major cost driver.	Advanced cost-saving strategies like split ticketing and early bookings can significantly offset rising travel costs. Efficient budget management tools can mitigate inflationary pressures and improve ROI.

PRIORITISE USER EXPERIENCE

Effective technology should be intuitive and user-friendly. Cumbersome tools become obstacles rather than solutions. Look for platforms with cloud-based interfaces that are easy to navigate and supported by reliable customer service teams. This approach increases the likelihood of quick adoption and higher satisfaction among team members.

FOCUS ON SCALABILITY

As businesses grow, so do their travel management needs. Choose technologies that can scale to accommodate increasing complexities, such as large-scale bookings, multi-departmental requirements and evolving travel policies.

ASSESS INTEGRATION CAPABILITIES

Select tools that integrate with your existing systems to reduce disruptions and enable efficient information sharing.

CONDUCT A COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

While initial investment in new technology may seem substantial, evaluate the long-term benefits in terms of efficiency gains, employee satisfaction and cost savings.

LEVERAGE DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

Real-time analytics play an integral role in understanding and optimising travel spending. Choosing platforms with robust reporting tools can uncover patterns in travel behaviour and identify opportunities for cost savings. These capabilities empower organisations to make data-driven decisions and improve overall efficiency.

Key benefits of real-time analytics include:

- Instant access to up-to-date travel metrics
- Actionable data for negotiating better hotel rates
- Detailed insights into team and individual travel expenditures
- Tools to control costs and refine travel policies effectively



REAL-WORLD SUCCESS: MUSGRAVE RETAIL GROUP'S JOURNEY WITH ROOMEX

The strategies and tools discussed in this white paper have proven their value in real-world scenarios, with the [Musgrave Retail Group](#) standing out as a prime example. By partnering with Roomex, they transformed their travel management approach by addressing their inefficiencies and achieved remarkable results:

THE CHALLENGE

Musgrave Retail Group faced several travel management challenges.

Most notably, they needed to:

- Gain better control over their accommodation spending
- Streamline booking processes to improve efficiency
- Maintain strong relationships with their preferred hotels



The complexity of manual systems for booking and tracking expenses often resulted in missed cost-saving opportunities, administrative delays and fragmented data, which made it difficult to optimise their travel programme effectively.

THE SOLUTION



Roomex provided Musgrave with a centralised travel management platform that directly addressed these challenges.

Leveraging Roomex's innovative tools, Musgrave was able to:

- Integrate its spending data for seamless tracking across all five divisions, supporting a global workforce.
- Get better data access to streamline processes and drive cost reductions.
- Compare rates on every booking to benefit from maximum savings on hotel accommodations, optimising the budget effectively.

THE RESULTS

- **Cost savings:** Achieved a 19% reduction in costs compared to standard rates.
- **Better visibility:** Instant access to booking data by person, hotel, division and group
- **Effortless negotiations:** Fully outsourced hotel negotiation and contracting processes.
- **Real-time benchmarking:** Live comparisons between actual booked rates and negotiated rates.
- **Streamlined workflow:** Standardised booking process with self-cancellation functionality to avoid unnecessary costs.
- **Time efficiency:** Significant time savings in bookings, reporting, staff communication and hotel contracting.

THE TAKEAWAY

Musgrave's success highlights the potential of centralised travel management platforms like Roomex. By adopting technology tailored to their needs, they overcame long-standing challenges, achieved measurable cost savings and improved operational efficiency.

STREAMLINING CORPORATE TRAVEL WITH THE RIGHT TRAVEL MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY

As this white paper illustrates, embracing advanced travel management tools can significantly alleviate the typical challenges travel managers face and drive tangible improvements in operational efficiency.

The success of Musgrave Retail Group underscores the power of a robust travel management platform. Their partnership with Roomex resolved long-standing challenges and delivered measurable outcomes such as a 19% cost reduction, better data visibility and operational time savings.

For organisations seeking similar results, Roomex offers a free, customisable platform designed to meet the evolving demands of corporate travel management. By leveraging Roomex's innovative features, such as carbon reporting, instant expense claims and split-ticketing, businesses can optimise their travel programmes while giving employees a user-friendly experience.

Explore how Roomex can help you modernise your travel management practices and unlock the full potential of your corporate travel programme.
[Book a demo](#) with us today.