Seven Steps to Increasing the Resiliency and Value of Your Travel Program in the "New Normal"

As a user of SAP® Concur® solutions, you're already on your way to being prepared for travel to resume. According to a new Wakefield Research survey of 4,850 business travelers, travel is vital to success. Of those surveyed, 46% predict sales declines without travel.[1]

But there are many challenges ahead, from learning how to travel safely to improving transparency into travel bookings and spend. You'll also need to be mindful of employee concerns and address them — in many cases, by using SAP Concur solutions to better support travelers worldwide, improve their satisfaction and productivity, and gain full visibility into travel data.

Here are seven steps to enhancing the resiliency and value of travel programs in the "new normal."
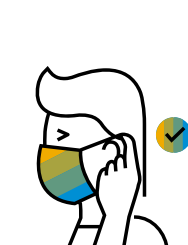
Step 1: Plan Ahead for Continuous Change

Given current disruptions, business travel may not return to normal for years to come. As a result, your return-to-travel strategy needs to be agile and adaptable.
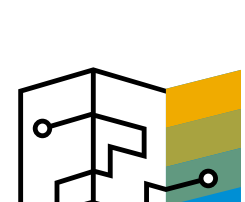
- Work with your internal stakeholders (such as security, HR, finance, and legal) and external ones such as your duty-of-care service provider and travel management companies (TMCs) to map out what's required before restarting travel — and what events would necessitate a shutdown.
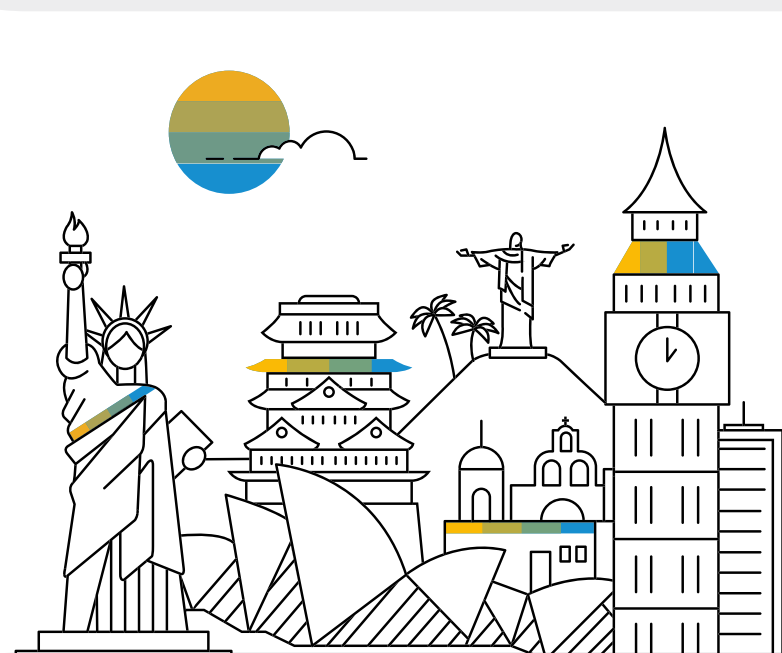- Consider planning for a phased return to travel as states, countries, and borders reopen and are considered safe for travel.
- Publish travel and expense policies and guidelines frequently to reflect the changing nuances of today's evolving travel landscape.
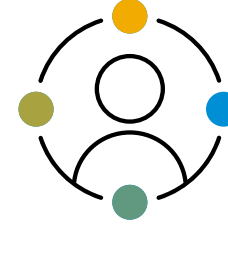- Give travelers time to adjust to new travel dynamics and policies.

96% of travel managers say their companies were not fully prepared to manage travel during COVID-19.[2]

Step 2: Adapt Quickly by Staying Informed

Never before has travel been impacted by constant change, from new travel restrictions and requirements to new traveler responsibilities being put in place by nearly all travel suppliers. Keep travelers informed of changes by:

- Establishing a business travel resource center where travelers can find relevant, up-to-date travel information (for example, regarding safety and the latest travel requirements).
- Encourage employees to review and update their entire profile in the Concur Travel solution, including mobile numbers, emergency contacts, office location, and more.

Step 3: Harness the Power of Foresight with Pre-Trip Approvals

Obtain transparency over travel spend and risk by:
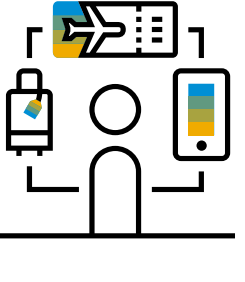
- Implementing Concur Request and Budget services to increase visibility into the purpose of trips and empower managers to assess expenses and budgets before allowing them to take place
- Working with management to define "essential travel" and communicate it to employees
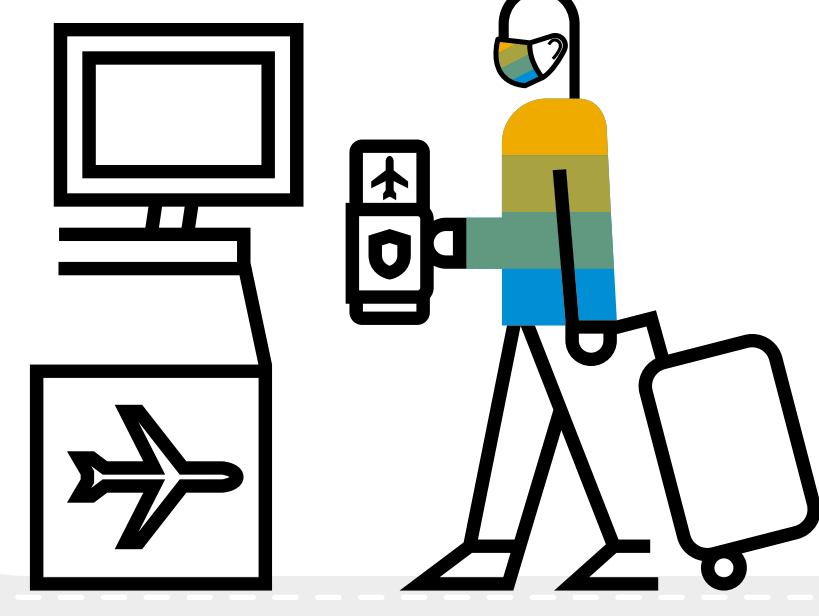- Empowering managers to postpone, cancel, or substitute travel with technology, or choose to drive (and deploy the Concur Drive service to auto-track mileage, if not in place)
- Defining criteria for when a trip can be self-booked in Concur Travel (or directly with a supplier in the Concur TripLink service) and when a trip is complex and requires agency booking services

40% of travel managers expect to add pre-trip approvals in the near term.[3]

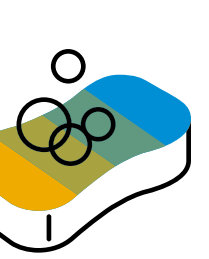## Step 4: Guide Approved Travelers to Make Wise Choices

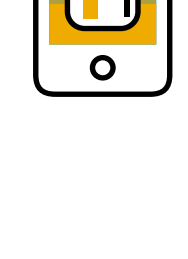Once travel is approved, help employees stay safe and have a smooth trip by:

- Using the visa requirements reminder feature in Concur Travel to alert travelers to check visa and entry requirements when booking, as well as the EY Travel Risk and Compliance app (available on SAP App Center) to alert travelers of tax risks and immigration requirements
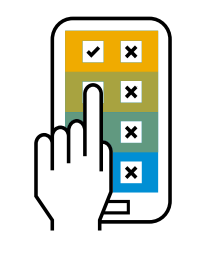- Encouraging travelers to book only flexible flights and refundable hotel rooms so they can respond to unpredictable changes
- Advising travelers to check with your TMC partners for unused tickets or credits available for use
- Configuring Concur Travel to list preferred vendors (in sale locations, for example) and lowest-priced tickets or rates at the top of search results
- Directing them to book through your approved channels (such as Concur Travel, your approved travel agency, or supplier direct using your Concur TripLink service partners) so spend data, regardless of booking source, is captured automatically for expense reporting and spend visibility
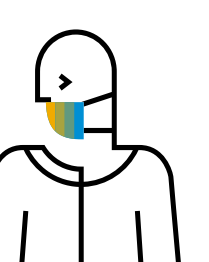
Step 5: Build Safety into Pre-Trip Planning

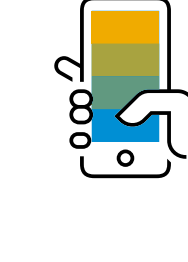Business travelers have never been more concerned about safety. Show you care by:
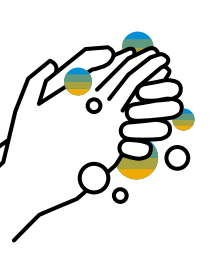
- Defining a clear company position on when personal protective equipment (PPE), masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes should be used and if costs can be expensed
- Advising travelers to be prepared to comply with requirements for wearing masks and to review airport security guidelines in advance so they can avoid issues and delays
- Working with TMC partners to establish pre-trip reporting on all upcoming travel
- Reminding your employees to use the top-rated TripIt® mobile app to access neighborhood safety scores and supplier alerts
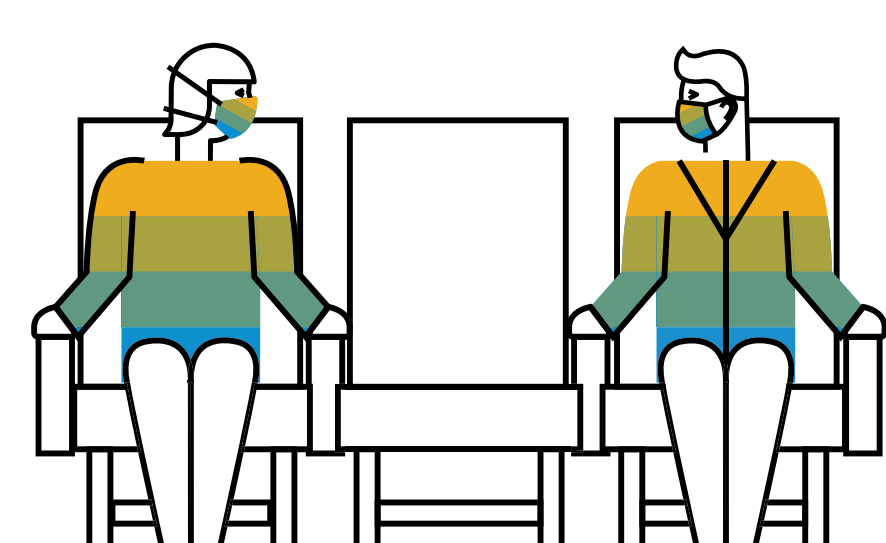
38% of business travelers ranked health and safety as most important when traveling for business (up from 31% last year).[4]

Step 6: Help Employees Stay Safe While Traveling

Employees adapt more quickly and easily to change when they know what's safe. You can help by:

- Advising travelers on what to do if any point during a trip they feel unwell and who to contact in an emergency
- Deploying duty-of-care services and solutions to support employee risk management and safety communications and advising all travelers on who to contact if needs arise
- Educating travelers on new standard health practices (for example, online check-in, electronic boarding passes, and contactless luggage drops)
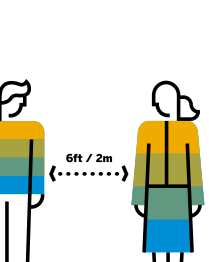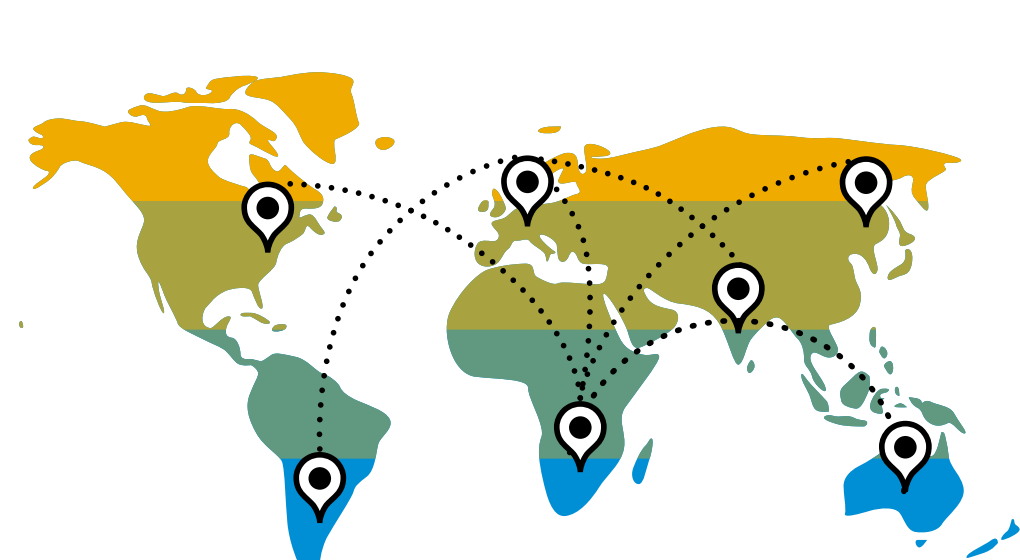- Encouraging the use of contactless payments and reeducating travelers on how the Concur Expense solution eliminates the need for paper receipts
- Advising travelers to allow extra time for airport check-in and health screenings and to practice social distancing, especially when using public transit systems
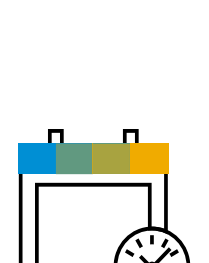
33% of travel managers were not prepared to help track travelers during COVID-19.[5]

Step 7: Proactively Manage the Post-Travel Experience

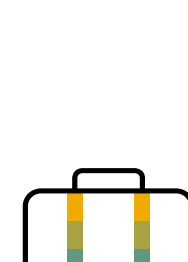Once travelers return, continued duty of care and expense management are top of mind. Consider:

- Advising travelers to self-isolate for 14 calendar days once they return from a trip
- Avoiding visits to company and customer offices
- Communicating a maximum reimbursable allowance per trip for PPE purchases
- Deploying the Consultative Intelligence service to create dashboards and reports that provide a more complete picture of your spend and insights into trends and policy compliance.
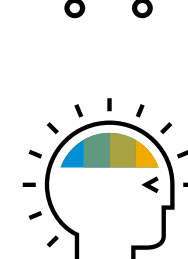- Defining standard post-travel reports for senior management
- Surveying travelers to understand the real-world traveler experience and using insights to continuously adapt and improve travel for employees
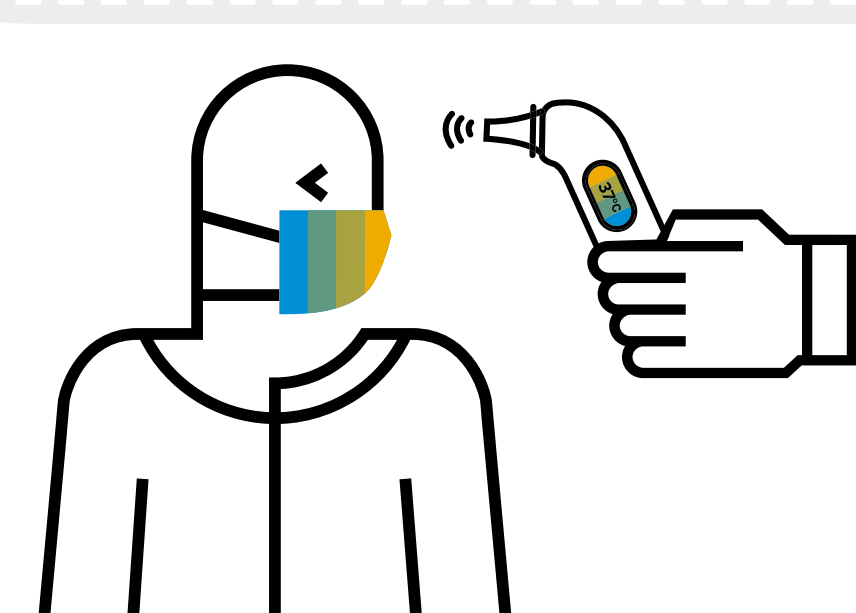
36% of travel managers expect to add enhanced duty-of-care solutions and services.[6]

Learn More

Want to learn more? Visit us online to learn about how to extend your SAP Concur solutions to streamline and support your organization's return to travel.

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