



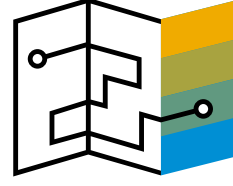
Seven Steps to a Successful Return to Travel

Business travel will resume. According to a new Wakefield Research survey of **4,850** business travelers worldwide, **46%** predict declines in new business if they are not able to travel.¹ But as your company resumes travel, there will be unknowns to address. Gaining visibility over travel spend will always be a priority – now more than ever. Getting your employees traveling again will require building their trust and confidence in new health and safety protocols, as well as helping them navigate new steps to keep them more connected pre- and post-travel.

Here are seven steps to a successful travel program in the “new normal.”

✓ Step 1: Plan Ahead for Continuous Change

Given current disruptions and economic conditions, the return to business travel as we knew it will take time. As a result, your return-to-travel strategy needs to be agile and adaptable.



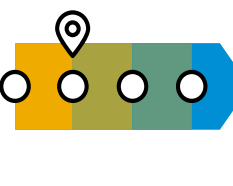
Work with your internal stakeholders (such as security, HR, finance, and legal) and external stakeholders (such as your duty-of-care service provider and travel management companies [TMCs]) to map out what's required before restarting travel – and what events would necessitate a shutdown.



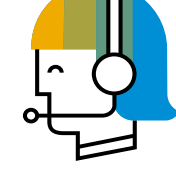
Publish travel and expense policies and guidelines frequently to reflect the changing nuances of today's evolving travel landscape.



Give travelers time to adjust to new travel dynamics and policies.



Consider planning for a phased return to travel as states, countries, and borders reopen and are considered safe for travel.



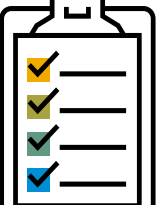
Be available to address traveler concerns and publish who to contact with specific questions.



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 travel mandates by airlines, ground transportation providers, and hotels. To make it easy to keep travelers informed:



Establish a **business travel resource center** where travelers can easily find relevant, up-to-date travel information (for example, regarding safety and the latest travel requirements).



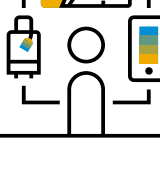
Remind employees to keep their travel profiles up to date, including emergency contacts.



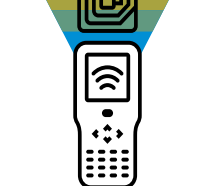
Consider deploying a travel app that integrates supplier alerts and messages so there's no delay in employee access to critical travel updates.

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

Obtain greater transparency over travel spend and risk by implementing a pre-trip request and approval process. You'll gain visibility into the purpose of trips, be able to assess importance and cost, and empower managers to proactively manage budgets and accrue for expenses prior to approving employee travel. To get started:



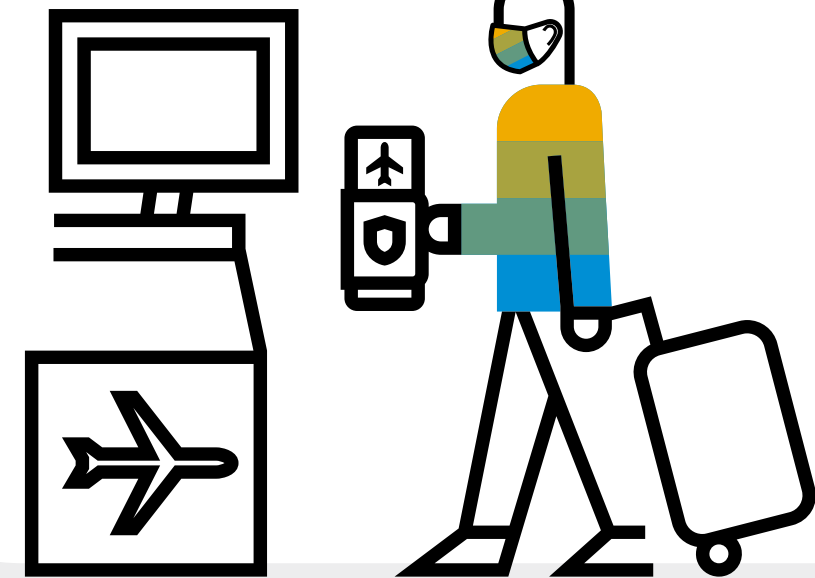
Work with management to define “essential travel” and communicate it to employees.



Empower managers, where appropriate, to postpone, cancel, or recommend the use of technology.



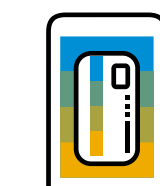
Define a clear approval pathway that syncs with your travel support partners such as TMCs and duty-of-care service providers.



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

✓ Step 4: Guide Approved Travelers to Make Wise Choices

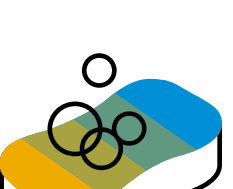
Once travel is approved, aid in employee safety and booking practices by:



Advising travelers to check with your TMC partners for unused tickets or credits available for use



Encouraging travelers to book only flexible flights and refundable hotel rates



Recommending that travelers use only preferred air, lodging, rental car, and other vendors with established, trustworthy cleaning protocols



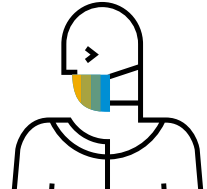
Advising international travelers (or those embarking on complicated trips) to book through your TMC partners that can provide assistance

✓ Step 5: Build Safety into Pre-Trip Planning

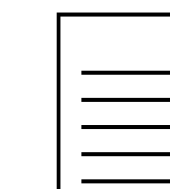
Business travelers have likely never been more concerned about safety. Help ease their concerns by:



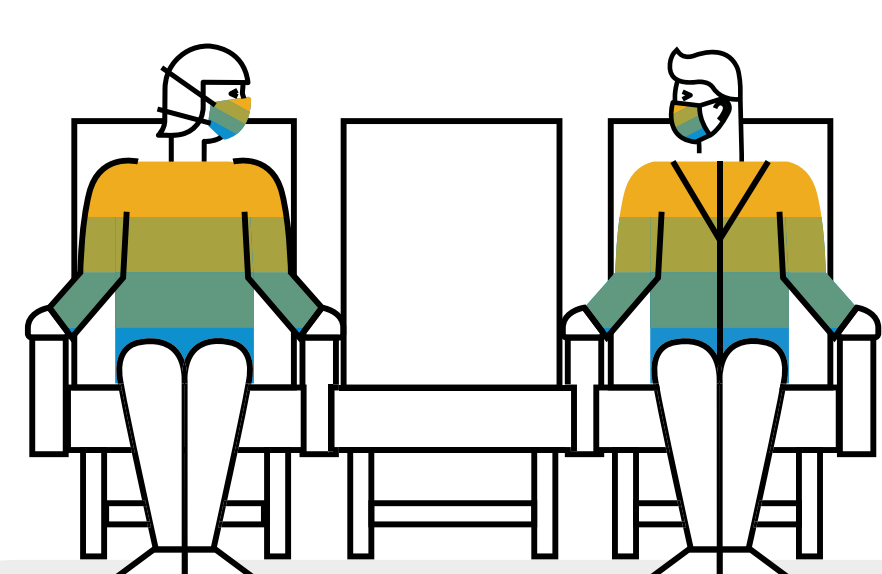
Defining a clear company stance on when personal protection equipment (PPE) items such as masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer should be used and if the costs can be expensed



Advising travelers to be prepared to comply with supplier rules for wearing masks and review airport security guidelines to prevent unnecessary delays



Working with your TMC partners to establish pre-trip reporting on all upcoming travel



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 can adapt faster and more easily to change when they are prepared. You can help by:



Advising travelers on what to do if at any point during a trip they feel unwell or become sick



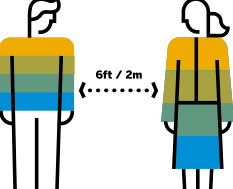
Educating travelers on new standard practices – for example, to check in online, get an electronic boarding pass, and use contactless luggage drops



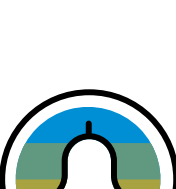
Aligning, if available, with security operations to ensure readiness to support traveler emergencies



Keeping things touchless by encouraging use of contactless payments, using their mobile device and deploying an expense automation solution to capture digital receipts as they go



Advising travelers to allow extra time for airport check-in and health screenings and to always practice social distancing, especially on public transit systems



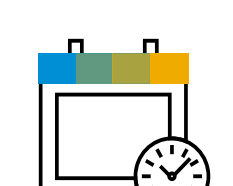
Providing mobile tools that give them updates on flight changes and health and safety scores



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 home, continued duty of care and expense management should be top of mind for you – and for them. Consider:



Recommending, where possible, that travelers work from home for 14 calendar days once they return from a trip and avoid visits to customer offices



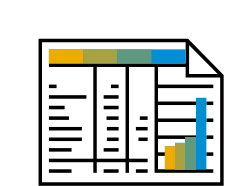
Defining standard post-travel reports for senior management



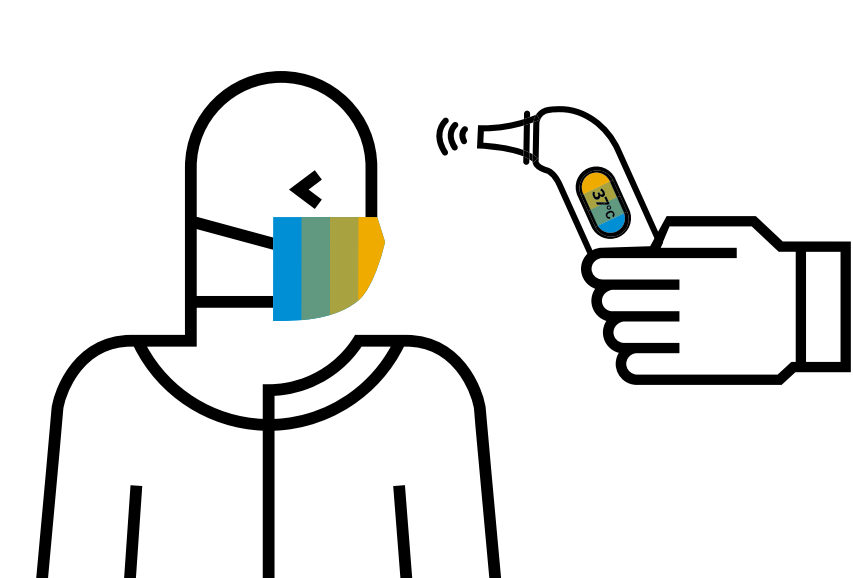
Communicating a maximum reimbursable allowance per trip for PPE purchases



Surveying travelers to understand the real-world traveler experience and use insights to continuously adapt and improve travel for employees



Automating expense reporting so employees no longer need to collect and retain receipts



36% of travel managers expect to add enhanced duty-of-care solutions and services.⁶

Learn More

Want to learn more? Visit us [online](#) for expert advice and solutions to streamline and support your organization's return to travel.

1., 4. "Global Traveler Report," Wakefield Research, July 2020.
2., 3., 5., 6. "Global Travel Manager Report," Wakefield Research, July 2020.