

When should companies restart their international travel programmes?

Companies that have taken a wait-and-see approach to their business travels are now actively starting to re-evaluate travel programmes. This in turn can lead to some difficult decisions, and one burning question is when can one safely resume your international travel programme?

Oz Desai, general manager of Corporate Traveller, explains the most pressing question South African companies are asking: how they will know the time is right.

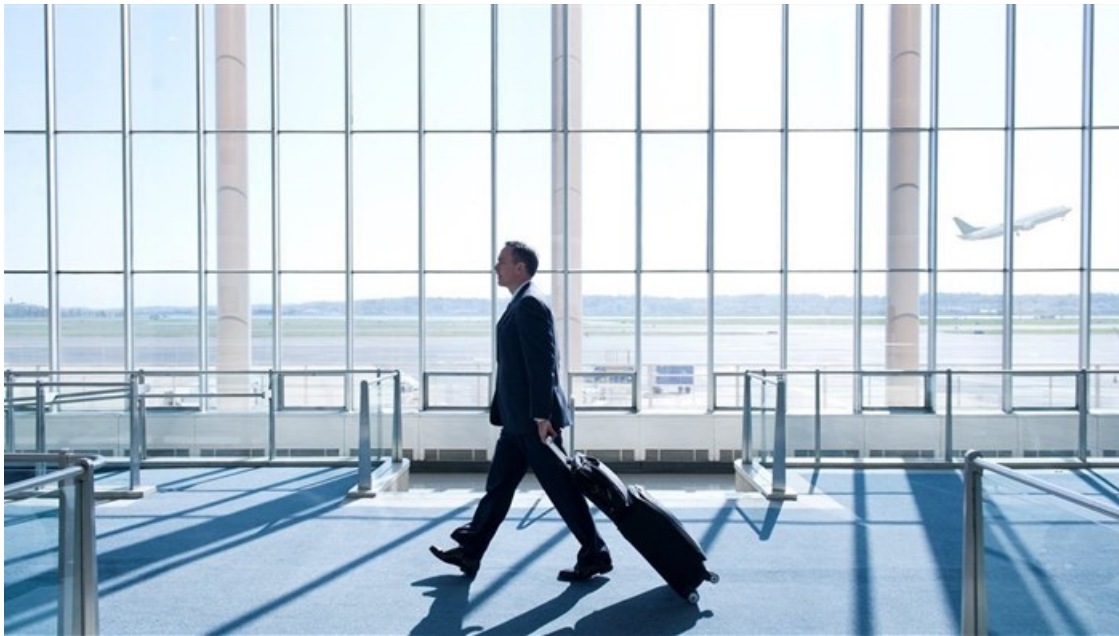


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"Travel managers want to know whether it is safe to send out their travellers internationally. They are also actively exploring what kind of technology is important for these travellers during these times – and how they should change their approach to business travel."

According to Desai, a recently conducted Corporate Traveller survey shows that the majority of companies are ready to resume business travels as soon as their employees are fully vaccinated. However, the question remains as to how travellers feel about this.

"Some may be worried about travelling until certain measures are in place. Others might not even want a vaccine. It's important to know what the expectation of employees is in each company as every workforce is different."

To answer the most pressing questions around business travel, Corporate Traveller has released an insightful white paper with tips and advice. In a nutshell, however, companies need to assess the following elements within their own company:

1. Traveller readiness

Survey employees to gauge what they want from travel in the future and how comfortable they are. Your travel management company can help sculpt your survey and advise on the how, when and what to send out.

2. Travel policy

Travel has changed, so your policy needs to as well. Chat to everyone in your company: HR, teams, security, procurement and gather important feedback. Once you have finalised details such as approval processes, reasons for travel and COVID conduct, make sure you share the changes with your travellers.

3. Supplier choices

Once you have a good understanding what is important for your travellers and your company, your choice of suppliers will be easier to make. You can now suggest that travellers book a particular hotel chain or airline that has the measures in place they expect – and can trust.

4. Savings

While safety is important, it's clear saving money is still a priority as well. Your TMC can help you recognise changes in your programme and opportunities to save money, such as flexible airfares and hotel negotiations. Even spotting patterns in your travel data creates a chance to save some cash.

5. Support and technology

Evaluate what's important to you when it comes to support and technology. What sticks in your memory from your TMC experience in the last year? It might be a team or tool that has brought some comfort or peace of mind. Or something that has saved you a bunch of time.

"Business travel has always been more complex than leisure travel. And in a post-COVID world, it is more complex than ever before. By evaluating what's important to your company and your travellers and having open and honest conversations, you'll be able to answer most questions on travel. For all the other questions – turn to your travel management company and remember that no question is a stupid question," concludes Desai.

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