The Hotel Expert
The magazine for travel management and hotel procurement

It's getting personal
Better service for business travellers with recommendation management

Touring Buenos Aires
Travel guidelines – less is more
MICE location check Amsterdam
Dear Readers,

Traveller centricity – focusing on the business traveller and his or her individual needs – is currently the dominant theme in travel management. Young companies, like for example Berlin-based start-up Conichi, picked up on the trend towards personalisation some time ago and are continually driving it forward. The conquest of customised services is also imminent in the area of business travel planning. To find out what that means for you as travel managers and how we support you in this area, please see our cover story from page 8.

There is widespread agreement in the market about the value of this new orientation towards the traveller, as numerous studies show. However, a current survey carried out by ACTE and HRS also indicates that the vast majority of travel managers are still bogged down in operational concerns. Almost the same number of travel managers who plan to generate savings primarily through demand-side management and compliance in future – far more than 80 percent – spend a significant portion of their working time in negotiations with suppliers. Thus there is almost no time left for gearing their role more strategically with an eye to the travelling employee.

Because after many years of countless rounds of individual negotiations. But time, this precious resource, is urgently required to strategically position travel management so that focusing on the traveller leads to a measurable reduction in both direct and indirect costs.

To achieve this, it is decisive that the travel manager increasingly pulls back from business operations and instead positions himself as a strategic consultant within the company. Established processes should be reconsidered in their entirety and the use of automated solutions investigated. With optimised payment solutions, for example, which can reduce the average process costs per travel expenses report by half – €53, as a study carried out by the GBTA Foundation and HRS shows. Or with personalised offers for the traveller which enable him to find a hotel that is suitable for him faster and can already save time during the booking process.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of our mag-

Tobias Ragge
HRS Managing Director
Issue 02/2016

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Truman Capote would approve of the new era dawning for business travellers on the Río de la Plata. Brazil was beastly, but Buenos Aires the best - not Tiffany's, but almost! - the writer waxed lyrical. The new President, Mauricio Macri, stands for a more open foreign policy, economic liberalisation and integration into the global market. Even after finishing time, the elegant capital has a lot to offer: Buenos Aires is the world capital of steak lovers.

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Berlin retains top position

Europe’s favourite MICE destinations: Berlin has repeated its previous year’s performance to be named the most important city for meetings and events. Of the event planners surveyed, 53 percent could imagine holding conventions there, according to the results of the latest Pro Sky Destination Report. Barcelona (38 percent) followed in second place, ahead of Vienna (29 percent) and Lisbon (27 percent). Scandinavian and Baltic cities are also highly popular. MICE planners confirm that Copenhagen, Stockholm and Riga, as well as the Polish city of Gdansk, all have great potential for development.

Hotel price ranking

The run on large, international cities is continuing, and hotel prices are rising sharply in accordance with this trend. This is the result of the “Price Radar 2016” HRS analysis for the first quarter of 2016. The clear leader of the field is Buenos Aires, with an average price increase rate of 20.4 percent to €108 per overnight stay. Similarly robust price increases were seen in Tokyo (+19% to €184), San Francisco (+16.6% to €229) and Bangkok (+14.8% to €81). Staying in Miami overnight remains expensive; accommodation prices here rose by 10.5 percent to €191. In contrast, England’s capital, London, experienced a slump: Prices there declined by 39.3 percent to €117 per overnight stay. In Germany, Berlin prices rose by 3.4 percent; an overnight stay in the city costs €87 on average.

China Refunds allowed

China has scrapped its Business Tax and replaced it with value-added tax (VAT). This new tax is charged at 6 percent and is thus 1 percent higher than the previous levy. However, travelers from abroad are still better off than they used to be. They can get the new VAT on accommodation and other travel services refunded – unlike the Business Tax – on departure. In order to receive a refund, they must have their company name, tax number, address, telephone number and bank details on an invoice. This information can already be stored when using HRS virtual payment solutions.

Keeping ancillary fees under control

Ancillary fees for seat reservations, luggage or changing reservations are some of the nuisances of our time. But the days of lacking transparency are now gone. In order that travel managers can at least allocate ancillary flight costs directly down to the last detail in future, Air Plus, a solutions provider for business travel management, has expanded its Information Manager to include what are known as “electronic miscellaneous documents” (EMDs). This enables all additional costs to be viewed at a glance if they were booked before a trip in the form of an EMD through a GDS and paid for with the AirPlus Company Account.

Up to now, additional costs have mainly been caused by changes or cancellations of reservations (83 percent). However, looking at the airlines’ à-la-carte strategies, AirPlus General Manager Patrick Diemer expects a strong surge in ancillary fees.
**Time gain: Online conference bookings**

Booking conferences directly through online portals like meetago will become the preferred method – this is the opinion expressed by meeting organisers at companies and in the hotel business in a survey taken by the HSMA Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association. Almost all respondents named time gains as the greatest benefit of online bookings: “Time-consuming searches” (Silke Vetter, Roche Pharma AG) were no longer necessary, nor were “complicated enquiry processes” (Christian Schmidt, Go Gießen). “Of course, no one has has the time or the desire any more nowadays to spend time and effort searching for available conference rooms or hotels for a meeting or a conference,” Hanna Rieke, General Manager of Telekom Mobility Solutions, also confirms. Meanwhile, Bernd Fritzges from Vereinigung Deutscher Veranstaltungsorganisatoren e.V., the Association of German Event Organisers, advises the use of a differentiated approach: He believes that a combination of live booking and queries with options – depending on the type of event – is the best method. Till Rute (Certified Certifier at VDR, the German Business Travel Association), is of the same opinion: Real-time booking is suitable for seminars up to 50 participants with standard technological requirements, he says, while larger, more specialised events would still necessitate an initial enquiry.

**Smooth surfing**

From autumn 2016, Lufthansa passengers should be able to use significantly faster internet connections during flights. Initially, the service will only apply to selected flights using the Airbus A319 to A321 models within Germany and Europe. Up to now, only long-haul Lufthansa aircraft have been equipped with internet connections. The airline has not yet disclosed prices for the service, but refers to the existing fees on long-haul flights. Currently, four hours of surfing on long-haul flights costs €14. Internet reception on the aircraft is carried via satellite; an LTE connection is set to follow from 2017. Then the combined technology of satellite and LTE should permit smooth surfing above the clouds for airline passengers.

**In the fast lane**

China is overtaking the USA: The Chinese business travel market is still growing and has now even usurped the previous market leader, the United States, from the number one position, the Global Business Travel Association discovered in its China 2016 study. During the course of the year, the People’s Republic will likely spend US$320.7 billion on business trips. This corresponds to a 10.1 percent expansion from the previous year. In a direct comparison, the United States will likely spend US$295.7 billion in the same period, which is nonetheless an increase of 1.9 percent. Despite experiencing a slowdown in relative terms, China’s business travel market is the fastest growing market in the world, according to the study. It has grown by 16.2 percent on average every year since 2000.
Mobility Symposium  
23/6/2016 | Frankfurt am Main  
Self-driving cars, mobility budgets and digital travel are the key topics of this symposium which is organised by German rail company DB and TIC. New: Best practice sessions.  
www.deutschebahn-events.com/mobility/2016

Hospitality Symposium  
12/7/2016 | Frankfurt am Main-Gravenbruch  
Premiere of TIC and HSMAI Region Europe event: Discussions, presentations and break-out sessions on sales, revenue management and digitisation. The symposium will be held in English.  
www.travelindustryclub.de

GBTA Convention  
16/7–20/7/2016 | Denver  
World’s largest business travel trade fair. Under the heading “Balance” the fair will focus on duty of care, cost management and compliance.  
convention.gbta.org

Convention4u  
20–21/7/2016 | Graz  
Further training focusing on the human factor and digitisation at events.  
c4u.acb.at

Travel Industry Manager 2016  
5/9/2016 | Essen  
Presentation of the awards for the Business Travel Manager and the Travel Industry Manager of the year, as well as for four further categories.  
www.travelindustryclub.de

FVW Congress and Travel Expo  
6/9–7/9/2016 | Essen  
Conference on the status quo and trends in the sector: Travel technologies in an era of smartphones and tablets, and risks when travelling. Simultaneously, networking at the Travel Expo fair with 80 exhibitors for service providers and companies.  
www.fvw.de

Strategic collaboration

HRS and Concur, a solution provider for travel management and travel expense accounting, are deepening their partnership. The objectives of the closer collaboration are improving the display of HRS content in the Concur Travel tool as well as integrating Concur’s Triplink technology. This will enable travel managers to view and manage all bookings processed directly through HRS. In practice this will mean: Business travellers will be able to book directly on their preferred provider’s website and still take advantage of fixed corporate rates. This will enable companies to achieve significant cost savings.

Reorganisation

In order to be able to support large, internationally operating corporations even better, HRS is expanding its global management team. Thus Flavio Ghiringhelli is moving up from among the ranks of HRS to become Vice President of Corporate Solutions. In future, Dirk Schmidt will be responsible for business in North and Central Europe as Managing Director Corporate Solutions. In this way, HRS is adapting to its accelerated growth and global expansion.

The HRS Group now has a worldwide presence, with 26 branches in the most important business travel markets. In order to be able to support customers in the individual regions even better, the Cologne-based group is also expanding its organisational structure in the area of Bereich Corporate Solutions.
Earlier online check-in
From now on, passengers flying with Emirates will be able to check in 48 hours before departure. Thus the United Arab Emirates airline is extending the window of time for online check-in by an additional 24 hours. Now passengers around the world can complete their check-in procedure from their computer or mobile device as early as two days or as late as 90 minutes before take-off. By allowing a significantly longer lead time, Emirates wants to give its customers greater flexibility in selecting their seats, says Volker Greiner, Emirates Vice President for North and Central Europe. In addition, the extended check-in time enables seamless customer communication in the event of flight delays, he says.

Fewer flights, more train journeys
Business travellers in Germany will travel less frequently by air in the future. This is the result of the preliminary Business Travel Analysis 2016 carried out by VDR, the German Business Travel Association). According to the study, 27 percent of the approximately 800 travel managers surveyed expect fewer flights in 2017; that is 17 percent more than in 2016. "From an economic perspective, business trips are a potential early indicator of macroeconomic activity," says VDR President Dirk Gerdom. "Whether someone and who has to take a business trip, and how often, is not decided by the traveller’s situation, but by the company's." Accordingly, companies with moderate order intake are especially likely to opt for alternative modes of transport. Rail companies could be among those to profit from this development. After all, 47 percent of respondents expect an increase in rail journeys in 2017.

German conference market
Event sector on a growth trajectory: In 2015, German event locations welcomed a total of 393 million participants – an increase of 2.6 percent compared to the previous year. The significance of events in Germany is growing in other countries in particular: Thus the number of international visitors rose by 8.3 percent to 27.7 million. That means that the number of foreign event participants almost doubled in the last 10 years alone. These are the key results of the 2016 Meeting and Event Barometer. The event budgets of companies and associations are likely to increase in the current year too. Some 26.7 percent of the survey’s respondents expect their financial resources to rise. Only 15.6 percent of event planners foresee a decline in financial resources.
Google banners, email advertising, product recommendations – everything on the web is becoming more personal and increasingly better tailored to the specific needs of individual users. This personalisation can make a lot of things easier – including planning a business trip.

The better a salesperson knows his customers, the better he will do business with them. That is the case with the local menswear shop salesman, who knows which manager prefers which shade of tie, and also the regional real-estate agent, who knows which people on his books are looking for which type of house. This data is a salesperson’s capital and his guarantee of success.

The winner will be the one who knows his customers best

It is no different in today’s online world. Everyone who wants to sell something on the internet, whether it is Amazon, a hotel chain, airline or the online chemist, tries to “get to know their customers better”. “It will be the next big race,” says Michael Strauss, CEO of technology provider Pass Consulting. “The winner will be the one who knows his users the best, because he will be the fastest to lead them to the best individual offer.”

The easiest way to see how this works is to take a tour around one of the large IT trade fairs. The theme of personalisation is omnipresent here. Legions of software craftspeople are labouring to identify internet users and allocate attributes to them like age, sex or personal preferences in order to subsequently be able to offer them suitable products or services.

The first tentative attempts were taken a few years ago using re-targeting advertisements, which for example show a person offers for certain flights for several days in a row, just because the person searched for this once – and has probably already booked long ago. In contrast, the product recommendations from Amazon and Ebay, which were established by then, were a resounding success. By all accounts, Amazon already sells a double-digit percentage of its products not because customers actively look for them, but because the internet retailer nudge them in that direction.

The topic of personalisation is also occupying minds in the travel industry – driven in the first instance from the consumer side. Tour operator TUI, for example, recently personalised its own website. Based on collected data, TUI.com now no longer shows every visitor the same content, but holiday destinations, hotels or departure airports which are likely to be of particular interest to that particular visitor. In the opinion of Dirk Föste, Chief Digital Officer at TUI, this is the way to “understand” his customers “in real time” in the future.

Airlines and hotel chains are also becoming increasingly personal. Lufthansa subsidiary Miles & More has just programmed its app in such a way that frequent flyers receive individual tips on collecting and redeeming their air miles based on their data and in future will also receive location-specific offers.

The trend is not even stopping at the product itself any more: Car hire firm Sixt, for example, has developed a vision of a personalised car. In future, cars will already be configured individually as they are being booked online. Then the planned route will be preprogrammed into the satnav, and in the same vein the seat position and the air conditioning too. The customer’s favourite stations will be tuned on the radio, or the individual Spotify music list.
Personalisation
Steering towards the prescribed booking channel

Personally addressing and customised offers to travellers have an animating effect

74% of all TRAVELLERS believe that they would be animated by being personally addressed coupled with relevant offers for compliant bookings.

65% of all TRAVELLERS presume that recommendations from colleagues or other business travellers – for example through an internal review system – were an incentive when they booked.

"Ideally, employees find everything they need in our systems."

Christoph Carnier, Travel Manager at Merck: Greater convenience for travellers, greater efficiency for companies

Service for the traveller: Yes. Disturbance in the booking process: No.

Christoph Carnier, Travel Manager at pharmaceutical group Merck, can definitely see the benefits of this type of personalisation – for example more convenience for the traveller, or more efficient processes within the company, because the traveller gets to his destination faster. "I have nothing against service providers offering benefits to our travellers," says the travel manager. "For example, if an airline knows what food a passenger prefers, or which seat, then that is good service and does not affect us at all." However, Carnier voices reservations too. Because if this is "combined with the attempt to draw" the person being courted "into their own booking worlds," as the Merck manager puts it, "then we will have a problem."

Carnier is referring, for example, to targeted special offers which airlines sometimes use to advantage on
their own website or app. "Our prescribed booking processes may not be disturbed," the travel manager clarifies. Because if control and access to bookings were to be lost, then the company would no longer be able to fulfil its duty of care. Although Carnier regards the providers' efforts as being "still in their infancy," he nonetheless says that one must "keep an eye on this" as a company. Henning Schmidt, Director Business Intelligence at HRS, can understand reservations of this nature – "the fear that a third party is getting involved and influencing my travellers." Therefore, the personalisation must occur fully in the interests of the company, he says. HRS itself recently extended its own system of hotel recommendations to include the business travel segment. On request, corporate customers can define their own criteria according to which the hotels in the results list are sorted (see page 12/13). These can be company contracts, particular services, those hotels that were frequently booked in the past, or the favourites of individual departments.

The aim also pursued by HRS with this is: to lead each individual making a booking as fast as possible to the offer that is best for him. Henning Schmidt compares this process to a Google search: "71 percent only look at the first page of results (on Google), and 68 percent of all clicks land on the first five entries." Consequently, even among the 2,500 hotels in Shanghai, for example, the really relevant ones would have to be right at the top, "otherwise the search becomes tiresome."

**Recommendation is only the beginning**

The plan appears to be working: Before the introduction of what is known as recommendation management, users looked at 6.1 hotels on average before they booked, Schmidt reports, today, it is only 1.4 hotels, he says. "Thus travellers are achieving their goal faster despite a very extensive range of offers and companies are saving costs because of more efficient booking processes." Schmidt summarises the results. One thing is clear to Schmidt, a business mathematician: "If you conjugate the topic of recommendation down the whole way, then at the bottom you have to get a completely personalised recommendation for each individual user."

The approach of taking the traveller and his wishes into account to a greater extent has been increasingly gaining ground in the business travel market in recent years. According to a study carried out by Business Travel News magazine in the USA, 4 out of 5 business travellers would like their online booking system to recognise them at log-in, including personal preferences or status in bonus programmes. At the same time, the system should make suitable offers, for example highlight services providers with particular services, or independently generate suggestions based on the traveller's travel history.

For example, anyone using HRS-Mobil to search for a hotel can have hotels in the immediate vicinity displayed immediately via GPS, instead of spending time scrolling through the entire range of offers.

"Wish: personal services"

*Online booking system should recognise business travellers directly at log-in*

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**Source:** Business Travel News magazine survey, USA
out by ACTE and American Express GBT, almost 80 percent of travel managers see improved service for the traveller as a way to achieve savings. Developments of this type frequently come as an external impetus from other sectors, and the next trend in this area is already on the horizon: Under the heading of “predictive analytics”, companies are attempting to predict what will interest customers in the future. Streaming service Netflix does this, for example. On the basis of the films watched up to now, it determines the probability with which a particular user will watch a certain film next. Or Amazon again. “Anticipatory shipping” is the concept for which the online heavyweight has already registered a patent. The idea: Even before a customer has ordered a product, delivery is already set in motion, because he will almost certainly purchase it shortly.

Even before a customer has ordered a product, delivery is already set in motion, because he will almost certainly purchase it shortly. Transposed onto travel management, in the future we could see booking systems that not only make suitable individual suggestions for flights, hotels or rental cars when a traveller actively searches for them, but initiate searches themselves. For example, because they foresee that a traveller has to go to a regular meeting in London again next week too. Then a cheap flight and a hotel to go with it could be blocked at an early stage by the system and presented to the traveller as a booking suggestion. After checking the offer, single click suffices – maximum efficiency.

Avail of trends, retain control
But that is all still a long way off. Currently, travel manager and business travel providers are sufficiently occupied with integrating the existing options into their own worlds without losing control over their travel management. Like Jessica Köhling, Travel Manager at Hamburg-based personnel services provider Time Partner: “As a company, we have to control our travel programme,” says Köhling, “but at the same time we want to give employees as many options as possible so that they can book the trip that is best for them individually.”

Providing his travellers with the best tools is also what Christoph Carnier wants. “Ideally, employees find everything they need in our systems,” says the Merck travel manager, and summarises the opportunity and challenge for travel management: “If our applications cover all requirements, then no one will have to look elsewhere any more.”
Good for you.

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Recommendation management
HRS knows what is particularly important to corporate customers from its own sourcing as well as from data analyses, says Henning Schmidt, Director Business Intelligence at HRS. In addition, travel managers can also define their own parameters according to which travellers are shown preferred hotels. Several corporations, for example, a European insurance group and a Japanese automotive manufacturer, have implemented this type of personalised recommendation management in collaboration with HRS. Typically, the adoption rate rises after implementation, because suitable offers can be found faster. Frequently, the average rates paid decline too, because factors like discounts, early bird discounts and last-minute prices come further up the results lists. Henning Schmidt: “This is how companies manage to procure the better product at a lower price.”

»Travel managers can also define their own parameters according to which travellers are shown preferred hotels."
Ms Unger, depending on the study, figures show that between 30 and 50 percent of all business travellers defy existing travel guidelines.

I have a theory that in reality no one is hell-bent on circumventing their company’s travel guidelines. But many people don’t know what is actually in their booking at all when they make it. Instead, many travellers act on the assumption that their decision is in line with common sense. Or alternatively, they think that they are simply entitled to a particular category of hotel room or seat on a flight.

Where does this mindset stem from?

A world in which advertising – for example on Facebook – is increasingly tailored to the individual, sends out the signal: It’s about you personally! So why not transpose this onto the working world too?

And indeed, travel management departments are also increasingly putting the (individual) traveller at the focus of their strategic considerations, or taking the traveller’s individual needs into account. Remember the catchword: “traveller-centricity”.

Traveller-centricity primarily stands for communication. Many rules are good, but frequently written in academic or other incomprehensible jargon. That means they are read and forgotten. In addition, many travellers defy corporate guidelines because they don’t see the sense in them. But particularly Generation Y, the Millennials, need a lot of explanations. They want to understand why something is this way or that way, they question what the point of it is. Meanwhile, the generation before them has also adopted this attitude. Above and beyond this, today’s travellers have much better access to offers that they can book as private individuals – and simply and cheaply too.

That means that if they do not see the sense of something, they simply book on their own initiative, meaning outside the channels prescribed by the company.

That is precisely what it means. Many employees have no idea what happens in the background in a business travel agency or in the travel management department. For example, they do not know that there is a contract in place with a hotel chain according to which the breakfast is included in the room price. Or a cancellation even on the arrival date. Many of them know nothing about their travel manager’s duty of care either. Or about the...
"It is important that travel management explains the reasoning behind its rules."

fact that he has to know precisely where his travellers are in order to be able to support them in an emergency. So when they find and book a cheaper rate for an overnight stay on the internet, they do not realise at all that in doing so they are completely contravening their travel guidelines and making the travel manager’s work more difficult in the next round of hotel negotiations.

In a study carried out for the Corporate Travel Forum, the results showed that many travel managers believe that their travellers were avoiding the company’s internal booking tools because of a lack of user-friendliness. Instead, maverick buying is the result of a lack of awareness, in your opinion?

At least very frequently. But there is also something else that should not be underestimated. Most bookings – particularly in hotels – are still made by phone. For example by the secretary who knows the hotel and knows that her boss gets an upgrade there. The travellers themselves do not necessarily book the cheapest option either, but the most convenient one, the one they already know. Or if they have a hotel chain or airline loyalty card and can collect points there.

It is easy to see that this weakens the travel management department’s bargaining power. But in your view, the “communication” approach goes hand in hand with the topic of “total cost of trip”. In what respect?

In my understanding, total cost of trip means that not just the travel management department, but also the traveller, knows what a trip costs. So not just the flight or the hotel, but the entire trip. Because the traveller can only judge whether it was proportionate or too expensive if he gets a feeling for the overall price of his trip.

There is also the aspect of indirect costs – meaning those resources that are lost during time-consuming processes. Has a holistic view of direct and indirect costs been lacking up to now?

Yes and no. The total cost of trip is the Holy Grail in travel management. It has been almost impossible to find it up to now. If a company looks at
what level of savings was achieved in its year-end review, these frequently only exist on paper.

How come?

It frequently occurs that the travel expenses of the previous year are set as the target for savings in the following business year. Then the travel management department enters into their negotiations with hotels and airlines with this figure in their heads. Yet only a very small number of them look to see what expenditure was actually incurred. Did my travellers really book with the hotel partner and did they save money there? Those sort of things. So instead of total cost of trip, the overall budget is used as a yardstick.

But there are countless ways to get precisely itemised data: Even just credit card companies like AirPlus or Amex offer any number of possibilities for allocating individual invoicing data.

Up to now, there has been a gap between the data that was booked and the data that was consumed, for example in the case of cancellations or changes to bookings. And the flight costs are often not taken into account in employees’ travel expense reports, because these are booked centrally. It therefore depends on the business travel agency to set up data services of this type. However, one problem about this is that there are no data standards in the sector. Particularly the data from the hotel industry is all different. In this case, it can take months before you have clean data. Purged of double entries. Or until you have data that shows how many of the negotiated deals were actually used. Or how many trips were booked in accordance with the travel guidelines, with the emphasis on: compliance.

Let us go back to the topic of leakage. How can travel management make its travellers adhere to the travel guidelines in an era of individualisation and personalisation?

With what is known as traveller engagement. That means that I provide the traveller with the means that incite him to the correct behaviour. There are many good apps for this nowadays with which a company can indicate to its employees: “We will support you, and we will look after you.”

Above and beyond that, as I said before, you need communication. It is important that travel management explains to its travellers the reasoning behind its rules. That is the essence, in my opinion.

Ms Unger, thank you very much for the interview.
When the employee of a medium-sized company arrived at the airport in India, his next stop was not the taxi rank, but an interrogation room. The problem was this: His company had left it to the business traveller to procure a visa himself – and the business traveller had got himself a tourist visa. “This has to be regulated in the travel guidelines,” travel management consultant Andrea Zimmermann criticises. Just like other elements that come under the heading of corporate duty of care: How are travellers insured while they are travelling? In which cases do they have to go to the company doctor beforehand? How should risks be avoided, how should travellers behave in emergencies? Things that in light of an increasingly – at least in our perception – insecure world are being dealt with more frequently in travel guidelines, but are making these unwieldy. Other developments are requiring regulation too. For example the Sharing Economy, the growing number of booking options, apps and other mobile applications. Or how airlines are splitting their services: Travel managers must now define whether to accept the cost of meals, extra pillows or a preselected airplane seat, and which of these is to be handled in which manner for tax purposes. And if mobility topics like car-sharing or company fleet are added as well, the travel guidelines expands by even more articles. How then is it possible to reduce these rules and regulations down to a size that still keeps it transparent and clear to the traveller?

List of positives, not a raft of “no’s.
“By formulating the travel guidelines as a list of positives,” says Dirk Gerdom, President of VDR, the German Business Travel Association, and Head of Global Mobility at software group SAP. “Only list the items that will be reimbursed,” is his expert advice, “that automatically rules everything else out.” Previously, we attempted to cover all eventualities, Gerdom recalls, for example which hotel category could be used in which circumstances, how to handle standard and de-luxe rooms, executive floors or upgrades. “We attempted to delimit everything that was not permitted, but in the end no one was able to cope with that any more.” In addition, the room for interpretation that remained led to legal uncertainties. But travel guidelines should actually be formulated in such a way that no one could unwittingly transgress them, he says.

Clear rules + flexibility + latitude
Incidentally, that also applies to the younger generation, which is known to question more and to dislike being forced into a straitjacket. In practice, consultant Zimmermann has not experienced that precise rules and regulations were less well received among the younger generation. “Everyone needs clear rules that they can see the sense of,” is her conviction. “One employer may forbid a Porsche Cayenne – even if the employee pays for it
himself – because he does not want employees arriving at the customer’s office in one. Another employer won’t mind this at all.” However, one thing that younger travellers expect is greater flexibility, Gerdom adds. They have to be given more latitude, for example in their choice of booking channels, says the travel manager. Technological solutions help to catch bookings made on the road or through third-party channels in the background. And anyway, or so people used to believe, technological development would make the classic travel guidelines obsolete at some stage. This would happen when all the rules could be displayed directly in the online booking system - precisely in the place where they were relevant, it was thought. But that did not occur. Because there is no company where everything is booked through one channel, thus a central set of rules and regulations will still be needed tomorrow.

SAP manager Gerdom has at least managed to decimate the volume of his rules considerably. As many others have also done. “I know companies who have cut down from 80 to 8 pages,” says Gerdom. According to Zimmermann, travel guidelines are typically only 10 to 12 pages long nowadays. Anyone who only makes domestic trips could also get by with five or six pages, she says.

Friendly, but firm

While the central basic document should be a lively text, it should also change as little as possible, she recommends. For more complex things, for example the approval process, illustrations are helpful, and sometimes videos too, she says. Details, for example explanations of per deums or a list of important telephone numbers and contacts should preferably be moved to appendices, she says. However, these may never contain additional rules, but only more detailed explanations, Dirk Gerdom remarks. Incidentally, when Andrea Zimmermann draws up travel guidelines on behalf of a company, it always contains a special clause too: “Consequences of non-compliance.” Travel guidelines are being communicated significantly better nowadays, says the consultant. However, it is important to know the consequences of a potential transgression, she says. ☹️

Dirk Gerdom: “Only list the items that will be reimbursed!”

These points should be in the travel guidelines

1. Planning a trip: Information about destinations, modes of transport, transfer times, and so on.
2. Booking a trip: Booking channels (typically OBE a travel agency, possibly complemented by open booking), how to deal with bonus cards and upgrades. Are they permitted to incur costs, for example?
3. Modes of transport: Which modes of transport may be used, for example plane, train, taxi, rental car, Uber, car-sharing and so on? Rules on travel classes for flights, rental car categories and so on.
4. Accommodation: Permitted hotels (for example the company’s own hotel programme, plus exceptions). May travellers use private accommodation?
6. Credit cards: Which solutions does the company offer, how should these be used?
7. Reimbursement of travel expenses: Which tool must be used, how does the process work?
8. Health, insurance: How are travellers safeguarded against health risks? Prevention, behaviour in the event of illness.
Economic indicator: Carnivorousness in the capital

"The city offers entertainment with local colour and in comparison to other cities in Latin America, it is relatively safe."
Perfectly grilled crust, tender and succulent inside. There is no denying it: The first steak in Buenos Aires is an awakening. And it does not even have to be the hefty 1,000 gram baby beefsteak for the slightly bigger appetite to achieve this. It is the quality that makes the difference and makes newcomers think back with sheer pain to their steakhouses back home, where they have up to now felt really happy.

“Buenos Aires has a great choice of restaurants, but also of shopping areas – particularly in the district of Palermo,” says Carl Moses, who analyses the country’s economic situation for Germany’s economic development agency Germany Trade and Invest. “The city offers a lot of entertainment with local colour, has a European character and in comparison to other cities in Latin America, it is relatively safe.” Particularly the comparatively low crime rate, but also high quality of life and a pronounced gastronomic culture are significant benefits of the city – but not the only ones, he says.

Spirit of optimism after change of government
The elections in November 2015, from which former Mayor of Buenos Aires, Mauricio Macri, emerged victorious as president after a run-off vote, fired hopes of a pick-up in the economy. From 2017, when the liberal conservative president’s reforms take effect, insiders like Moses are expecting strong growth. “After the change in government, a spirit of optimism has been spreading through the economy, although the new government’s economic clean-up measures are initially dampening the economy. In the medium and longer term, a strong up tick and rising investments are expected,” he says.

In carnivorousness, the 2014 football World Cup runners-up already hold top position worldwide. With 59.7 kilograms of beef- and 8.1 kilograms of pork, the Argentinians lead the per-capita consumption rankings by a wide margin. The 38.6 kilograms of poultry that are also consumed are hardly taken into account. Because here, poultry and lamb do not count as meat here at all and are not called “carne” (meat) either.

Economic indicator: carnivorousness
It is a general obsession which has withstood all crises to date; carnivorousness in Buenos Aires is indeed a barometer for the mood in the country. Every day, the daily newspapers triumphantly report the number of cattle slaughtered on the previous day on their front pages. Beef producers who had suffered greatly under state intervention during the Kirchner government are now...
hoping for fresh stimuli for their exports. They hope that a reduction in export taxes and the devaluation of the peso will whet appetites for Argentinian beef abroad.

Apart from excellent steaks, the elegant architecture, the timeless tango, a rich cultural heritage and the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Buenos Aires also make it one of the most appealing destinations in Latin America. That also applies to business travellers. The city on Río de la Plata has long been one of the favourite convention locations in South America. In addition, the high educational standards have the pleasant side-effect that business travellers and holidaymakers alike can get around with English there. Even before the change in government, the number of international visitors just undercut the record level of six million. Because of better economic conditions, the share of business travellers is now likely to rise significantly again.

**Live is getting easier for business travellers**

“A lot of things in day-to-day business have become easier under the new government, particularly because of the reforms of the foreign exchange market,” says observer Carl Moses. The different exchange rates have been standardised; previously, foreigners had to either exchange money on the black market or accept inflated prices for dollars or euro if their money was converted at the official exchange rate. The first result of the relaxation of foreign exchange controls was the devaluation of the peso. But that too is set to bring competitive advantages for the country in the short term. The relatively low local costs are a positive side-effect for business trips.

While at the start of the millennium the capital’s hotel industry was barely able to service the demand for high-quality accommodation, Buenos Aires today is well positioned in terms of beds. Some 170 trade fairs and conventions every year are one of the reasons that made this necessary. Although the conurbation of Buenos Aires stretches over around a hundred kilometres along Río de la Plata, the city centre districts are relatively compact. In the elegant five square kilometre district of Recoleta, once home of the Dutch Queen Máxima and birthplace of the writer Jorge Luis Borges, the upmarket hotels in particular compete for well-heeled travellers: Whether they are Four Seasons or Park Hyatt, Wyndham, Accor or Meliá. Because well-maintained palaces, a lot of green spaces, museums, top-class shops and restaurants also make Recoleta a hub of the good life. And even death wears a handsome garb here: In Reco-
The city on Río de la Plata has long been one of the favourite convention locations in South America.

Back to the future: A metropolis on its way back to former glory

In the city’s cemetery, the cream of society in the capital have found their final resting place in 5,000 magnificent mausoleums, including the former First Lady “Evita” alias Eva Duarte de Perón. Starwood has located its Park Tower in the trendy Puerto Madero, the former port revamped into a waterfront. Since international star architects have been allowed to let their imagination run riot in the lofts and warehouses of the former port area, Puerto Madero is one of the city’s liveliest districts. Post-modernism and history create exciting contrasts here.

Alongside other museums, the Faena Arts Center for modern art has found a home in a former grain mill, for example. And the Hilton Buenos Aires, with its 6,700 square metre convention centre is situated decoratively on the waterfront and walking distance from the business district of Microcentro. The group’s second hotel, the Anselmo Buenos Aires, Curio Collection by Hilton, is located in the historic district of San Telmo. Furthermore, the magnificent Avenida de Mayo, with its Art déco and Art nouveau palaces, is one of the tourist highlights of the beautiful metropolis. It runs from the Palace of the Argentine National Congress right up to the pink seat of government, the Casa Rosada, on Plaza de Mayo. Like its counterparts in the upmarket Recoleta, its ele-

Top 3 business hotels

**Madero Hotel**
Modern five-star hotel with event rooms for 250 people, rooftop spa and heated indoor pool in the trendy Puerto Madero district. The 197 rooms with balconies are equipped with a workstation, high-speed internet, plasma television and minibar. Guests of the Le m club can avail of facilities including secretarial services in an exclusive business centre on the eighth floor with private balcony. Rooms from €180.

**Recoleta Grand**
Located in the heart of the Recoleta district and walking distance from numerous tourist highlights, this new hotel has good conference facilities (four conference and meeting rooms for up to 350 people), pool, gym and a Floralis spa. The 88 elegant rooms have LED smart TVs as well as remote control for lights and curtains. Rooms from €165.

**Dazzler San Telmo**
Fén Hotels have branches at 10 attractive locations in Buenos Aires under their two brand names, Dazzler and Esplendor. The Dazzler San Telmo is situated 500 metres from the Casa Rosada and 500 metres from Puerto Madero. Its 70 rooms have workstations, free Wi-Fi, flatscreen TV, air conditioning and soundproofed windows. Rooms from €70.
Easy by taxi, difficult by bus: Local public transport in a metropolis of 13 million

Giant buildings are reminders that Argentina was one of the richest countries in the world around a hundred years ago. The legendary Café Tortoni, previously known as a meeting place for the literati, is still a lively example of coffee house culture in the city.

**Rush hour? It’s quickest on foot!**

The fact that the city’s most attractive districts – apart from Recoleta and Palermo to the north – are located relatively close to each other, as well as the very relaxed security situation, allows visitors to explore Buenos Aires on foot, at least one section at a time. However, it is not always easy to reach the city centre without losing time. The metropolis has very good international connections. Aside from the Ministro Pistarini international airport in Ezeiza, it also has the domestic Airport Jorge Newbery as well as Argentina’s major sea port. Apart from trading ships, some 200 cruise ships set anchor here every year. In addition, a ferry port connects Buenos Aires to Uruguay on the other bank of the river.

However, the traffic situation within the boundaries of the metropolis, with its 13 million inhabitants, is frequently strained. The underground, a huge bus network and motorways with up to 16 lanes are meant to protect Buenos Aires from the gridlock typical of Latin American mega cities. The success of this endeavour is mixed. During rush hour, pedestrians get around the fastest in the city centre. Business travellers are well advised to arrive on a Sunday. The city centre boulevards are so empty on Sundays that you could dance a tango on them.

**Business travellers should arrive on a Sunday if possible to avoid the traffic gridlock.**
Facts & Figures

Travelling to Buenos Aires
Lufthansa flies daily from Frankfurt to Buenos Aires. With a flight time of 14 hours, it is the airline’s longest non-stop flight. Iberia flies via Madrid. The international airport is in Ezeiza, which is about 30 kilometres from the city centre. Aerolíneas Argentinas flies from Buenos Aires to other cities in Argentina as well as to other Latin American capitals. From Ezeiza Airport, travellers can take a taxi, which is booked and paid for in the Arrivals area (“Taxi Ezeiza”), to the city centre. The trip costs about 480 pesos (€30). The alternative is transfer by bus (for example using the Manuel Tienda León company), which runs every 30 minutes around the clock. It stops near the company headquarters close to Retiro train station. The trip takes between 45 and 60 minutes, depending on traffic, and costs 95 pesos (€5.90).

Retiro is one of the city’s three major train stations. Nowadays, their merit is mainly decorative, since the rail network only connects a few cities in Argentina with one another. However, the Trenes Buenos Aires (TBA) run from here and the train stations Once in the west and Constitución in the south and connect the city centre with the suburbs.

Travelling in Buenos Aires
Taxis are the most convenient mode of transport. There are 40,000 taxis on the streets of Buenos Aires. People familiar with the city get the hotel reception or the restaurant to call a taxi for them. It is recommended to count the change received from the driver and to check that the notes handed over have a visible watermark.

Limousines run by private companies, which have no taxi light, are a little more expensive but are considered to be safer. The best strategy is to ask the hotel concierge.

Travelling by underground, the Subtem, is equally convenient: Six lines connect the individual districts with one another. Tickets cost 5 pesos (€0.31) and are sold in kiosks at the stations (www.metrovias.com.ar).

Travelling by bus is possible but tedious, as the network is almost unmanageable large. The “Guia T” city and bus guide, which can be purchased at every kiosk, is an indispensable tool. Tickets cost 6 pesos (€0.37) from the driver (www.xcolectivo.com.ar/colectivo).

Hotel prices in 2015
Ø per night €104 (+13% compared to 2014).

Taxes/tips
In good restaurants, between 10 and 15 percent of the amount on the bill is usual. In hotels, the guest leaves a few pesos a day. Taxi drivers receive a small tip if they help with heavy luggage.

Black-out dates
The seasons are the converse of those in the Northern Hemisphere: October and November are the spring months, the hottest time of the year and high season for tourists is in the months of January/February. Because many restaurants and museums extend their Christmas celebrations into mid-January, Buenos Aires is full of tourists during this period. Thus it is not a good time for business appointments. Mardi Gras and Holy Week are also popular for short trips, and many offices and authorities are closed.

Fixed dates: Buenos Aires Fashion Week (BAF), the Argentina Open ATP tennis tournament and Mardi Gras fill hotel beds in February; the National Festival of the Calf (Fiesta Nacional del Ternero) and C.I.T.A. tango festival attract many visitors to the city in March. In the last week of April and the first week of May the literary world meets for the international Book Fair on the La Rural trade fair grounds. The Vinos & Bodegas wine fair takes place on the last weekend in September, and on the second Sunday in October a marathon takes place with more than 10,000 participants.

Security
Only a few districts in the city are dangerous. The greatest danger are pickpockets, which is why travellers should try to have as little cash and as few valuables as possible visible on their person. This also includes smartphones because these were difficult to come by for a long time and extremely expensive because of import restrictions, which have only recently been lifted. Even during the day, the streets behind the three train stations should be avoided, for example.
How do our employees actually travel and book? How do they use their time while travelling? In travel management, questions about all aspects of the traveller are becoming increasingly important. According to an international study carried out by ACTE and American Express, the relative importance of employee needs in comparison to pure cost management will change decisively in the future.

The Corporate Travel Forum (CTF) organised by HRS and the Travel Industry Club (TIC) also approached the main protagonist when considering total cost of trip from several different viewpoints. Around 250 travel managers and industry representatives, old hands and young professionals had accepted the invitation to come to the stylish Westhafen Event & Convention Center in Berlin. A premiere, because the CTF thus took place in the capital and on the day before the ITB for the first time.

Calling everything into question

The industry experts discussed, for example, the question of how end-to-end solutions can be taken into account in strategic procurement or what follow-on costs can be incurred by open booking and a company’s own booking channels. The role of the travel manager was also called into question: Can he position himself as an optimiser of all things related to total cost of trip?

However, corporate travel expert Claudia Unger set her sights on the traveller right at the beginning in her keynote speech. “Total cost of trip depends predominantly on the traveller,” the expert said. How, what and when they book, how they behave, pay and invoice the trip – all these data streams also flowed into the overall costs of a business trip, she explained. Thus even small changes could have significant effects. Thus travel managers could start in this area and use new technologies to take travelling employees by the hand, she said.

Key factor: Business traveller

Everyone is talking about the buzz-word “total cost of trip”. Data, data, data, and always remember the costs – that is how the mantra goes. But it is not just travel managers, procurement managers and suppliers who are called on to optimise the costs and processes in business trips from start to finish. The travellers themselves can make their contribution too – they just have to know: How?!
1. Premiere in Berlin: The Corporate Travel Forum took place in the capital for the first time; 250 travel managers and industry representatives had accepted the invitation.
2. Hello again: Panel members Haakon Herbst (HSMA, centre) and co-organiser Dirk Bremer (TIC, right) met with old acquaintances from HRS.
3. Farewell hotel procurement: In a discussion with chairman Steffen Ball (right) HRS Managing Director Tobias Ragge risked a look into the future of travel management.
4. Maritime ambience: Breaktime: checking mails and networking against a backdrop of Becken II (Pool II) of the Westhafen harbour.
5. Clear profile: Konstantin Sixt (left) revealed some internal secrets, took the rise out of Uber and Co. and appealed for "healthy business relationships".
6. Modern payment solutions: HRS payment expert Christopher Hecht on a panel with Rüdiger Mahnicke (Steinberg), Benjamin Park (Parexel), Kira Schütze (TÜV Nord) and Michael Thomas (AirPlus).
7. Charming location: The Westhafen Event & Convention Center, a former warehouse and protected building, was the setting for the CTF.
for example by sending them an automated message on their smartphone on arrival and – depending on the time – point them towards public transport or recommend taking a taxi.

**Getting travellers on board**

However, sometimes the style of the travel guidelines are to blame when travellers do not know the rules by heart. “Why not write in a friendlier tone, for instance?” Unger asked. The expert recommended short, comprehensible sentences. However, the most important thing, she said, was to explain rules – that there were contracts in place and the benefits that arose from them – because informed employees tend to be more willing to follow travel guidelines. “They do want to be good people, and they want to cooperate,” Unger says and thus makes the appeal: “Give your travellers the copyright on the travel guidelines if you want to see total cost of trip become reality faster.”

According to a study jointly published by ACTE and HRS, the majority of the 350 travel managers surveyed around the world were aiming precisely in this direction – or at least in theory. In reality, however, a good half of all travel managers are either not involved at all or only seldom involved in planning and drawing up their company’s own travel guidelines. Instead, direct contract negotiations continue to determine most of the work in a travel manager’s day-to-day activities. And this occurs even though they themselves no longer expect any significant cost reductions in direct (hotel) negotiations. On the contrary: They expect better results from steering the traveller more and catering to his needs.

In the area of process optimisation – an objective for the majority of travel managers – there is still room for improvement too: While a little more than half of respondents actively measure employee satisfaction with their hotel portfolio, hardly any feedback is gathered about booking or invoicing processes; this only takes place in every fifth and every tenth company respectively. Yet it is precisely this perspective on employees’ day-to-day experiences with booking, travelling and invoicing that gives valuable insight into how travellers can be supported even better and thus also steered.

The study can be found at: corporate.hrs.com/acte

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8. Booking channels and their follow-on costs: Inge Pirner (Datev), Brigitte Lehle (Dürr) and Jörg Gerhardt (Concur) report on their experiences and the travellers’ role.
9. Probing questions: Conichi co-founder Maximilian Waldmann (right) takes questions from Biztravel editor Martin Jürs.
10. Prices and standards: André Wiehe (Rezidor) emphasised the hotel chain industry’s strengths in the strategic procurement of travel services.
The global business travel market continues to grow apace, but in no region is the growth as strong as in the Asia-Pacific Region (APAC). This is in large part thanks to Asian frontrunner China, whose business travel expenditure has meantime grown larger than the previous world leader, the US market. Today, the APAC region accounts for around 40 percent of worldwide business travel and can boast 5 of the top 15 business travel markets.

One of these five markets is Australia, which actually ranks in seventh place worldwide with respect to the revenue volume of hotel overnight stays of business travellers. HRS has reacted to the growing demand in this market by taking a shareholding in the Lido Group, a hotel aggregator and agent for business customers. Thus HRS will be able to support customers even better locally and on their trips to this region in future. With some 6,700 accommodation properties, the Sydney-based Lido Group is the market leader in procuring accommodation in the business travel segment in Australia. Apart from the major metropolises, the portfolio also covers rural and remote regions, thus enabling HRS customers to find suitable accommodation outside the large conurbations too.

Australian companies book their business trips particularly frequently online: With an online share of 76 percent of hotel bookings, the country is among the most technophile nations worldwide. "Australia is a highly dynamic and progressive market," HRS CEO Tobias Ragge explains. "With the shareholding in the Lido Group and the development of our portfolio in Australia, HRS is now very well positioned in all the top business travel markets in the world. Thus we can support our customers even better with their worldwide travel programme."
Separate MICE guidelines?

It is rare to see such agreement: In 2016, the fact that there must be guidelines for events as well as for travel guidelines is no longer being questioned. At least not officially. But: frequently it is only lip service.

Says… Rüdiger Krenz, Chairman of the MICE Expert Committee of VDR, the German Business Travel Association, and Sensior Purchaser Procurement at the AXA insurance group.

Last summer, we drew up the “Guide to drawing up event guidelines” in the VDR MICE Expert Committee. We did this as a response to a cry for help from among our members. Because there is a lot available on the topic of travel guidelines, but precious little on the topic of events. We wanted and we want to provide assistance in this area.

Yet this topic is not easily implemented at all. Because in order to determine the objective, an analysis of the current situation is necessary – the objective is the goal, not the way there – and that is what puts many people off. Above and beyond this, event planning is a baby people have grown to love, and meanwhile employees who have little or insufficient previous knowledge in the area are also allowed to do it as a sort of incentive. And where do we find these? Generally, they are located right at the top, in senior management, and are happy to be able to be creative and spend a lot of money for once. Then they fight like lions to keep this playing field for themselves.

Yet all I can say is: It can be done! You only have to have the will, and also the support of senior management. It is essential to get the green light from them; otherwise you will be stymied time and again on this topic. And as for emotions: At the end of the day, many people are grateful too if they no longer have to do something like participant management all on their own.

For whom is the introduction of an event guideline worthwhile? By no means just for the big corporations like AXA, but everywhere an appreciable spend can be expected. As for what counts as “appreciable” – I do not want to go into this any further at all. Because you can already cause a lot of damage with just two badly run events. Thus in the final analysis, you can say that you don’t just look at the costs, or at rather reducing them, when drawing up an event guideline, but also at areas like compliance and data protection. After all, no one wants to find the participant list for his event either on the internet or in the bin.

And who should draw up the event guidelines? In general, the MICE area should be the responsibility of the department that is also responsible for the topic of travel. In my opinion, travel management and MICE belong together, because there are various synergies between them. There are overlaps in the area of accommodation, for example. We have the same partners in these areas, and likewise in the area of travelling to the venue by train or by plane, and the same processes are involved in the credit card bill too.

On the other hand, MICE planners do not just negotiate with hotels, but also with event locations or trade fairs. For example, a hotel alone is not sufficient for a general meeting. But in negotiations we have the same approaches again. At AXA, we already merged travel and MICE management very successfully back in 2006 and set standards.
Today no-one questions the necessity of event guidelines any more. From our viewpoint, however, we have been wondering for years why existing event guidelines have not been implemented across the board long ago in many companies, but instead there are frequently departmental-level solutions with low effectiveness. While we are commissioned with a partial process in our function of provider of payment solutions for event management, we nonetheless find that a company-wide event guideline that covers all processes would be beneficial. I personally surmise that this is predominantly a problem of time and urgency. It takes considerable time and effort to draw up a “gesamtkunstwerk” like this, and particularly to establish a standardised MICE process across the entire company. For example, the person responsible for the MICE process requires certain figures for this, but – since reliable base of data is almost never available – he has to ask for them first. In advance of this, he has to define standardised processes for how the project and the structure should be organised. And the project manager should also find a project sponsor, someone who supports him in various escalation phases. This person in turn has to come from the senior management area, because otherwise there is a danger that the establishment of a standardised MICE process will simply fail at the hurdle of employee resistance.

In reality, however, many people who control these processes simply lack a mandate from senior management. And in order to reach senior management, you have to be able to portray the value added that event guidelines of this nature bring to the company. Apart from these highly internal challenges, a base of specialist knowledge is also required in order to be able to take the first step in a project with the overall heading of “Events”. Because as I already intimated, event guidelines are more complex overall than travel guidelines. It is not enough to just manage the area of responsibility of “event management” on the side. In order to have effective event guidelines, you have to have practical knowledge, for example in the areas of marketing, controlling and compliance. For example, you need to know what the exact distances for hanging up the corporate banner between ceiling and stage should be, but you also need to know how high the per-capita costs per participant can be, what technical support is provided by the internal IT department, and so on. Entire books have been written on the subject. Basically, however, you need knowledge of the entire “corporate event” process chain. Equally important: the issue of emotions. Because implementing event guidelines is a real case of change process: All involved have to be able to internalise both the requirements and the rules and see the sense in them. That is the real core task! To get across that in the end the MICE people will have more time for what is really important, and that it is not the case that the fun factor is being taken away from them if they no longer have to deal with questions of taxation or negotiating contracts. In short: The objective of introducing event guidelines and a standardised MICE process has long since ceased to be merely creating transparency in order to be able to negotiate better. Rather, the focus is primarily on optimising internal processes, because this enables the event manager to achieve both cost savings and increased efficiency.

We have just carried out a study on this with a large corporate customer: By standardising the internal processes for all aspects of event planning – from research right up to payment – the company was able to cut the processing time per meeting from almost 11 hours to just over 4. That corresponds to cost savings of more than €400.
If there are almost as many cycling helmets as smartphones on the table at a meeting, then it is almost certain that it is taking place in Amsterdam. In the world capital of cycling, it is taken for granted that even senior management cycle into the office with their ties blowing behind them. But the informality of day-to-day life is only one of the things that make Amsterdam and its inhabitants unique. In the capital of the Netherlands, people see things in a rather more relaxed way than elsewhere. Coffee shops, where hash and marijuana are on the menu alongside café au lait and tea, are just as unremarkable as the fact that the university and the red light industry share a district. There is a history to the basic attitude of total relaxation. The city of canals has always been not only a centre of world trade, a hub of international shipping and a melting pot of many cultures. It is primarily a place where liberalism is actively practised.

Location factors: tolerant and cosmopolitan
Tourists love Amsterdam because of this special atmosphere at least as much as because of its canals and its Rijksmuseum, the Museum of the Netherlands. But its proverbial tolerance also makes the city one of the top destinations for meetings and conferences. An environment that is open to new ideas is almost as attractive for international conferences as smooth functioning public transport. Because wherever people can think freely, creativity can blossom too. The fact that 90 percent of the communication-oriented Amsterdam folk speak English makes processes even easier still.

International hotel brands are targeting the city
In order to be able to provide sufficient beds in the business-relevant period from Monday to Friday, Amsterdam increased its hotel capacity spectacularly: From 25,000 rooms in 2015 to currently 37,600; and the number of beds is set

The hotel industry is blooming, culture is flourishing, and international connections are first class. But the highest trumps Amsterdam can play are a cosmopolitan population and unique locations.
to continue rising both this year and next. Particularly international brands are targeting the city with clout. Hyatt has already had a presence since 2012 with its Andaz Amsterdam Prinsengracht. The NH Group, which runs a total of 12 hotels in the city, launched three hotels into the competitive fray in spring 2016 as completely revamped five-star Collection hotels, and is also building an NH hotel at the trade fair centre, which is aspiring to grandness at a height of 91 metres. The opening is planned for 2018. "The Netherlands, and Amsterdam in particular, are a very important destination for us," explains Federico González Tejera, CEO of the NH Group. Others see this likewise. In 2015, the Courtyard Amsterdam Arena Atlas was opened by the Marriott group, and the W Amsterdam also opened. Aside from the W, Starwood already runs the Sheraton Amsterdam Airport Hotel, and followed up with the ecologically oriented Element Amsterdam in 2016. In the budget segment, the Motel One opposite the RAI trade fair centre was added in 2015. It was followed by the Hotel Leonardo in the three-star segment in spring 2016. There is no end to the boom in sight. In September 2016, the Postillion Hotel's convention hall will open in the Kauwgomballenfabriek business district; the hotel will subsequently follow in 2017.

**From wasteland to new creative district**

The Maritim Amsterdam will be a spectacular new addition in 2018. It aims to be one of the largest conference hotels in Europe with a conference area for up to 4,750 people. Its location will be in a 34-story tower in close proximity to the A'DAM Tower, the new hot spot in the city in the former wasteland behind the main train station. The 22-story building on the banks of the IJ River was formerly the headquarters of oil multinational Shell. Its new name, A'DAM, abbreviates "Amsterdam" to text message.
length and also stands for “Amsterdam Dance and Music”. Because apart from the Sir Adam boutique hotel, the A’DAM also houses two clubs as well as various offices for companies from the music and entertainment industry. The Tower opened in May 2016 under its new name with the aim of establishing itself as a creative and convivial centre in the former rather desolate north side of Amsterdam. The transformation of the area into a trendy business and cultural district with the new EYE film museum and many restaurants began already two years ago. Along with the new hotels, they ensure that there is a lot going on in the evenings too.

Meetings among masterpieces
To ensure that the many new hotel beds really do get booked between Monday and Friday, the city is also wooing MICE decision-makers. Its label “I Amsterdam approved” guarantees event organisers access to a quota of up to 16,000 beds in high-quality hotels and thus grants them a high degree of planning flexibility. The museums are going along with it too. The 44 museums in Amsterdam’s OAM museum association, including world-renowned museums like the Museum of the Netherlands and the Van Gogh Museum, together offer a multiplicity of unusual and inspirational meeting places. Where else can you sit down to a brainstorming session or celebrate an exclusive dinner under originals by the great Vincent van Gogh? The Van Gogh Museum enables meeting under masterpieces. Its newly designed glass entrance hall offers an impressive backdrop for larger receptions after closing time.

Dinner tours on the canals are always a favourite as incentives or for an evening event. The hotels organise them for groups of all sizes. The boat tours open up new perspectives on the city and leave lasting impressions. The most important trade-fair arena is the RAI trade-fair centre, which was opened in 1969. Every year, 79 trade fairs and 50 conferences take place there. Among the fixed dates are the Horecava for hotels, gastronomy and catering in January, the International Broadcast Conference, the largest European trade fair for media production, in September as well as the world’s largest trade fair for ship equipment, Metstrade, in November. After several extensions, the trade-fair centre currently has 87,000 square metres of space. This is distributed across 11 halls and 48 conference rooms. Currently under construction is a multi-story car park with 1,000 parking spaces – then more than 4,000 parking spaces will be available in total – and an integrated, 2,500 square-metre large exhibition area. This latest project is set to be completed in August.

Historical locations like the former stock exchange, the “Beurs van Berlage”, which was built in 1903 and is situated between the city centre and the main train station, make conventions unforgettable. The old stock exchange, which was the setting for the registry office wedding of the current king and his wife Máxima in 2002, has conference rooms for up to 1,200 guests. The royal concert hall, “Het Concertgebouw”, built in 1886, even offers atmospheric rooms for up to 2,500 participants right in the heart of the city.

The citizens of Amsterdam themselves prove time and again that the liberalism of the beautiful old city fires enthusiasm for innovation. Apart from bicycles, football and bottled beer, their passions also include technology and communication. Not only is free high-speed internet access a matter of course in hotels and conference locations. Amsterdam also has one of the fastest internet connections in the world, at 15.3 Bits per second on average. And in the area of mobile internet, Amsterdam is actually the European champion.
Between train station and historic centre: Former stock exchange with space for 1,200 guests

Meetings at the cinema: Theatre Tuschinski

Paradise for surfing: High-speed internet attracts a creative environment
The MICE hotspots in Amsterdam

Hotels:

01 W Amsterdam
The W Amsterdam resides in the KAS Bank building and in the adjacent former headquarters of the telephone exchange. It has 238 rooms and 25 suites. Apart from the W Lounge on the sixth floor with a panorama view, which acts as a lobby, the hotel also has the elegant The Duchess restaurant, the Mr Porter rooftop restaurant, a spa, a business centre that is open round the clock as well as 414 square metres of event space which can be divided into three rooms. The 700 square metre X-Bank exhibition area with auditorium can also be used for events.
→ Spuistraat 175, 1012 VN Amsterdam. Rooms from €350.

02 Okura Hotel
The Japanese chain’s only hotel in Europe is also the first in the Netherlands to hold a “five-star superior” classification. It has 300 rooms, four restaurants with the same number of Michelin stars, a jetty as well as 2,700 square metres of event space. Two foyers and 19 conference rooms provide space for up to 2,500 people. A cookery studio and a room for wine-tasting are suitable for teambuilding events. Walking distance from the RAI trade fair centre.
→ Ferdinand Bolstraat 333, 1072 LH Amsterdam. Rooms from €198.

03 Courtyard Amsterdam Arena Atlas
Hotel with 175 rooms located in the Zuidas business district. Schiphol Airport is 13 minutes away by train, the city centre can be reached in 10 minutes by underground. The functional design, the lobby with free Wi-Fi and flexibly changeable seating arrangements are aimed particularly at business travellers. The largest of the 6 conference rooms holds 160 participants.
→ Hoogoorddreef 1, 1101 Amsterdam. Rooms from €141.

04 The Sofitel Grand Legend
Historic splendour: Before becoming the elegant five-star hotel with its Michelín-starred seafood restaurant Bridges, the building built in the 15th century served as a royal palace, the main headquarters of the admiralty as well as Amsterdam’s City Hall. Its 177 rooms and suites include workspaces, high-speed internet and Nespresso coffee-machines. Of the 17 function rooms in an area of 1,400 square metres five are part of the heritage protected municipal hall.
→ Oudezijds Voorburgwal 197, 1012 EX Amsterdam. Rooms from €368.

05 Leonardo Hotel Amsterdam City Center
In April, 2016 the former Best Western opened as the Leonardo Hotel. This comfortable three-star hotel is located in a quiet area with excellent connections to both the trade fair centre RAI as well as the canal quarter, and offers more than 102 rooms.
→ Tasselschadestraat 23, 1054 ET Amsterdam. Rooms from €170.

06 Boutique design hotel The Albus
Besides its 74 stylish rooms, this four-star designer hotel offers free high-speed internet, desks, flatscreen televisions and Nespresso machines in its rooms as well as conference rooms with state-of-the-art communication technology located in its “innovation lab” just a few steps from the hotel. From here, there is also a spectacular view of the town centre. The spectrum ranges from the intimate Vaudeville Library for 2 to 8 people up to the 75 square metres of the sizeable Brasserie de Bary with its 60 Seat – or 300, with standing room capacity.
→ Vijzelstraat 49, 1017 HE Amsterdam. Rooms from €129.

07 Wyndham Apollo Hotel Amsterdam
This four-star hotel in the Oud-Zuid quarter is both charming and located at the crossing of five canals, which makes it conveniently situated for travel. The airport is only 20 minutes away (shuttle service), RAI and the World Trade Centre can be reached on foot. The 220 rooms offer free wireless access and flat screen tv. Beside a business centre, the hotel offers meeting rooms and state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment, air conditioning, and natural light. As an event highlight, cocktail and dinner cruises can be organised on the city’s canals.
→ Apollolaan 2, 1077 BA Amsterdam. Rooms from €167.

08 Hilton Amsterdam
A classic in Amsterdam’s Hotel Scene With its 271 rooms, 21 adaptable event rooms for up to 700 people, a lounge designed by Ralph Lauren, a fitness studio and three restaurants, it is no longer necessary for this hotel to benefit from its former fame as the location of John Lennon’s and Yoko Ono’s 1969 “Bed In”. 21 meeting- and boardrooms offer modern conference technology, ergonomic chairs and air conditioning.
→ Apollolaan 138, 1077 BG Amsterdam. Rooms from €219.

09 Motel One Amsterdam
This budget design hotel is located directly across from the RAI trade fair centre. With its 320 rooms offer mobile desks, free web access, flatscreen tv and air conditioning the hotel provides quite a lot at a relatively low price.
→ Europaboulevard 23, 1079 PC Amsterdam. Rooms from €85.

Events & Special Locations

10 RAI Messe- und Kongresszentrum
The RAI, is named after its largest shareholder, the Association of Cycle and Automobile Industry (Rijwiel en Auto Industrie), its initials comprising the name of this trade fair and congress centre.
→ Europaplein 22, 1078 RV Amsterdam. www.rai.nl

11 Beurs-van-Berlage-Conference Centre
Built in 1903 and named after its architect H.P. Berlage, the former old stock exchange in the heart of the city offers space for conferences and dinners for up to 1,200 guests.
→ Damrak 243, 1012 ZJ Amsterdam, www.beursvanberlage.com

12 Royal Concertgebouw (Het Concertgebouw)
Stucco and Chandeliers The concert hall disposes of several halls and foyers for events for up to 2,500 guests. The opulent decor of the great concert hall seats has space for 1,974 guests.
→ Concertgebouwplein 10, 1071 LN Amsterdam www.concertgebouw.nl

13 Pathé-Tuschinski-Theatre
Whether for a film screening as an incentive or as an exceptional location for the annual press conference, this art-déco cinema offers an extravagant setting. Six auditoriums offering intimate space for 60 to 100 people, up to the large
cinema auditorium ‘Tuschinsky 1’ with its room for 750 are offered. Catering, background music and additional decorations can be organised as needed.

→ Reguliersbreestraat 26-34, 017 CN Amsterdam, www.pathebusiness.nl

Theatre De Meervaart
The theatre between city centre and Schiphol airport is also the scene of 150 company events per year. It is located in a park and owns two theatre halls, three foyers, three studio stages and ten conference rooms. The latter are ideal for events of anywhere from 2 to 120 people, in the Roten Saal there is room for 800, and in the Blauen Saal room for 265 participants.

→ Meer en Vaart 300, 1068 LE Amsterdam
www.meervaart.nl

Van-Gogh-Museum
The greatest collection of Vincent Van Gogh’s works combined with diverse event rooms.

→ Museumplein 6, 1071 DJ Amsterdam, www.vangoghmuseum.nl

Compact Centre
with international accessibility:
From Schiphol airport there are connections to 185 cities worldwide. From the airport, travellers can reach the city in twenty minutes by public transport. The main railway station is located at the border of the compact city centre. The Dutch transport system connects this station to nine other train stations in all other provinces. Four underground lines, a tram and bus network, Amsterdam’s ferries and of course its bicycle network offer optimal mobility.

Places mentioned in the main text

1 Andaz Amsterdam Prinsengracht
2 NH-Hotel am Messezentrum
3 Sheraton Amsterdam Airport Hotel
4 Element Amsterdam
5 Postillion Hotel und Kongresshalle
6 Maritim Amsterdam
7 A’DAM-Tower
8 Reichsmuseum
Are you looking for a location that is perfect for your conference or event? These hotels offer a wide variety and ideal settings – whether for a small seminar or a major event.

**Conference Hotels**

**Selected Conference Hotels for your Corporate Event**

**Holiday Inn Berlin City-West ******
- **Rooms:** 336
- **Wi-Fi:** included
- **Conferences:** 18 rooms | max. 500 people
- **Audio-visual conference equipment:** available
- **Location:** Centre 6 km | Main Train Station 5 km | Airport 3 km | Trade Fair 4 km

**TANNENHOF *****
- **Rooms:** 50
- **Wi-Fi:** included
- **Conferences:** 3 rooms | max. 60 people
- **Audio-visual conference equipment:** available
- **Location:** Centre 3 km | Main Train Station 4 km | Airport 115 km | Trade Fair 7 km

**ARCUS-HOTEL ******
- **Rooms:** 50
- **Wi-Fi:** included
- **Conferences:** 1 room | max. 60 people
- **Audio-visual conference equipment:** available
- **Location:** Centre 15 km | Main Train Station 15 km | Airport 40 km | Trade Fair 5 km

**DAS TIGRA ******
- **Rooms:** 78
- **Wi-Fi:** included
- **Conferences:** 2 room | max. 26 people
- **Audio-visual conference equipment:** available
- **Location:** Centre 0,6 km | Main Train Station 2 km | Airport 20 km | Trade Fair 2 km
Book your conference hotel now at [www.hrs.com](http://www.hrs.com)!
Or contact us at [+49 221 2077 300](tel:+49%20221%202077%20300) or email us at [tagung@hrs.de](mailto:tagung@hrs.de)

**BASRA INTERNATIONAL HOTEL ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐**
- Rooms: 201
- Wi-Fi: excluded
- Conferences: 5 rooms | max. 500 people
- Audio-visual conference equipment: available
- Location: Centre 1 km | Main Train Station 7 km
  - Airport 20 km | Trade Fair 7 km

**HOTEL MADERO ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐**
- Rooms: 197
- Wi-Fi: included
- Tagungen: 11 rooms | max. 250 people
- Audio-visual conference equipment: available
- Location: Centre 2 km | Main Train Station 4 km
  - Airport 32 km | Trade Fair 10 km

**GRAND HOTEL AMRÂTH KURHAUS ⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐**
- Rooms: 253
- Wi-Fi: included
- Conferences: 10 rooms | max. 500 people
- Audio-visual conference equipment: available
- Location: Centre 5 km | Main Train Station 5 km
  - Airport 40 km | Trade Fair 5 km

**RADISSON BLU RESORT ⭐⭐⭐⭐**
- Rooms: 250
- Wi-Fi: included
- Conferences: 9 rooms | max. 600 people
- Audio-visual conference equipment: available
- Location: Centre 3 km | Main Train Station 3 km
  - Airport 22 km | Trade Fair 3 km
Boomtown: Shanghai

Photo: Adobe Stock
It became really exciting again at the end: As early as November 2015, it appeared that Marriott head Arne Sorenson had swept aside all his opponents in the bidding war for the Starwood hotel group. Marriott was the new number 1 – it was all sewn up. Until Chinese insurance group Anbang suddenly put a new and significantly higher offer on the table in mid-March 2016. Sorenson countered with a higher offer. The Chinese did the same. It went on like this for days. It was a real business-world whodunnit, at the end of which the unbelievable sum of US14 billion was at stake. And then Anbang withdrew; in response to pressure from the Chinese government, insiders speculate.

But even if Marriott emerged victorious from this battle: In the meantime, it is clear that Chinese investors – following extensive rounds of investments the automotive and mechanical engineering industries, as well as in the area of electronics and semiconductors – have now set their sights on the hotel industry. Only in April of this year, the HNA Hospitality Group took over the Carlson Rezidor Hotels, whereas the group was already functioning as majority shareholders in the weaker NH Hotel group. By far the largest hotel chain of the country, Jing Jiang International Hotel Group is already, as of the end of 2014, owner of the French Louvre Hotels Group. Alongside this, Jin Jiang is cultivating a marketing alliance with the Spanish Meliá Hotels, and the group has even got in on the act at Accor as a shareholder (currently 6 percent).

The appetite of Chinese investors is fed by the availability of endless funds as well as China’s rise to the world’s travel champion. This despite the fact that only 1.4 billion Chinese have travelled so far. Yet even this minority spends so much money on their trips abroad – US489 billion in 2014 alone, and rising – that Asian players do not want to merely sit by on the sidelines. “Chinese investors are mainly driven by the plan of achieving access to the huge business potential of mainly Chinese customers.” says Cindy Zhao, Business Development Director China at the law firm Taylor Wessing. Thus they are on the lookout for partners and takeover candidates they can use to secure a slice of the cake for themselves.

Everyone wants to profit – including the Chinese

Yet calculations include the Chinese market. The Plateno Hotels Group was, for example, up to its merger with Jing Jiang Hotels the largest hotel chain in the People’s Republic in 2015 and is now striving for “symbiotic connections”, according to Louise Leonard, CEO of B & C Consulting services with its head office in Shanghai. If an overseas brand in China is not yet represented, Plateno will rebrand at least 300 of its 2,000 domestic houses for this brand. Local brands receive equivalent management, systems, technology, etc.

A current example for this is the deal with Thomas Althoff, known for his luxury hotels, announced at the ITB. In future, four-star-business hotels of the Ameron brand will open in all of Asia. "Initially, ten hotels are planned in China, then 50 in Cambodia and Vietnam as well, says Althoff. “This will happen very quickly.” He has no fears that his brand may lose prestige. “We are the franchise-givers and quality control lies with us.”
Whoever has regular dealings with China knows that this is highly necessary. Though China's leading hotel chains cover the entire star portfolio, in much greater measure they cover the budget segment. Market leader is, again, Plateno, whose two-star brand 7 Days Inn has 2,275 houses with 380,456 rooms. These rooms with their hostel-like charm, would hardly be a room for a typical business traveller. And most of the time would not be able to. Because far from the boom metropolises, Chinese personnel is not - yet - prepared for guests other than their own fellow Chinese: whether factors regarding language, foreign menus and even credit card payment cannot be taken for granted. Western chains are already there. Thus, the majority of all travel managers and their travellers rely on affiliation with international hotel chains, in order to protect themselves from unpleasant surprises. Thus 80% of all bookings in Chinese cities like Shanghai, Peking, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Suzhou and Hangzhou are made via HRS by western chains; yet outside the cities, bookings still comprise 70%. As is generally the case with foreign travel, booking categories for the Chinese hotel market are usually one star higher than in the home country. The offer is there. Because for years foreign chains such as Marriot, Starwood, Hyatt, Hilton, Accor and Intercontinental have been, along with joint venture partners, aiming to become known in the increasingly prosperous People's Republic. Led by Europe's oldest luxury hotel group: Kempinski Hotels: As early as 2001, it established a joint venture, management company Key International, together with the nationwide leader, Beijing Tourism Group. Apart from the development of Kempinski's own projects on the Chinese mainland, Key even launched its own luxury brand, Nuo, above and beyond this in 2013. In contrast, German hotel group Steigenberger is focusing on shared projects with its Peking-based joint-venture partner, Beijing Yun Bang. Founded in 2013, “The German Hotel Group Co., Ltd. Operating Steigenberger Hotels” is currently completing two Intercity as well as four Steigenberger hotels. Furthermore, Maritim head Monika Gomolla from Germany's largest hotel chain is also pressing ahead “forcefully” with her growth strategy on the Chinese market: in addition to already existing houses in the business cities of Shenyang, Changzhou and Wuhu there are two more presently being built and “The contract for a further one is near completion.” Leading now also in business travel And not only foreign travellers prefer to book at known brands. For the exceedingly brand-conscious Chinese business travellers, no-name hous-
In the fast lane: US business travel market surpassed

For this reason, in Chinese hotel chains there may well soon be a massive investment in image and facilities in their own brands in the home market. Because despite the cooling of the economic situation, the business travel market in China still counts as the fastest growing in the world. With estimated expenditures of approximately US$321 billion in 2016 (+10%) in the meantime, it lies even in front of market leader USA. The upward trend is continuing. It is a given, that in this rising growth market, by no means should the strongly expanding western chains gain the lead in China.

Hotel procurement. Using local know-how

This doesn’t mean, obviously, that brand affiliation alone is a guarantee for adequate standards. This was recently noticed by CEO of the consulting firm Fish 4 Corporate Services Network GmbH, Andreas Bieschke, while on a trip to Guilin in the southeast. Because although his partner there had booked him into a western hotel, his experience there as a guest was far below the usual standards. “There was not even coffee,” the frequent traveller complained, “only a purely Chinese breakfast together with 250 bus tourists.”

Experiences such as these show how important it is to ensure that detailed data and founded local expertise are already in place and that only appropriate lodging are taken up into the hotel programme. A further problem is that China has a largely fragmented hotel market, in which only benchmark data and regional know-how can create transparency. Thus HRS advises travel managers to involve local stakeholders already in the RFP process, so that only suitable houses are taken up into the hotel programme. In the RFP tool from HRS these categories can be distributed to employees on site. Employees with power of decision receive a ”master”, those employees classified as “sub-user” can turn in suggestions, assess seated hotels and can comment on them.
In the beginning it was a question of strategy. More precisely: the question of whether travel managers are actually strategically positioned in 2016 as before the annual deadline. For this reason, HRS, together with the Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE), questioned 350 travel buyers in the USA, Europe and Asia:

Are services measured according to cost savings? Or on additional value that they yield for the company? That both factors clearly carry weight was not really surprising. Paradigm shifts don’t happen overnight. Yet a contradiction in individual estimates, or rather details is noticeable; how often a strategically formulated ideal goal

What are the highest hurdles on the way to the ideal hotel programme?

Lack of time A typical travel management day

- Too little time for negotiation: 26%
- Traveller expectation: 33%
- Slow or no answers from hotels: 40%
- Lack of time and personnel: 42%
- Higher Hotel prices: 58%
is undermined by the primacy of the operative reality. Because although the overwhelming majority actually knows that hotel negotiations regarding savings are largely exhausted - 45 percent already believe they have reached the end of the line - they still spend 88 percent of their time mainly in negotiations with suppliers.

**Savings remain Priority Number 1:**
A similar paradox can be found in results regarding strategic goals. Since there hardly any more savings can be expected, the focus of international travel management has become the traveller himself, or rather his behaviour when travelling. Thus 84 percent of those surveyed want to generate savings in future by demand management and compliance; 75 percent rate better services for the traveller as a tried and true method to actually reach savings aimed for.

Yet although there is broad consensus that successful inclusion of the traveller, mainly by optimising already existing processes (62 percent) and decreasing traveller complaints (69 percent) can be measured - via strategic decisions - count as a measure of the success or failure of travel management with the still "classical" targets: 78 percent of those questioned must still produce proof of savings of "direct costs". 71 percent counts in a well running booking programme as performance indicator. A rise in traveller approval and with that fewer complaints only take a back seat position of 59.9 percent on the list of priorities.

The fact that a strategic direction of operative tasks placed on an external partner can ease the burden on travel management, is demonstrated by results revolving around the subject of hotel negotiation. In answer to the question of what causes general failure in hotel negotiations, 58 percent of travel managers said the rise of hotel rates, 42 percent said there wasn't enough time or employees, respectively and still 40 percent put the blame on the entirely missing or lack of response from the hotel side. Above all are the time aspects that prevent a travel manager to negotiate optimally.

A completely different scenario is shown by those who have managed to outsource no longer valuable and time consuming services. These travel managers show two to three times fewer problems with rising costs or delayed answers, because the appropriate benchmark data and a global hotel portfolio allow the targeting of cost-effective houses and requests which can also be controlled via specific RFP platforms. To phrase this differently: Because these travel managers are free from the recurring problems that plague their colleagues, they can concentrate on strategy - in this case the management of the traveller. Remember the catchword: Traveller centricity.

**Getting self-booking customers to book smartly**
A remarkable fact is that nearly no respondent expected consideration of individual travellers’ needs to lead to a cost explosion. On the contrary: 72
Whoever wishes to improve process must query those using the processes.

84% of travel managers agree that better service for their travellers are an adequate way to economise.

75%

The travel manager believes that demand management and Compliance are the keys to savings.

Wish: More time for the guest.

84% say that they are Traveller satisfaction with their hotels collect and measure.

20% only look to see whether their colleagues are satisfied with the booking process.

11% only collect the satisfaction with accounting processes.

43% only say that they are.

But: The operative day-to-day operations block the time contingent

percent expected an improvement in service and no higher expenses and/or travel costs. A possible explanation for this is offered by a Canadian travel manager: “There are still ways to save and a lot of leeway to make self-bookers book smarter.” says a participant during an ACT conference in April. “But that won’t work without specific training.”

Of course travel management still has quite a bit to learn as well. That is to say until now only somewhat less than half of all those questioned measure how satisfied their travellers are with their hotel and everything pertaining to it. If we look at aspects of process, the booking process and that of travel expense accounting, this pertains to only every fifth or even every tenth company. In addition, only two thirds have a formal query process. If processes are to improve, then those who use these processes must be questioned as well. This is the conclusion of the ACTE conference panel, whose results were presented in April. The entire study is available as a download to be had at corporate.xls.com/acte.
• Travel Managers, who outsource hotel buying see in rising hotel costs no obstacles **3 x more often**
• Slow or missing response from hotels pose **2 x more often no obstacles** if hotel buying is outsourced.

**Download the free white paper.**

corporate.hrs.com/ACTE