# Managing Business Trips Using IT Solutions

By Tatyana Nugmanova

November 18, 2012

Tatiana Nugmanova
Marketing Director
Demlink Travel

The current state of the business market is characterized by the need of enterprises to optimize their costs and find possible ways to save money and reduce costs.

Nowadays, the procurement divisions of companies face difficulties in choosing a provider of business travel services because the budget allocated for arrangement of business trips and events takes a significant share in the overall budget of the enterprise.

On the one hand it is necessary to choose a service provider that offers full range and high quality services, while on the other hand the selected supplier of business travel services should contribute to the reduction of costs and savings funds of the organization.

The major factor contributing to successful cooperation between the corporate client and business travel agency is administration of the booking process, i.e. the possibility for the customer to receive, analyze and modify related information. In practice, there are many companies that already use various internal Enterprise Resource Planning, or ERP, systems.

With that in mind, the electronic circulation of documents operates within the company and information on travel processes is accessible and controlled.

While selecting a Business Travel Agency (BTA) the customer should pay close attention to the presence of a developed system of on-line services that will facilitate and ease administration of the booking process, as well as to the possibility for the corporate client to receive the necessary information in a convenient format in order to integrate it into the internal ERP system.

The following are the basic needs of the corporate client for arrangements of business trips or events:

• Ease of administration process

- Tailor-made trips and events

- High quality of services

- Cost optimization

- Information on market opportunities

What kind of modern IT-solutions help to solve business tasks and challenges and meet the needs of the corporate client?

The leading BTA's offer cooperation in the framework of the "automated reservation management system," simply called "On-line Personal Account."

Since all the 'automated reservation management systems' are created and owned by the BTA IT department, their interfaces are different, but their services are actually very similar.

This "On-line Personal Account" offers a wide range of business travel services and on-line assistance. Often the customer does not remember the whole range of services, so banner words are available in the header of "On-line Personal Account" and serve as a reminder.

Generally, the "On-line Personal Account" offers 24-hour access to services. This allows you to choose and book services in real-time, track the status of your order, payment and delivery, maintain databases and monitor the travel budget. Opportunities of "On-line Personal Account" allow corporate clients to receive detailed on-line statistics, which includes many useful tools for analysis and further cost optimization.

For those customers who have a large number of different events such as conferences, seminars, work-shops and other activities, business travel agencies offer modification of the "Personal Account" program created especially for MICE purposes.

This modification is particularly in demand from companies that held different events on a "non-stop" basis. It brings great value to large companies that have to centralize its regional branches and subdivisions with service through a single provider.

Using Internet access alone, the central office and other authorized individuals of the company have the ability to control the booking process and budget online, both inside and outside of Russia.

Another very important item is the integration of the "Personal Account" program with in-house ERP-systems of the customer.

This, in turn, minimizes mistakes made through human error, and makes the book process and overall collaboration transparent and manageable.

Online services of the "Personal Account" program could be used as convenient and relevant tools for drawing up quarterly or annual budget and receiving actual information on prices and services.

These services can be located both in "Personal Account" and also be available via general

access to any client on the BTA's website.

Booking through online systems offered by leading BTAs helps clients to pick up flight options and schedules, to choose a hotel in Russia or abroad, to receive a preliminary description and location of the hotel, etc.

In addition to online services, the leading BTAs offer maintenance of statistics. The important part of statistics is aimed at the assessment of economical tariffs and their compliance with the travel policy of the company.

The reason of choosing the tariff, comparative public hotel rates and matching the cost of the service and the allocated budget for different level of employees will be indicated during the reservation of tickets or other services. Then the travel policy of the enterprise will be controlled and the planned amount of cost savings will be achieved during the period of cooperation with the BTA.

Another option for receiving information on market opportunities is using the regular BTA e-newsletter, which offers flight options, news on hotel chains and other travel news such as visa regulations and leisure options. Every employee of the customer's company could have access to this mailing.

We have to admit that nowadays the tourism market is more and more saturated by information technologies. IT-solutions can significantly reduce the time, funds optimization; monitor the entire booking process, from the submission of the application to generation of detailed statistics and summary of cooperation results.

The leading BTAs actively use IT solutions responding to the needs of corporate clients in order to meet the high requirements of business.

On the other hand, while offering high-tech IT solutions toall clients, BTAs develop a mid-size business, thereby raising and equalizing the overall level of business travel services throughout Russia.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/11/18/managing-business-trips-using-it-solutions-a19541