



Lever Six: Address security needs and corporate social responsibility

World-class companies do not wait for disaster to strike before integrating risk management into their travel program. They continuously strive to reduce the frequency and severity of incidents and work hard to implement effective response and recovery procedures that will enhance traveler protection, maintain productivity and limit liability.

These companies are also increasingly conscious of their corporate social responsibility (CSR). Consequently, they are managing their economic, social and environmental performance simultaneously to achieve good corporate citizenship and long-term sustainability that goes beyond financial performance. Effective travel management is contributing to this effort, particularly in the area of environmental protection.

Better safe than sorry

Companies have a duty of care to do what is reasonably practical to protect the health and safety of their employees, both in the workplace and when they are traveling for business. This has become a legal and a moral obligation.

Successfully managing the risks associated with business travel requires proactive measures coupled with effective execution of a well-designed Disaster Response Plan. To that end, travel managers must be part of a cohesive crisis management team composed of experts from human resources, IT, the legal department, risk management and medical services. They must also work hand in hand with their travel management company to keep travelers well informed and quickly locate and assist them in the event of an emergency.

Managing travel-related risks calls for the following fundamentals:

- **Thorough planning is key.** Specific policies and procedures related to safety and security must be clearly defined and continuously updated. This might mean banning high-risk travel destinations, mandating the use of preferred suppliers with confirmed safety records, limiting the number of employees on the same flight and/or implementing pre-planned evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency. Travelers, travel bookers and travel counselors at the point of sale must be well versed in the policy to make more responsible decisions.
- **Destination information helps prepare travelers.** Providing them with relevant, pre-trip information based on a specific itinerary

enables travelers to assess the threats and hazards in a given country and take the necessary precautions. Pre-trip briefings for travelers going to high-risk destinations are particularly useful. Understanding health issues and immunization requirements beforehand further enhances protection. Under certain circumstances (e.g., an epidemic illness), relevant post-trip information also helps to protect travelers.

- **A Disaster Response Plan must be prepared.** Travelers must know what to do in the event of an emergency. To that end, the Disaster Response Plan must be widely communicated. In the event of an emergency, it is best when travelers can call a single number 24/7, including holidays, for information and/or assistance pertaining to any situation they are in. To ensure the plan works well, practice drills should be organized periodically and the plan modified if necessary.
- **Tracking travelers and notifying them immediately buys precious time in an emergency.** Companies with a mature travel

risk management program stay on top of breaking news that could be of danger to their employees. In the event of an emergency, their travel management company uses proprietary booking data to immediately pinpoint and identify travelers who may be affected. This is why monitoring compliance with travel policy, including the use of preferred booking channels, is so important. These companies, in conjunction with their travel management partner, have also implemented a formal notification process that enables them to communicate with travelers day and night and provide assistance worldwide.

- **Feedback is needed after every emergency.** Even the most mature travel risk management programs can be improved. Companies must determine if the situation could have been avoided in the first place and/or better handled. If so, risk mitigation strategies, policies, plans and procedures must be reevaluated and modified accordingly.

Corporate duty of care

Implementing a proactive travel risk management program can be a lifesaver both for individual employees and the company as a whole. In April 2008, the *Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007* came into effect in the United Kingdom. While it only applies in the U.K., any work-related deaths that occur there will be considered for prosecution, regardless of whether an employer is registered there.

Under the law, a company may be found guilty, and liable as a whole, of corporate manslaughter if senior management is found guilty of playing a significant role in the decision, management or organization of the activity that causes an individual's death in the U.K. and amounts to a gross breach of a relevant duty of care. The maximum penalty is an unlimited fine.

"Duty of care" is defined as the legal responsibility of an organization to do everything "reasonably practical" to protect the health and safety of employees. Companies must provide a safe work environment (including the hotels and airlines they use), inform and instruct employees of potential hazards (e.g., high-risk destinations), and disseminate health and safety advice.

Sustainable business travel

Effective travel management and CSR are good business partners. **Environmental, social and economic concerns** are often addressed in a well-managed travel program.

Responsible procurement of business travel products and services has become increasingly important as more and more companies choose to work with suppliers who have implemented their own CSR initiatives over those who have not.

Requests for information and requests for proposal should take not only economic goals but CSR considerations into account. Once a supplier has been selected, they should be regularly audited to ensure continued adherence to CSR policies and ongoing development of sustainable products and services. Many companies have also made

supplier diversity and/or the use of local suppliers a cornerstone of their CSR program.

Protecting the environment from the potentially devastating effects of climate change has become a priority for many companies. Here, effective travel management can play an important role. Where possible, many companies are striving to **reduce their carbon footprint** by proposing rail as an alternative to air travel for trips under three hours in length. Carbon calculators at the point of booking help them sensitize travelers to the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions associated with various forms of transportation. Other companies are encouraging their travelers to take direct flights since they are less polluting than connections.

Many of these same companies are seeking "green" hotels and organizing more environ-

mentally friendly meetings and events. Still others are cutting back on business travel and using videoconferencing and Webinars when they are equally effective. Oftentimes, when companies have reduced their CO₂ emissions as much as possible, they turn to carbon offsetting programs to neutralize the impact.

Enhancing traveler safety and security responds to CSR concerns as well. Furthermore, when business travel and social initiatives such as employee training or volunteer activities are combined, companies enhance their image as a good corporate citizen.

Sustainable checklist

Today, most companies can develop and implement a responsible business travel strategy by adhering to some basic principles:

- Identify opportunities for responsible business travel and adapt the **travel policy** accordingly
- Establish key **CSR performance measures** that can be easily monitored
- Use questionnaires or requests for information to better understand current and prospective **suppliers' CSR initiatives, products and services**
- Consider **diversity** when choosing suppliers
- Reduce **CO₂ emissions** as much as possible before offsetting
- Encourage **rail travel** where appropriate for increased environmental protection and a more productive work environment
- Weigh the environmental impact of **direct flights** over connections

- Use **"green" hotels** and environmentally friendly meeting facilities that are effectively managing natural resources
- Hold meetings and events in **less distant locations**
- Work with rental car companies whose fleet includes **hybrid vehicles** for better fuel consumption; prohibit vehicle upgrades
- Consider the use of **videoconferencing** and/or Webinars as an alternative to certain business trips, meetings and events
- Mitigate risk with a well-designed and well-implemented **traveler security** program

Effective travel management has an important part to play in a company's overall CSR program. The "4Ss," savings, service, security and sustainability, respond to needs for sound financial performance, employee well-being and development, respect toward all internal and external stakeholders, environmental protection, and civic-minded behavior in the local community and the world at large. Consequently, CSR in business travel must be addressed in a concrete fashion with performance metrics for continuous progress. The future is now.