



Lever Eight: Develop executive dashboards and actionable performance measures

If you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it. So goes an adage familiar to travel management professionals. Without relevant performance indicators and corresponding data that is consolidated and delivered in a timely, accurate and easy-to-use fashion, it is impossible to evaluate and optimize the effectiveness of a travel program. Furthermore, to engage top management and business unit/department heads in the optimization of a travel program, the data that is reported must be adjusted to reflect their individual needs and concerns and be comprehensible at a glance. The task of effectively capturing and presenting data is complex. Multiple suppliers around the world use different standards and formats. Merging information from different sources increases complexity. The challenge is compounded by non-compliant travelers who book outside of preferred channels, which results in travel spend that is unaccounted for.

In most companies, the goals of an effectively managed travel program mirror overall business objectives. To monitor and drive progress, companies rely on:

- **Well-defined performance indicators.** Performance indicators must be carefully defined, measurable and in alignment with each of the goals of the travel program. Above all, they must provide actionable insights that will lead to desired results. To that end, performance indicators should be regularly monitored against program goals and benchmarked against market trends, as well as the performance of similarly sized companies in the same business sector with comparable travel spend and corporate culture.

In general, performance indicators cover air, hotel and ground transportation spend, as well as service levels and traveler behavior. Environmental indicators are increasingly monitored as well. It is the job of travel management professionals to specify those indicators that are most relevant to their travel program and their company as a whole. In addition to travel spend per category, they might include:

- ▶ **Advance air bookings**
- ▶ The use of **restricted airfares** versus flexible fares
- ▶ **Average ticket price** and **room rate** year over year
- ▶ Key **city pairs** per country and/or region

- ▶ Air and hotel **supplier market share**
- ▶ **Class of air service** and **category of hotel room**
- ▶ **Missed hotel bookings**
- ▶ **Online adoption**
- ▶ **Compliance with preferred booking channels** (i.e., the travel management company and the corporate online booking tool)
- ▶ On- and offline **transaction fees**
- ▶ **Touchless transaction rates**
- ▶ **Compliance with preferred suppliers**, including the corporate credit card provider
- ▶ **Missed savings**
- ▶ **Cost avoidance**
- ▶ **Traveler satisfaction**
- ▶ **Carbon dioxide emissions**

- **Integrated data and reporting.** Data should be integrated from a variety of sources—the travel management company, credit card providers, online booking tools, suppliers—to provide the most complete picture of travel program performance.

Good data reporting provides the information for sound analysis, actionable insights and concrete initiatives that drive progress. Well-designed dashboards integrate graphs, pie charts and other visuals in a single page, allowing managers to step back from the details and quickly and accurately identify the key trends and relationships that characterize the travel program.

Dashboards also play a key role in internal communications to C-level executives and business unit/department heads who manage budgets and corporate travelers. They are particularly useful for comparing performance among business units and departments and indicating where individual progress is needed.

They can also be used to communicate with travelers to encourage new behaviors that will contribute to the optimization of the travel program.

In all of these cases, the information that is reported must be carefully targeted and easy to understand for non-experts of business travel management. Providing too much information is usually counterproductive and discourages focus on what really matters.

- **Relevant, easy-to-use dashboards.** Effective dashboards share the following characteristics:

- ▶ They are easy to interpret and **actionable**.
- ▶ They are **customizable** with top-line data reflecting the objectives and areas of concern most important to the user.
- ▶ They track **performance against goals**.
- ▶ They have easy and intuitive **drill-down capabilities**, enabling users to move quickly from high-level data to supporting data and reports for each graph.
- ▶ They are **easily adjusted** so performance indicators can be changed.
- ▶ They are located **in one place** and are easily **accessible**.
- ▶ They can be viewed in **multiple languages** and **currencies**.

Travel management companies play a key role in identifying and monitoring relevant performance indicators, as well as consolidating, delivering and analyzing the right data at the right time to facilitate decision-making and implement corrective action.

This is one of the key reasons global companies are increasingly consolidating their travel program with one travel management partner worldwide.

Figure 13: Sample dashboard for reporting on compliance and savings

Divisions (By number of transactions)	7-day advance purchase		Self booking adoption		Preferred hotel adoption		Average ticket price		Combined air-hotel booking		Missed Q2 savings vs. compliance goals
	Current Q %	Trend from last Q	Current Q %	Trend from last Q	Current Q %	Trend from last Q	Current Q	Trend from last Q	Current Q %	Trend from last Q	
Division A	74%	↓	35%	↓	52%	↓	US\$602	↓	75%	↑	US\$1,313,230
Division B	60%	↓	20%	↓	51%	↑	US\$663	↓	81%	↓	US\$791,424
Division C	54%	↑	18%	↓	48%	↓	US\$879	↓	46%	↓	US\$923,739
Division D	79%	↓	39%	↓	70%	↓	US\$995	↓	57%	↓	US\$878,537
Division E	67%	↓	28%	↓	48%	↑	US\$693	↓	70%	↓	US\$319,435
Division F	63%	↓	23%	↓	63%	↑	US\$588	↓	76%	↓	US\$202,143
Division G	68%	↑	38%	↑	28%	↓	US\$610	↓	68%	↓	US\$115,353
Division H	48%	↓	35%	↓	29%	↓	US\$587	↑	80%	↑	US\$85,821
Division I	23%	↓	43%	↑	13%	↓	US\$540	↑	92%	↑	US\$6,847
Total	67%	↓	30%	↓	53%	↓	US\$676	↓	63%	↓	US\$4,636,530
Goal	70%		60%		32%		US\$475		70%		

- ↑ Performance up on previous quarter
- ↓ Performance down on previous quarter

- At or above goal
- Approaching goal
- Below goal