The future of business travel

Pre-Travel

Contextual Service Design

From purchase to post-trip, travelers will be continuously connected to agents and their devices as mobile devices and ubiquitous Wi-Fi, from front door to taxi door to coffee shop door and beyond. This means that small pain points in customer journeys can be solved in real time – if not preemptively – based on an individual’s context and the conditions around them. Service becomes responsive, specifically geared for individuals at precise points in their journey, and travelers feel taken care of at every turn. People need not wait for an unexpected traffic jam en route to the airport, miss a last-minute gate change or settle for a mediocre meal on-the-go again.

Conscientious Consumption

Businesses will be able to opt in to worthwhile options, furthering the advance of the travel industry toward a smaller carbon footprint. Alternative fuel flights and less resource-intensive travel options like trains, and increasingly high-speed rail, will become comparatively more affordable as fuel prices rise, making it more attractive for businesses to choose more sustainable options. Readily available information will make it easier for customers to understand various options and their repercussions, empowering them to make conscientious choices that meet their business objectives and values.

On-Premise Personalization

Integrated booking systems and traveler profiles will allow travel agents to have a complete picture of what an ideal trip might entail. As business trips increasingly overlap with personal vacations, it will be important for agents to be able to tailor suggestions and opportunities to specific travelers based on preferences profiles, loyalty memberships, and trip details. Additionally, personalized recommendations will extend beyond activities to things like in-flight entertainment, airport dining and even well-being and nutrition tips. As these personalized recommendations become more widespread and accurate, travelers will feel more comfortable sharing information with agents because they appreciate the return delivered on their data.

During Travel

Systematic Collaboration

As traveler data becomes more readily shared and accessible, seating will become smart. Business travelers will automatically be seated according to their in-room preferences (e.g. near coworkers, near networkers, near strangers). These pairings will extend to ground transportation from airport to final destination as well, allowing for shared cabs and other efficiencies. Beyond efficiencies, the availability of social data and user profiles will enable serendipity as well, connecting travelers to friends and colleagues they didn’t even know were in town. And travel services providers will be able to link such serendipity to rewards for travelers – share a cab with your in-town co-worker and get a free drink at the hotel bar together.

Embedded Biotech

Biotechnology and biometric identification will become commonplace and, increasingly, biometric authentication will take the place of passwords and passports. Fless, long-range retinal and fingerprint scanners, along with vein-matching hand scanners, will start to take the place of photographic IDs, allowing for fast and easy identification, as well as rapid personalization.

Invisible Security

Advanced monitoring and universal data bases of travelers will expand current FastPass systems to apply to nearly all business travelers who opt in. The TSA will be minimally invasive for frequent travelers, country entry requirements will be loosened, and passports will be digitally enabled to make the pre-flight screening process a breeze.

Smart Digital Wallets

Kiss that cash goodbye. As banks, stores and transit become increasingly digital-friendly, payments – and wallets – will roll over. Digital money transfers will become the norm. Scan, snap and tap-to-pay functions will be present for nearly all transactions, and smartphones, wristbands and other tech devices will become intelligent wallets. Travelers will also be able to track, log and sync transactions across various devices, making budgeting and expense tracking easier than ever.

Predictive Planning

Connected systems and smart algorithms will make on-the-go decision making easier and more fluid than ever before. Traveler pain points like missed connections, cancelled flights and delays will be easily handled, with travel agents able to quickly reroute and re-book travel without any input from the traveler. Contextual and consumer data together will allow services to be provided more proactively, with travel agents able to connect travelers to one another for more rewarding trips, in addition to solving problems before they happen.

Smart Cities and First Stage Travel

As cities expand and urban centers become more complex, itineraries will be crafted with first-stage, door-to-door, travel in mind, creating the best and fastest travel experience possible for business travelers. This includes city smart transportation and increasingly available high-speed train transit between regional hubs, as well as off-peak travel and improved commuting logistics.

Post-Travel

Always-on Assistance

With universally available, Wi-Fi and wireless connectivity, and near-100% smart device penetration, people will come to expect 24/7 service from agents and service providers. Real-time language translation and video chat will make global face-to-face support as reliable as telephone service today and ‘MakeMyDay Button’ style instant access will make services the go-to source for information and assistance. Technology to enhance human interaction, creating rich, ongoing relationships between agents and travelers instead of one-time service offerings.

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