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# How Travel Management Companies Can Lend a Hand in a Disruption



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# HOW TRAVEL MANAGEMENT COMPANIES CAN LEND A HAND IN A DISRUPTION



## *Unpredictable Events Require Thorough Planning*

In coping with periods of disruption, companies are faced with tough decisions that leave some to rethink how they manage their travel programs. Many are examining whether they have the right protocols in place to help keep their people safe and healthy when traveling at the onset of an emergency.

While no one has a crystal ball to predict when a disruption might occur, you can build plans to be prepared for the unexpected. Consider this:

- 1. Do you have a travel policy and if so, when was it last refreshed?**
- 2. Do you have clear criteria on when to ban travel to regional areas?**
- 3. Are you able to enforce travel restrictions and update them easily?**
- 4. Can you locate and contact travelers who are in disrupted areas?**
- 5. Can you get travelers home quickly when a disruption occurs?**

While it's true that you can't plan for exact situations, careful preparation can help prevent a scramble should an incident arise. Considering this, we wanted to affirm the ways that a travel management company (TMC) can make this preparation easier and more effective. Let's begin by better understanding the traveler's perspective on the matter.

### THE TRAVELER'S PERSPECTIVE

Interestingly, many travelers already expect their company to care for them when they travel. An average of 75% of business travelers worldwide agree that their company is responsible for their personal well-being while they are traveling. In the same way, more than half (58%) of business travelers worldwide feel very or extremely confident that their employer could provide immediate help or assistance if there was a disruption to their business travel plans. Meanwhile, 42% feel only somewhat (29%) or not very/not at all (13%) confident that their company could support them through a disruption.<sup>1</sup> In short, while travelers understand that their company is responsible for their wellbeing, only slightly more than half are confident that their company could effectively care for them when they need it most. A TMC can help meet travelers' expectations with practical solutions so that travelers feel more supported.

# How a TMC Can Help Meet a Traveler’s Needs

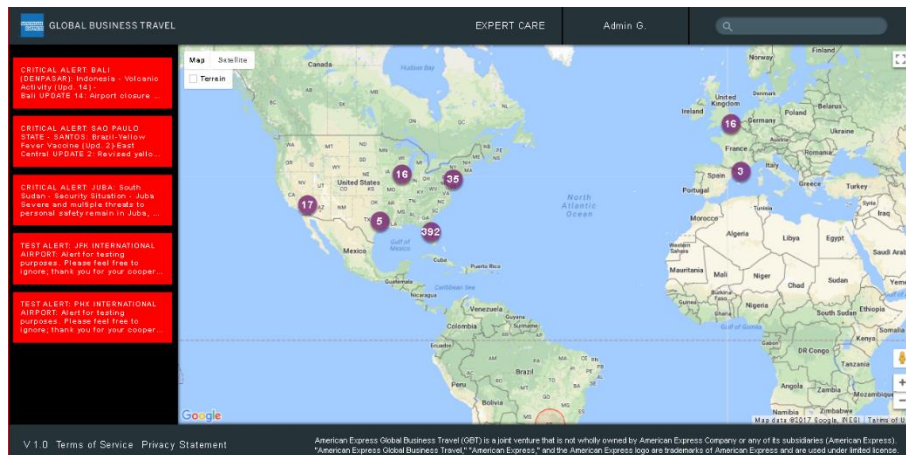
## EFFICIENT DUTY OF CARE SOLUTIONS

The idea of duty of care is a straightforward concept that, among others, encompasses the care of the health and safety of your team when they’re at work. That said, the execution of duty of care practices can be difficult for a company to manage on their own. This is where a TMC can be handy. The duty of care initiatives that TMCs can offer vary. Consider:

- Global traveler care that provides alerts of potential service disruptions to travelers and travel managers ahead of travel.
- Pre-trip approvals that can be implemented before employees travel to make others aware of when they leave, where they’re headed, and when they are expected to return. GBT’s pre-trip auditing tool, Expert Auditor™, triggers an approval process for booking, helping to keep travelers compliant and companies aware of when and where staff plan to travel.
- Destination intelligence to inform you and your travelers of destination-specific information such as cultural norms, local laws and areas deemed unsafe.
- A management tool to maintain the up-to-date contact information of your travelers and their emergency contacts.

## VISIBILITY INTO TRAVELER DATA

Once your company has a plan in place to fulfill their duty of care responsibilities, you need the right data to execute that



plan. A robust incident-readiness program will constantly monitor risk events, like natural disasters, and cross-reference that with the location of your travelers to provide maximum visibility. In addition, a strong program encourages travelers to book within company-approved channels which in turn lends itself to increased traveler visibility. While you could manage this with spreadsheets and a full-time employee monitor, it’s

a lot easier with the right tools and technology. For instance, American Express Global Business Travel (GBT) offers Expert Care™, a tool that automatically pulls risk data from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties along with the location of your employees and assets (like offices) to visualize where a disruption is occurring and where your travelers are in relation.

## PROVEN AND TESTED RISK FRAMEWORK

After you’ve evaluated traveler visibility and duty of care fulfillment, turn your attention to a TMC with a proven and tested risk framework. All your planning and preparation might be for naught if your TMC and suppliers aren’t also equipped for

disruptions. TMCs with strong risk frameworks often have robust business continuity policies and procedures in place to allow for continued positive traveler experiences even in the face of challenging travel shutdowns. A sturdy risk framework is part of what helped prepare American Express GBT for the challenges we're seeing today and drove strong customer satisfaction scores in return.

#### HUMAN SUPPORT

Lastly, a TMC can offer some much-needed support from travel counselors with means to connect in the event of an emergency like live calls and live messaging. A lack of human support could leave your travelers to juggle contacting multiple suppliers to make or rebook reservations on their own or with chatbots. The process can be both time-consuming, isolating, and frustrating in times of stress. In the age of online booking technologies, it might seem old-fashioned to phone in support but when things go wrong a travel counselor can be the backing your travelers both want and need.

## LEARN MORE

If you'd like to learn more about how American Express Global Business Travel is helping in these times, [contact sales or your account representative](#).

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<sup>1</sup> "2020 Traveler 360° Research.", American Express Global Business Travel and Ipsos Public Affairs, Unpublished raw data.