

Why a TMC will be your greatest asset in 2023

New research from Concur shows that at least two out of five business travellers find travelling for work stressful, with the lead-up to their departure and time in transit being the most anxiety-inducing. Working with a travel management company (TMC) makes these stresses all but disappear says Bonnie Smith, GM of Corporate Traveller South Africa, adding that TMCs offer an end-to-end travel service and takes the reins from the moment you give them the go-ahead.



Source: Supplied

Travel Management Companies (TMCs) can be the difference between an investment in the future of your business or a perennial drain on precious funds. The last thing SMEs want to do is add another line item to the expense list – unless it provides exceptional value, reduced costs, and significant time savings.

"Travel bookings are deceptively simple. The process is simple enough and anyone with an internet connection can do it. But what many people don't account for is the time it's taking away from the core business, the unnecessary stress it's creating, and the exclusive rates and deals only available to TMCs. Often the best deal they can see is still far higher than what a TMC has access to."



5 ways businesses can travel more and spend less in 2023

18 Jan 2023



Just how do TMCs save you money? The most obvious is by saving you time, says Smith, not only during the booking process but also when it comes to filing claims, generating reports, and tracking staff. "Just like you are a specialist in your industry, TMCs are specialists in business travel. What might take you a few minutes they'll do in a few seconds. They also have access to exclusive industry rates and can use their own buying power to negotiate deals on your behalf.

"If your business already has negotiated rates and discounts in place, the need for a TMC might seem redundant. But in almost all cases TMCs have the power to honour these existing relationships and expand on them. They spend their days dealing with vendors and service providers finding and negotiating the best deals and rates."

Instead of you having to sift through multiple websites and track results across spreadsheets, adds Smith, your TMC will present you with an omnichannel solution that gathers all the relevant data in one place.

The expertise of a TMC is invaluable

Their teams are made up of highly experienced dedicated travel experts that have seen and dealt with it all, says Smith. "They know which hotels are two-star parading as three, which airlines to avoid, the best routes to and in a destination, and all the little details you need to know before travelling to somewhere new. They monitor everything related to any given trip and that includes pandemic developments, airport and road closures, weather conditions, strikes, and a host of other things.

"With their expertise, they can pre-empt scenarios and offer solutions before you know you need them. It's the kind of knowledge that can only be gained from experience, and they have that in heaps."

When it comes to support and duty of care, especially in the case of SMEs, there's almost no comparison, continues Smith. "A TMC will have someone available 24/7 to handle any requests, disputes, or emergencies. They also consider all aspects and can advise on health and safety practices for all legs of the journey. It's an aspect that's easy to overlook but has a big impact on your employees' comfort and peace of mind. It demonstrates care and consideration for their health and well-being, provisions that pay dividends in the long run.

"Business travel is an essential component of business growth and development, as well as employee attraction and retention. Making the shift from unmanaged travel to working with a TMC can be a seamless process that will deliver almost instant benefit. If you haven't considered utilising a TMC for your SME yet, now's the time."

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