

BUSINESS TRAVEL TRENDS & INSIGHTS

Business Travel Trends & Insights Survey Methodology

To better understand some of the latest trends and perceptions of corporate travel managers and frequent business travelers within large-market companies, The BTN Group Content Solutions invited [corporate travel decision-makers](#) to complete online surveys about multiple topics. Through its research partner, **Equation Research**, the companies also invited [frequent business travelers](#) to complete a separate, but similar online survey about the same topics.

In the first survey conducted in August 2021, 63 corporate travel or expense managers with 2019 travel spend ranging from more than \$100 million (40%) to \$10 million provided responses. Completing the traveler survey in August were 54 business travelers who took four or more trips in 2019, were required to follow a company travel policy and worked for companies with 10,000 or more employees. Survey questions and results for each of the two audience surveys can be found below. Response totals may not equal 100 due to rounding or ability of respondents to select more than one response option.

Travel Manager Survey Responses

Q1. Which of the following best represents your job title / role in your company or organization?

Travel manager, director, VP or other corporate employee: 86%

Expense, finance, HR, procurement or other corporate employee: 14%

Q2. Please indicate which of the following most closely reflects your company's 2019 travel spend:

\$10 million to \$24.9 million: 20%

\$25 million to \$49.9 million: 27%

\$50 million to \$99.9 million: 13%

\$100 million or more: 40%

Q3. Overall, how would you describe the role that sustainability (e.g., reducing carbon emissions, choosing "eco-friendly" lodging options) has at your organization? *Please select all that apply*

Sustainability is important to us, but such decisions are up to each individual traveler: 51%

We have a reporting system in place for sustainability measures at our company: 48%

There are company goals to adhere to regarding sustainability offsets: 40%

We provide guidance to travelers on sustainable travel options when they're booking their trips: 29%

Sustainability is a priority that impacts our corporate travel decisions and policies: 25%

Sustainability is not a company priority currently: 6% (mutually exclusive)

Sustainability is such a priority in our organization that it is imposing "green taxes" on budget owners and individual travelers for the carbon output on each trip: 3%

Q4. How important to your organization are the following sustainability efforts as they related to travel?
Please rate 1-5 with 1 being **least** important and 5 being **most** important.

	1	2	3	4	5	Top 2	Bottom 2
Reducing carbon emissions for air flight:	11%	18%	16%	30%	25%	56%	29%
Choosing eco-friendly hotel options:	13%	21%	37%	24%	6%	30%	33%
Sustainable food options/reducing food waste:	32%	24%	19%	19%	6%	25%	56%
Offsetting carbon output of trip:	24%	13%	16%	24%	24%	48%	37%
Limiting use of certain destinations or airports:	54%	27%	14%	3%	2%	5%	81%

Q5. Do you have a system in place to alert travelers of the following threats before and during travel?

	Before	During	No System in Place	NA
Protests, labor strikes and other political volatility:	86%	81%	5%	5%
Weather-related disruptions:	68%	81%	11%	2%
Environmental risks:	60%	54%	21%	14%
Health & Medical (e.g., COVID infection, other rates):	84%	78%	8%	3%
Traveler restrictions (e.g., border, quarantine rules):	94%	75%	6%	0%
Virtual or on-site access to medical professionals:	73%	68%	13%	5%

Q6. During a trip, how do you alert travelers to various threats? Please indicate your primary means to alert travelers, followed by secondary means.

Email alerts: 68% primary; 68% secondary

SMS or immediate alerts to ask travelers to check in during emergencies: 44% primary; 59% secondary

SMS or other means to immediately communicate to travelers: 41% primary; 65% secondary

Calls to mobile phones: 35% primary; 83% secondary

One-button push to connect to help: 16% primary; 38% secondary

Other: 6% primary; 6% secondary

None of these: 6% primary; 3% secondary

Q7. Post-trip, how do you evaluate the effectiveness of services that the company and preferred suppliers provided to the traveler? Please select all that apply.

Email survey sent on return to evaluate the booking process, suppliers, travel program: 38%

We do not have a ratings system in place: 38%

Online surveys sent after I return from a trip: 30%

Quick, SMS ratings as I complete each element of my trip: 6%

Other: 11%

Q8. How important are the following measures to your company as they related to lodging options of your travelers? *Please rate each option 1-5 with 1 being not at all important and 5 being very important.*

	1	2	3	4	5	Top 2	Bottom 2
Providing alternative lodging options that avoid large hotels/busy lobbies:	32%	25%	25%	11%	6%	18%	57%
Allowing employees to choose the hotel brands they are most comfortable with:	8%	5%	27%	43%	18%	60%	13%
Only choose hotels that have creditable "clean" or "safety" protocols in place:	3%	3%	14%	37%	43%	79%	6%
Only choose hotels that are considered green or eco-friendly:	18%	30%	40%	6%	6%	13%	48%
Only choose hotels that are not in COVID hot spots:	19%	18%	24%	21%	19%	40%	37%
Only choose lodging options that are off-site or away from city centers:	65%	18%	14%	3%	0%	3%	83%
Allow employees to choose Airbnb or other short-term rental options to be more secure:	67%	11%	6%	14%	2%	16%	78%

Q9. Has your company authorized any new expense categories because of COVID?

No: 57%

Yes: 43%

Q10. What expense policy additions have you authorized at your organization since the start of COVID? *Please select all that apply.*

Work from home equipment such as computer, printer, webcam: 82%

COVID testing: 70%

Personal protective equipment such as facemasks, face shields, hand sanitizer, etc. to take to business appointments with clients: 56%

Internet service / access costs: 44%

Catering to home offices for team meetings or sales calls with clients via virtual conferencing: 41%

Staying at a hotel during quarantine: 37%

Rental cars to drive to appointments rather than fly: 33%

Monthly charges for virtual conferencing applications such as Zoom, Cisco, etc.: 7%

Rental of hotel rooms for remote offices when needed: 4%

Other: 4%

Q11. What statement best describes the new expense policies?

We are re-evaluating how long we should keep the COVID-related expense categories in place: 33%

We will keep all COVID-related expense categories in place until the virus is no longer a threat: 30%

We will keep only some COVID-related expense categories in place until the virus is no longer a threat: 26%

We will keep most COVID-related expense categories in place even after COVID is no longer a threat: 7%

COVID-related expense categories are already starting to go away: 4%

Q12. Concerning your travel expense reporting system, with which of the following technologies are you using to integrate travel expenses? Please select all that apply.

Individual corporate payment: 75%

Booking tool: 71%

General ledger/accounting system: 56%

Pre-trip approvals: 40%

Duty of care: 33%

Third-party software or supplier systems (e.g., Uber, Delta): 29%

Human resources: 25%

Virtual card: 22%

Other: 6%

Don't Know: 0%

Q13. Concerning integration of travel expenses with other systems, is the priority more, less or about the same for each of the following:

	Less	Same	More	Don't Know
Real-time reporting:	2%	30%	67%	2%
Greater transparency:	2%	24%	73%	2%
Trying to get to one-view of all expenses:	3%	29%	65%	3%
Booking data:	2%	52%	44%	2%

Q14. Please choose the statement that best describes your company's travel policy as of July 2021. *Select all up to 3 responses.*

Business travel is allowed under certain circumstances: 67%

Only domestic travel is allowed: 33%

Both domestic and international travel are allowed: 27%

International travel will be allowed when border restrictions/quarantine requirements are lifted: 24%

International travel will be allowed when it is considered safe to travel regardless of lifted restrictions: 22%

Business travel is allowed but we are reconsidering future business travel until COVID cases decline: 11%

No business travel is allowed until COVID cases decline/travel is considered safe: 2%

Q15. Roughly what percentage of your company's total business travel spending in 2019 was for international travel? And what percentage of your company's current total business travel spending in 2021 is for international travel?

	2019	2021
None	0%	19%
1-19%	30%	75%
20-39%	32%	3%
40-59%	27%	0%
60-79%	10%	3%
80%+	2%	0%

Q16. When do you think international travel will return to 2019 levels at your company?

Fourth quarter 2021: 3%

First half 2022: 14%

Second half 2022: 18%

2023: 32%

It has already returned to 2019 levels: 2%

It may never return to 2019 levels: 32%

Q17. How has the role of duty of care at your organization changed since COVID? *Please select all that apply.*

No changes, we have always had a rigorous duty of care program: 52%

We implemented many new duty of care services that were developed in-house: 24%

We implemented many new duty of care services through outsourcing partners: 14%

While we've implemented many new duty of care services, we are looking for next-level services now: 11%

We don't have a duty of care program: 6%

Q18. What duty of care initiatives have you implemented at your company before and after COVID began?

	Implemented Prior to March 2020	Implemented After March 2020	Has Not Been Implemented
Traveler tracking technology through our TMC:	67%	6%	28%
Traveler tracking technology through another supplier other than our TMC:	82%	6%	13%
Text messaging alerts related to disruptions and political volatility:	69%	11%	20%
Text messaging alerts related to health & safety at the destination:	63%	11%	26%
Text messaging alerts related to border restrictions:	48%	17%	35%
Virtual access to medical care/tele-medicine while traveling:	35%	39%	26%
Website content for employees on disruptions, health & safety, border restrictions:	59%	39%	2%
Virtual access to medical care/tele-medicine:	70%	19%	11%

Q19. How would you rank the effectiveness of your company's duty of care/traveler safety initiatives in terms of keeping your travelers safe and informed while traveling? *Please rate 1-5 with 1 being not at all effective and 5 being very effective*

1	2	3	4	5	Top 2	Bottom 2
3%	3%	14%	44%	35%	79%	6%

Business Traveler Survey Responses

Q1. How frequently did you travel for business (at least 50 miles from your home) in 2019 (before the pandemic), with at least one overnight hotel stay domestically and/or internationally?

0 to 3 times a year: 3% Domestically; 42% Internationally

4 to 12 times a year: 52% Domestically; 33% Internationally

13 to 50 times a year: 41% Domestically; 19% Internationally

More than 50 times a year: 4% Domestically; 6% Internationally

Q2. For your business travel, are you required to follow some type of policy or guidelines about how to book or expense travel, suppliers to use or classes of service permitted?

Yes: 100%

Q3. Please indicate which of the following most closely reflects the number of full-time employees in your company or organization. [select one]

10,000 to 24,999 employees: 41%

25,000 to 49,999 employees: 24%

50,000 to 99,999 employees: 20%

100,000 or more employees: 40%

Q4. Overall, how would you describe the role that sustainability (e.g., reducing carbon emissions, choosing “eco-friendly” lodging options) has at your organization? *Please select all that apply*

Sustainability is a priority that impacts our corporate travel decisions and policies: 50%

Our travel program provides guidance on sustainable travel options when booking our trips: 46%

Sustainability is such a priority in our organization that it is imposing “green taxes” on budget owners and individual travelers for the carbon output on each trip: 44%

We have a reporting system in place for sustainability measures at our company: 41%

It is up to each individual traveler to make their own decisions around sustainable travel options: 33%

There are company goals to adhere to regarding sustainability offsets: 20%

Sustainability is not a company priority currently: 6% (mutually exclusive)

Q5. How important to you *personally* are the following sustainability efforts as they relate to travel? *Please rate 1-5 with 1 being least important and 5 being most important.*

	1	2	3	4	5	Top 2	Bottom 2
Reducing carbon emissions for air flight:	13%	9%	17%	30%	32%	61%	22%
Choosing eco-friendly hotel options:	6%	7%	20%	22%	44%	67%	13%
Sustainable food options/reducing food waste:	7%	9%	17%	28%	39%	67%	17%
Offsetting carbon output of trip:	7%	11%	17%	37%	28%	65%	19%
Limiting use of certain destinations or airports:	19%	7%	17%	32%	26%	57%	26%

Q6. Does your company have a system in place that alerts you of disruptions, threats, or health hazards while you are traveling?

Yes: 82%

No: 18%

Q7. What types of alerts are available to you before and during travel? *Select all that apply*

	Before	During	None in Place	Don't Know
Protests, labor strikes and other political volatility:	52%	44%	19%	6%
Weather-related disruptions:	63%	48%	6%	4%
Environmental risks:	52%	35%	17%	9%
Health & Medical (e.g., COVID infection rates):	59%	46%	9%	9%
Traveler restrictions (e.g., borders, quarantine):	65%	41%	6%	7%
Virtual or on-site access to medical professionals:	44%	44%	19%	11%

Q8. Of the following list, what are the top 3 types of alerts most important to you before and during travel?

Please select exactly three

Health & Safety (e.g., COVID infection, other rates): 65%

Traveler restrictions (e.g., borders, quarantine rules): 63%

Weather-related disruptions: 56%

Environmental risks: 48%

Protests, labor strikes and other political volatility: 37%

Virtual or on-site access to medical professionals: 32%

Q9. How do you prefer to receive alerts while traveling? *Please select all that apply.*

Mobile alerts via SMS or text: 80%

Email alerts: 57%

Real-time notification using GPS tracking: 50%

Some other way: 4%

Q10. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your organization's duty of care program and whether it makes you feel informed, protected and that help would be available at the push of a button? *Please rate each of the following statements from 1-5 with 1 being least effective and 5 being most effective.*

	1	2	3	4	5	Top 2	Bottom 2
My company's travel program makes me feel informed prior to travel:	2%	6%	17%	30%	46%	76%	7%
My company's travel program makes me feel informed during travel when things change:	0%	7%	15%	32%	46%	78%	7%
My company's travel program makes me feel protected during a trip:	4%	11%	13%	26%	46%	72%	15%
My company's travel program offers one-button tech to reach out when help is needed:	11%	6%	22%	28%	33%	61%	17%
My company takes special care to protect me when traveling internationally:	2%	9%	13%	28%	48%	76%	11%
My company takes special care to inform and protect me when traveling domestically:	0%	7%	26%	30%	37%	67%	7%

Q11. Post-trip, how do you evaluate the effectiveness of services that the company and preferred suppliers provided to you? *Please select all that apply.*

Quick, SMS ratings as I complete each element of my trip: 54%

Email survey sent on return to evaluate the booking process, suppliers, travel program: 54%

Online surveys sent after I return from a trip: 46%

Other: 2%

My company does not have a ratings system in place: 19%

Q12. How important are the following offerings as they relate to choosing lodging options when you travel for business? *Please rate each option 1-5 with 1 being not at all important and 5 being very important.*

	1	2	3	4	5	Top 2	Bottom 2
Finding alternative lodging options that avoid large hotels/busy lobbies:	7%	7%	17%	35%	33%	69%	15%
Choosing the hotel brand I am most comfortable with:	2%	6%	13%	30%	50%	80%	7%
Finding hotels that have a creditable “clean” or “safety” protocols in place:	2%	4%	7%	32%	56%	87%	6%
Ability to choose Airbnb or other short term rental options to be more secure:	15%	9%	20%	28%	28%	56%	24%
Ability to locate lodging options that are off-site or away from city centers:	2%	9%	20%	30%	39%	69%	11%
Ability to locate hotels that are not in COVID hot spots:	2%	4%	17%	32%	46%	78%	6%
Ability to locate hotels that are considered green or eco-friendly:	11%	7%	15%	22%	44%	67%	19%

Q13. What type of new expense categories are allowed due to remote work or COVID-19? *Please select all that apply.*

Personal protective equipment such as facemasks, face shields, hand sanitizer, etc. to take to business appointments with clients: 61%

COVID testing: 52%

Catering to home offices for team meetings or sales calls with clients via virtual conferencing: 44%

Work from home equipment such as computer, printer, webcam: 43%

Monthly charges for virtual conferencing applications such as Zoom, Cisco, etc.: 39%

Rental of hotel rooms for remote offices when needed: 32%

Internet service / access costs: 30%

Staying at a hotel during quarantine: 24%

Rental cars to drive to appointments rather than fly: 22%

Other: 2%

My company has not introduced any new expense categories due to COVID: 9%

Q14. Which of the following expense policies are most important to you? *Please select exactly three*

Personal protective equipment such as facemasks, face shields, hand sanitizer, etc. to take to business appointments with clients: 55%

Monthly charges for virtual conferencing applications, such as Zoom, Cisco, etc.: 49%

Work from home equipment such as computer, printer, webcam, chair, etc.: 43%

Internet service/ access cost: 39%

COVID testing: 39%

Catering to home offices for team meetings or sales calls with clients via virtual conferencing: 27%

Rental cars to drive to appointments rather than fly: 20%

Staying at a hotel during quarantine: 16%

Rental of hotel rooms for remote offices when needed: 12%

Q15. How satisfied are you with the ease of entering, reconciling, and getting reimbursed for travel expenses? Rate 1-5 with 1 being least satisfied and 5 being most satisfied.

	1	2	3	4	5	NA	Top 2	Bottom 2
System automatically populates all charges from my corporate card to ease report submissions:	4%	9%	11%	26%	41%	9%	67%	13%
System automatically creates an expense report from pre-approval to verify and submit:	4%	7%	13%	33%	39%	4%	72%	11%
System requires me to manually enter all travel expenses:	0%	19%	32%	19%	28%	4%	46%	19%
System allows me to approve each transaction to make expense reporting quick and painless:	0%	9%	11%	35%	39%	6%	74%	9%
My company requires me to use personal credit cards for travel:	7%	6%	13%	26%	30%	19%	56%	13%
System allows me to take pictures of all receipts to automatically create expense line items:	2%	9%	11%	35%	33%	9%	69%	11%
Each corporate card transaction provides all detail needed to verify and expense each charge:	4%	9%	20%	33%	28%	6%	61%	13%

Q16. Please choose the statement that best describes your company's travel policy as of July 2021. *Select all that apply.*

International travel will be allowed when border restrictions/quarantine requirements are lifted: 43%

Business travel is allowed under certain circumstances: 41%

Business travel is allowed but the company might reconsider until COVID cases decline/travel is safe: 41%

Both domestic and international travel are allowed: 30%

Only domestic travel is allowed: 28%

International travel will be allowed when it is considered safe to travel regardless of lifted restrictions: 24%

No business travel is allowed until COVID cases decline/travel is considered safe: 9%

Q17. Roughly what percentage of total trips that you took in 2019 were international trips? And what is that percentage now in 2021?

	2019	2021
None:	11%	32%
1% to 19%:	7%	18%
20% to 39%:	46%	14%
40% to 59%:	25%	7%
60% to 79%:	11%	21%
80%+:	0%	7%

Q18. When do you think international travel will return to 2019 levels at your company?

Fourth quarter 2021: 13%

First half 2022: 28%

Second half 2022: 37%

2023: 17%

It has already returned to 2019 levels: 2%

It may never return to 2019 levels: 4%

Q19. What duty of care/traveler safety initiatives have your company implemented before and after COVID?

Please select all that apply.

	Implemented Prior to March 2020	Implemented After March 2020	Has Not Been Implemented
Real-time notification using GPS tracking:	37%	32%	32%
Text messaging alerts related to disruptions and political volatility in the area where I am traveling:	43%	30%	28%
Text messaging alerts related to health & safety at the destination where I am traveling:	35%	41%	24%
Text messaging alerts related to border restrictions where I am traveling:	41%	37%	22%
Website content related to disruptions, health & safety, and border restrictions that the traveler can access	46%	41%	13%
Virtual access to medical care/tele-medicine while traveling:	35%	39%	26%

Q19a. Only for those who selected response one above: You said your company has implemented real-time notifications using GPS tracking. Which statement best describes your experience?

I feel more secure traveling with my company knowing my location at all times: 73%

I feel more secure traveling with my company knowing my location but prefer to shut off GPS tracking at times because of privacy: 19%

I don't feel more secure traveling with my company knowing my location: 8%

Q20. How would you rank the effectiveness of your company's duty of care/traveler safety initiatives in terms of keeping you safe and informed while traveling? *Please rate 1-5 with 1 being not at all effective and 5 being very effective*

1	2	3	4	5	Top 2	Bottom 2
2%	2%	19%	41%	37%	78%	4%