

Expert Insights. Beyond 2010: The future of business travel.



Space-age travel, queue-free check-in and hotel-style first class cabins. These are just a taste of what's in store for SME business travellers in the not-too-distant future. As the technology boom continues to impact the look and feel of the industry, what can you expect from business travel over the next five years?

Corporate Traveller believes the world is about to embark on a vastly different age of business travel. Based on industry advancements that are currently taking shape, businesses can look forward to travel that is less complex, smarter, greener and more responsive to the needs of individual travellers.

Industry influencers

Many of the changes to come are already being influenced by factors such as:

- technology – smarter technologies will help to make business travel a faster process all round, while in-flight technologies will keep people in touch with their colleagues and businesses.
- climate change/carbon emissions – Organisations of all sizes including SMEs will be made increasingly aware of their carbon obligations. Climate change will drive a change in the

types of fuels used in the air and on the ground, as well as aircraft and hotel design.

- continued opening of skies – more bilateral agreements across different countries and regions, creating far more choices for travellers
- de-congestion strategies at major airports – with a greater focus on streamlining technologies, improved access routes and the promotion of self check-in facilities
- cost and value – More SMEs will realise the value of travel management specialists to ensure they are buying travel at the most competitive cost in the most convenient way .

What we can expect

Air travel

Air travel is not likely to be at risk, as business people will always have a desire and a need to have face-to-face meetings.

In its 2007 Global Traffic Forecast, Airports Council International (ACI) says global passenger numbers are expected to surpass 5 billion by 2010 and 9 billion by 2025. Over the next 20 years world

Corporate Traveller expects travel management beyond 2010 will offer businesses the best of all worlds. Efficiency. Convenience. Comfort. And above all, providing service with a human touch.

passenger volumes are likely to rise by 4.0% annually, with growth rates for international flights (4.5%) to continue to outpace domestic (3.7%).

In the airline sector, futuristic design and engineering is paving the way for the new era of space-age travel. Led by Virgin Galactic, this era will be marked by air travel that breaks the sound barrier with supersonic jets now being designed for commercial use.

Other developments include the elimination of first-class travel from some airlines, while some – like Singapore Airlines – are making their first-class cabins more like five-star hotels. First-class seats will become mini suites and other enhancements will include larger bathrooms and customised menus.

It is also anticipated that private jets, including Very Light Jets, will become more popular in the air taxi industry as demand continues to grow and pricing becomes competitive.

Airports

Airport design will continue to take on significant focus, with future terminals to be based on 'new urbanist' principles. They will be structured like small towns,

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offering sidewalks, open air cafes, trees and gardens.

Cell phones and paging systems within airports will become a distant memory as everyone will be wearing radio-frequency identification (RFID) wristbands.

The greatest challenge in every busy traveller's life, long security lines, may become a thing of the past.

Biometric identification – including iris scanning now used at London Heathrow and fingerprint recognition used by key airports worldwide – will be perfected and there will be no need to stop from the terminal entrance to the gate. The retina reader will identify the passenger as they walk to their pre-booked seat, which – using RFID chips – greets them by name as they approach their premium travel pod.

It is also possible the frequent flyer may only require minimal luggage, with suitable clothes already in their managed hotel suite for their arrival.



Hotels

As with airports, lobby check-in at hotels may well be bypassed with guests being

advised of their room number prior to arrival. Weary travellers will be able to walk straight to their rooms, open the door and automatically check-in by simply using their fingerprint. The hotels of the future may also have voice technology that greets each guest with a personalised message and offers them service choices, each time they enter their room.

Ground travel

While air travel will undergo vast changes in its service offering, it will be forced to compete with high speed rail on point-to-point travel in many regions. It is expected that rail will increasingly replace air travel on routes such as Boston – New York City in the US, Paris – Frankfurt in Europe, and Sydney – Melbourne in Australia. The high-speed Eurostar service has already gained the majority market share on its London to Paris and Brussels routes.

In the car rental and taxi sector, climate change will be a driving force with hybrid cars and hydrogen fuel-cell cars to become travellers' preferred options.

Technology

In addition to the superior travel technologies that will be adopted by airports and travel industry suppliers worldwide, PCs may be replaced by compact 3D holographic devices that only the traveller can decrypt using coded glasses.

Travel management sales and service

Despite the technology and online boom, Corporate Traveller believes

travel management for SMEs in the future will retain a strong element of personal service. Growing demand from companies for tailored solutions will ensure there is more one-to-one style service and a greater onus on travel managers to get to know their clients.

The focus will shift from technology-driven service, to people-driven service that ensures clients only use technology tools where it best suits their needs.

As a TMC that still believes in people doing business with people, Corporate Traveller expects travel management beyond 2010 to offer businesses the best of all worlds. Efficiency. Convenience. Comfort. And above all, service that is 'human'.

about corporate traveller.

Corporate Traveller is a leading travel management specialist for the SME market. We offer a unique combination of expert advice, local personal service and global negotiating strength to maximise your savings.

The Corporate Traveller team is the best in the business. Our travel experts are highly experienced and have exceptional product knowledge to deliver airfare and accommodation options that will have an immediate and positive impact on your bottom line. Our flexible business model is shaped to match the distinctive needs of SMEs, enabling us to better understand your travel requirements, offer tailored solutions and build long-term partnerships.