BCD travel

BUILDING A ROBUST HOTEL PROGRAM

Your guide to developing a thriving hotel program for your company

WHAT IS A HOTEL PROGRAM?

WHY IT MATTERS

GETTING STARTED

MEASURING YOUR SUCCESS

MANAGING YOUR HOTEL PROGRAM

FIRST THINGS FIRST:

WHAT IS A HOTEL PROGRAM?

A corporate hotel program is a travel management strategy designed by companies to manage their employees' hotel bookings when they are on business trips. This program can include negotiated rates with specific hotels, preferred hotel chains, and a centralized booking process that streamlines the booking process for employees.

The main objectives of a corporate hotel program are:

- To help companies control their travel expenses
- To ensure employee safety and comfort during business trips
- To provide a convenient way for employees to book their accommodation

Corporate hotel programs can also give businesses useful data and insights into the travel patterns of their employees, which can be used to optimize their travel policies and drive further savings.

Overall, a corporate hotel program is an essential component of a company's travel management strategy, helping companies manage their travel expenses and provide their employees with a safe, comfortable, and seamless travel experience.

This guide will show you:

The benefits of having a hotel program

Which six steps to take to develop your hotel program

How to measure your program's success

How to keep managing a thriving hotel program

WHY IT MATTERS

A robust corporate hotel program can bring upon many benefits:

✓ **Cost savings:** Companies can negotiate for better rates with the hotels with based on a certain level of annual room night commitment, which can result in cost savings for the company. By negotiating a lower rate, you can reduce your overall travel expenses and improve your company's bottom line.

✓ **Duty of care:** A well thought out hotel program can ensure that employees are staying in safe and comfortable accommodation while on business trips. By partnering with reputable hotels, you can provide your employees with a consistent and reliable level of service and amenities. Read how Domino's partnered with BCD to keep travelers safer in Hong Kong—and around the world.

✓ **Streamlined booking process:** A centralized hotel program can simplify the booking process for employees. It also saves your employees time from shopping across multiple channels and ensure their hotel choices are within policy.

✓ **Travel policy compliance:** A hotel program can help companies ensure that their employees are complying with their travel policies. By partnering with specific hotels, you can ensure that your employees are staying in accommodation that meet your policy requirements.

✓ **Data and insights:** A corporate hotel program can provide companies with valuable data and insights into their employees' travel patterns. With this data, you can optimize your travel policy and improve cost savings. Read how AstraZeneca partnered with BCD Travel to transform their travel program and gain data insights that drove savings and traveler satisfaction.

Overall, a corporate hotel program is an important component of a company's travel management strategy. It can help companies **reduce costs, ensure employee safety and comfort, streamline the booking process, ensure travel policy compliance, and provide valuable data and insights.**

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GETTING STARTED

Here are some steps to consider when developing a corporate hotel program:

Identify goals and objectives: The first step is to identify the goals and objectives of your hotel program. This can include cost savings, employee safety and comfort, centralized booking, travel policy compliance, and data and insights.

Conduct a needs assessment: This is to determine your company's current travel practices and identify areas for improvement. This can include analyzing travel data, surveying employees, and assessing current hotel contracts.

Research hotel options: Research hotel options that meet your company's travel needs and negotiate rates and benefits with preferred hotels. This can include evaluating hotels based on location, amenities, safety, and cost. Historically, sourcing has been considered the key to a successful hotel program. But these days you're up against smarter suppliers with increasingly sophisticated data. There are new, sophisticated strategies proven to drive more value with less effort, such as Stay by BCD Travel®.

Develop or update your travel policy: Develop or update your current travel policy to outline the guidelines and requirements for booking hotels. This can include preferred hotels, booking procedures, allowable expenses, and reimbursement policies. Need help in creating a best-in-class travel policy?

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Implement the program: Once the program is developed, implement it throughout your organization. This can include communicating the program to your employees, training them on booking procedures, and monitoring compliance with the travel policy.

Monitor and evaluate: Monitor your hotel program's effectiveness and evaluate its impact on the company's travel expenses and employee satisfaction. Adjust as necessary to ensure the program meets your company goals and objectives.
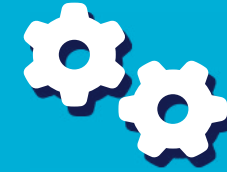
Developing a corporate hotel program requires careful planning, research, and collaboration with key stakeholders. By following these steps, companies can create a program that meets their travel needs, improves cost savings, and enhances employee travel experiences.

MEASURING YOUR SUCCESS

Measuring the success of a hotel program is essential to ensure that it is meeting your company goals and objectives. Here are some ways to measure success of your hotel program:

Cost savings: One of the most important metrics to measure the success of a corporate hotel program is cost savings. You can track your program's impact on travel expenses by comparing the cost of accommodation before and after the program was implemented.

Travel policy compliance: You can monitor compliance with the travel policy by tracking the number of bookings made through the online booking tool (OBT) or through their appointed travel management company (TMC) and comparing it to the number of bookings made outside of these. Read on to learn the best practices that drive policy compliance.

Employee satisfaction: You can measure employee satisfaction with the hotel program by conducting surveys or gathering feedback from your employees. This can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that employees are satisfied with their travel experiences.

Hotel usage: You can track hotel usage to determine which hotels are most popular among employees and negotiate better rates and benefits with these hotels.

Overall, measuring the success of a corporate hotel program requires a combination of quantitative and qualitative metrics. By tracking these metrics, companies can determine whether the program is meeting their goals and objectives and adjust as necessary to improve its effectiveness.

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MANAGING YOUR HOTEL PROGRAM

You've just invested a considerable amount of time, effort, and personnel and financial resources into curating a global hotel program that you are confident your travelers will appreciate, and your company will find value in. So, what's next?

Having an industry-leading program goes beyond the hotels that are included in your program or what rates you were able to achieve. What separates an industry-leading program from the rest is having a strategy in place to actively manage the program. This includes engaging with your travelers on what's most important to them and their experience, while also maintaining program competitiveness in the market.

There are five key areas to focus on as you manage your program all year long:

- **Regular monitoring**
- **Traveler experience**
- **Buyer behavior**
- **Sustainability**
- **Diversity, equity & inclusion**

Regularly monitor rates for competitiveness and availability to keep travelers in channel

If you haven't secured good rates during your request for proposal (RFP), you may want to start renegotiating post-RFP to maintain the value of your program. If the rates are non-negotiable and do not bring value to your program, consider removing them altogether.

Ensuring consistent availability of the negotiated rate also helps to bring value to your program and creates a positive experience for your travelers. Monitor your rates and availability every month and continue to adjust as needed.

Remember, your travelers are also digitally savvy consumers, and if they are finding better deals outside of your program, they will lose confidence and book in other channel where you don't have visibility. Also take into account that deals found outside of your program may be non-refundable, have stricter cancellations policies, or do not include some of the standard amenities. It is best to have all hotel content available in the booking tool for your traveler or through your designated TMC to make the best decision for their needs.
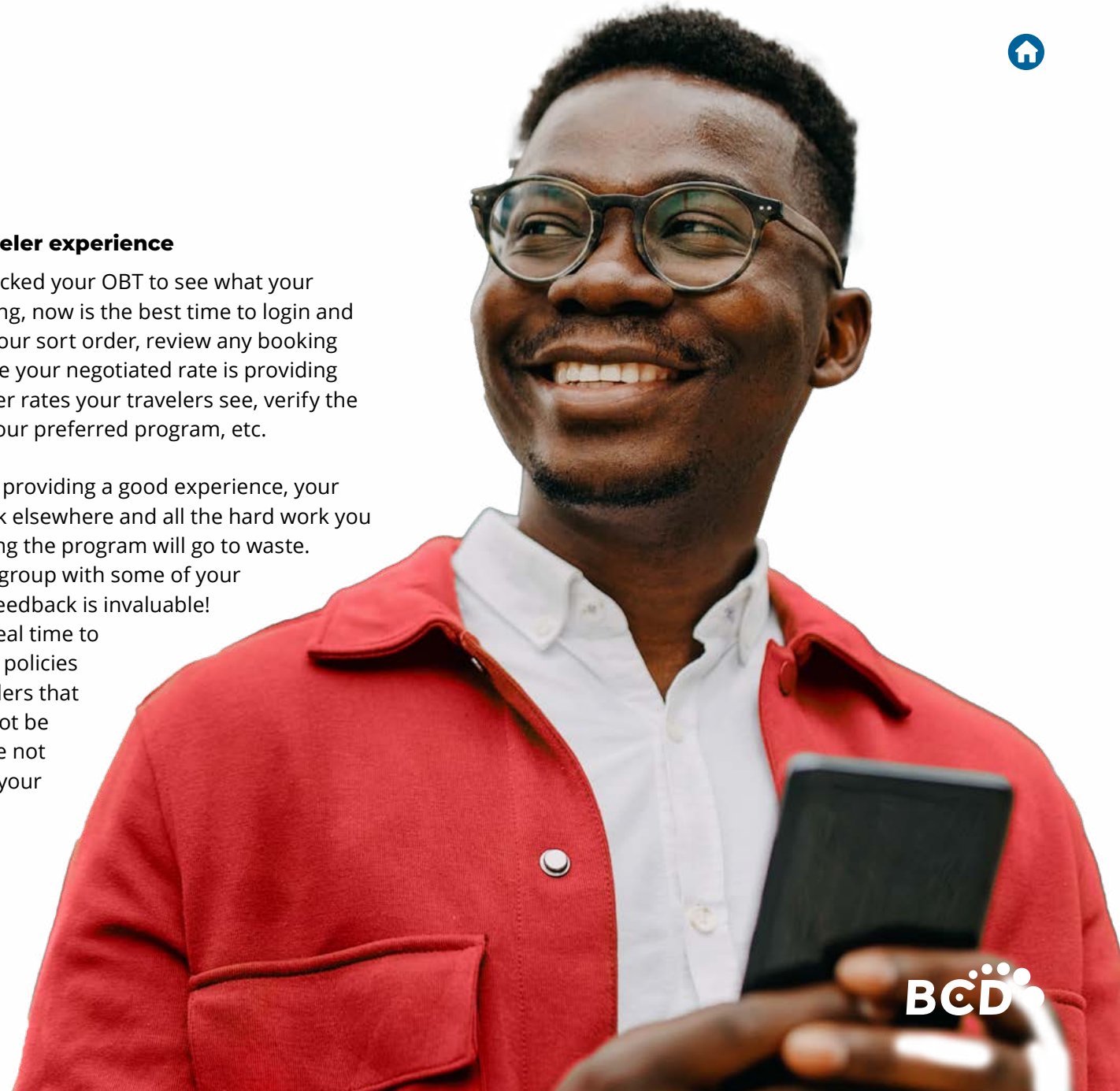
Boost your traveler experience

If you haven't checked your OBT to see what your travelers are seeing, now is the best time to login and clean up. Check your sort order, review any booking limitations, ensure your negotiated rate is providing value against other rates your travelers see, verify the preferencing of your preferred program, etc.

If your OBT is not providing a good experience, your travelers will book elsewhere and all the hard work you put into developing the program will go to waste. Schedule a focus group with some of your travelers – their feedback is invaluable! This is also the ideal time to revisit your travel policies and remind travelers that duty of care cannot be provided if they're not booking through your designated TMC.

Influence buyer behavior

Once you've ensured the user experience is up to par, you can take things a step further by influencing your travelers to make decisions that align with your company goals. Getting employees to book in policy doesn't have to be difficult, you just have to shift your mindset (and communication strategy).

> **Check out this [podcast](#) by Kelly Ellis, Global Traveler Engagement Practice Lead for Advito (BCD Travel's consulting arm) as she shares advice, success stories and tips on how altering your traveler messaging can pay off for both the traveler and the company.**

Focus on sustainability

As you continue to monitor your program, sustainability should also be top of mind. Did you consider sustainability during the hotel sourcing process? If you haven't, now is the time to review your program and see where you can make improvements. If you did prioritize sustainability during your negotiations, are your travelers booking those hotels within your program?

One of our key recommendations for companies seeking to encourage the adoption of sustainable choices is to create a sustainability-focused communications strategy that educates travelers on how to choose sustainable properties and the importance of making sustainable choices to align with the company's larger goals. No matter what initiatives you choose to adopt, don't forget to keep your travelers up to date on the changes you're making. Building a sustainable program only works if your travelers use it!

Diversity, equity & inclusion

While many companies are focused on environmental sustainability alone, it is important not to forget the rest of the environment, social and government (ESG) framework. Looking forward, travel managers should also consider diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) metrics as a valuable component of their hotel program. Start initiating conversations with your hotel partners on what they are actively doing to promote DE&I within their hotels and their communities.

Discover four ways to introduce diversity, equity and inclusion to your business travel program.

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Leave corporate travel planning to the BEST

How can you ensure booking compliance, savings and the best hotel rates?

Stop being afraid and rethink your hotel content strategy - that's how! In this **podcast,** April Bridgeman, Senior Vice President, Hotel Solutions, Advito, & Sustainability, shares success stories and offers advice on the best ways to optimize your hotel content. Let your TMC work for you!

Organizing and managing business travel is what we do best. At BCD Travel we have an innovative mindset focused on the future of business travel. We constantly raise the bar for ourselves by introducing innovative travel services. Our track record? A global client retention rate of 97%, the highest in the industry.

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About BCD Travel
BCD Travel helps companies travel smart and achieve more. We drive program adoption, cost savings and talent retention through digital experiences that simplify business travel. Our 13,000 dedicated team members service clients in 170+ countries as we shape a sustainable future for business travel. For more information, visit www.bcdtravel.com.

About BCD Group
BCD Group is a market leader in the travel industry. The privately owned company was founded in 1975 by John Fentener van Vlissingen and consists of BCD Travel, its subsidiaries BCD Meetings & Events and Advito, and Park 'N Fly. For more information, visit www.bcdgroup.com.