



Understanding Stakeholder Engagement with the Travel Program

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Introduction

Travel programs have always created value for their companies, and they continue to do so in new and innovative ways. The responsibilities vested in travel programs are wide-ranging – encompassing technology, data analysis, travel risk management, engagement and behavior management, and much more. Many are also responsible for meetings, payment and expense management.

In securing critical business outcomes related to these areas of responsibility, travel managers collaborate with a range of stakeholders across the entire organization. To identify the key responsibilities carried out by travel managers and gain insight into the nature of the collaboration with other groups within their organizations, GBTA and BCD Travel recently conducted a survey of experienced U.S. travel managers. Among the questions the survey sought to answer: How have the roles of travel managers changed in the past five years? A majority (52%) spend more time on cross-department meetings and collaboration compared to five years ago, while only two in five (18%) spend less time. ¹

This study examines stakeholder engagement with corporate travel programs. It is based on (1) a survey of global travel managers; and (2) interviews with travel managers and travel program stakeholders. The study addresses several key questions including:

- 1) Which responsibilities do travel managers share with internal stakeholders – and which do they primarily “own?”

¹ Global Business Travel Association, *Lost in Translation: Changing Landscape, Familiar Challenges* (Alexandria, VA: Global Business Travel Association, 2018), 7.

- 2) Do travel managers serve on cross-department committees or working groups? What do these groups cover?
- 3) How often do travel programs share data with internal stakeholders and what metrics do they share?

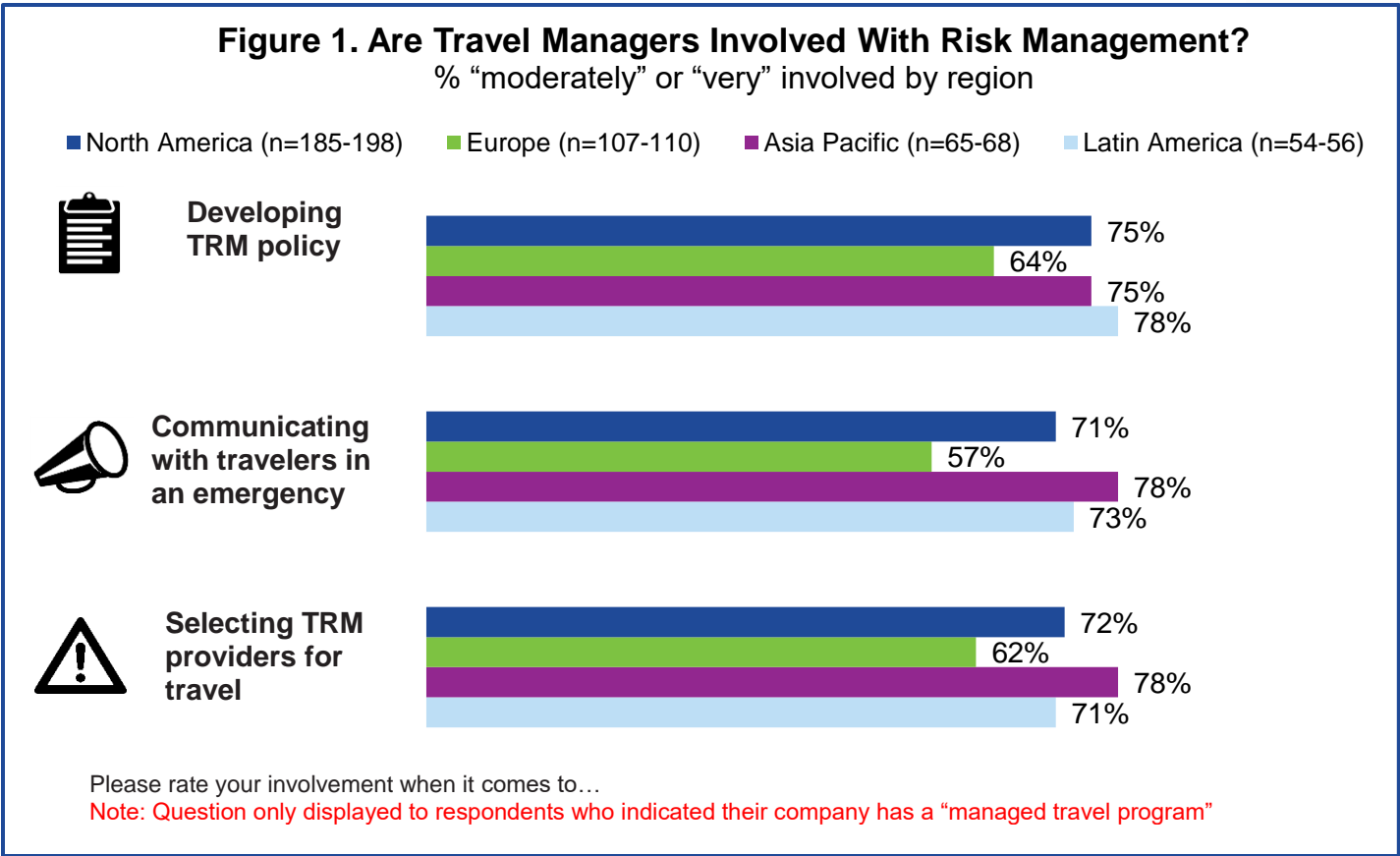
Where Are Travel Programs Involved?

Travel managers collaborate with stakeholders on a wide range of issues.

In some cases, they are in the driver's seat, making critical decisions that impact employee safety and productivity. In other cases, they play more of a supporting role. A key goal of this study is to examine how travel programs are involved with cross-department responsibilities. Which responsibilities do they share with other stakeholders – and which do they “own” outright?

Travel Risk Management

- **Most travel managers are involved with travel risk management (TRM).** A large majority worldwide are “very” or “moderately” involved with developing their company's TRM policy (72%), selecting TRM providers for travel (70%) and communicating with travelers in an emergency (69%). Involvement in these functions is lower in Europe than in other regions surveyed (see below).



- Travel departments sometimes have *primary responsibility* for key risk-related functions.** More than half of respondents (58%) say their travel department is the primary owner of selecting their company’s TRM provider(s). Almost half say their department is the primary owner of communicating with travelers in an emergency (48%) or developing the TRM policy (43%). Even at large companies—which typically have a separate risk management department or team—a significant number of travel departments have primary responsibility for these functions.² There are several possible reasons why:

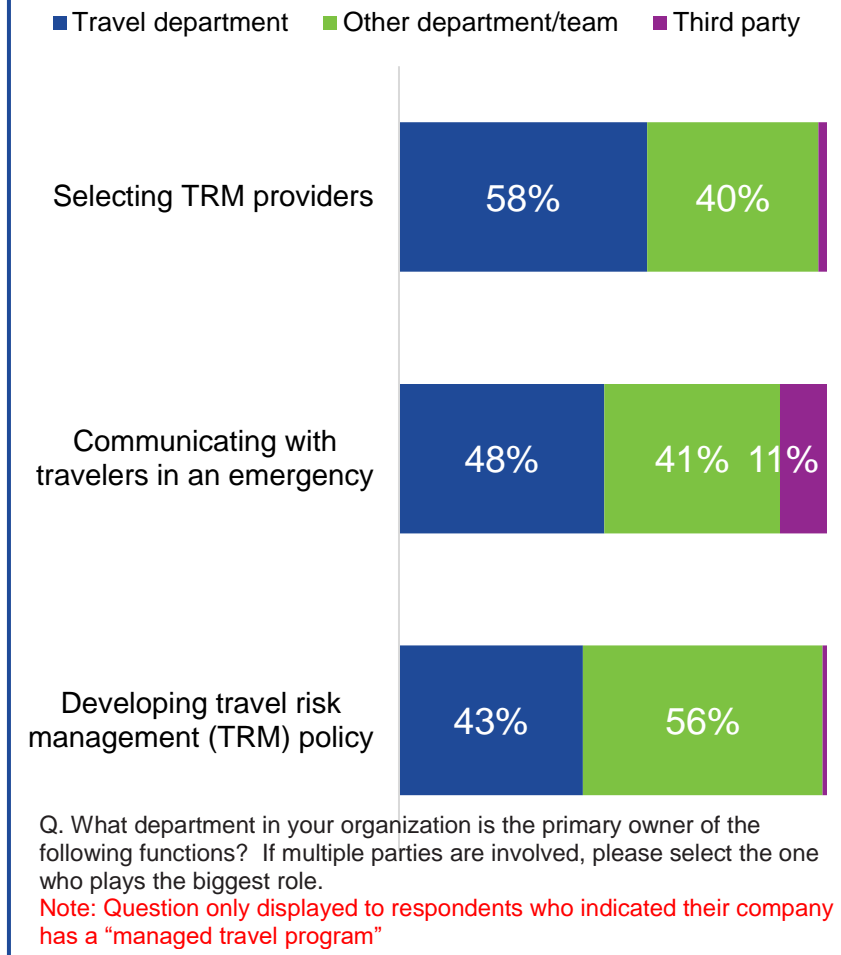
² Half of travel departments (50%) with annual spend of \$30 million or more are the primary owner of selecting TRM providers; one-third (36%) are the primary owner of communicating with travelers in an emergency; and one-fourth (28%) are the primary owner of developing the travel risk management policy.

- Some companies separate travel risk management (TRM) from other security efforts.



They may have a separate travel risk policy, or contract with vendors—such as a risk intelligence or medical assistance firm—specifically for travel. This can make it easier to delegate TRM to the travel department and not the security department.

Figure 2. Who Is the Primary Owner of...?



- Some risk-related tasks are a natural fit for travel managers. Many companies rely on their TMC for key risk management functions – and most travel managers oversee the relationship with the TMC. Travel managers may also be familiar with the traveler profile system and the emergency assistance resources available. In some cases, they manage important communication channels such as the travel Intranet.

- **Travel managers are well suited to understand traveler needs.** They may hear about safety concerns, receive feedback about risk management tools or providers, or evaluate which policies travelers would find reasonable.

“We work very, very closely with our corporate travel team, and across the globe we have nothing but support from them because they realize quite what a devastating impact, a disproportionately devastating impact, incidents can have both on the [company’s] reputation as well as their own reputation as a service provided to the [company].”

-Europe-based risk management professional

Payment and expense management

- **Some Travel managers are involved with expense management.** At least half are “very” or “moderately” involved with deciding expense policies for travel (68%), selecting their company’s expense management tool (53%), or configuring their company’s expense management tool (50%). However, involvement is lower in North America and Europe than in Asia Pacific and Latin America.

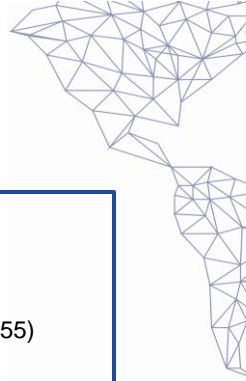
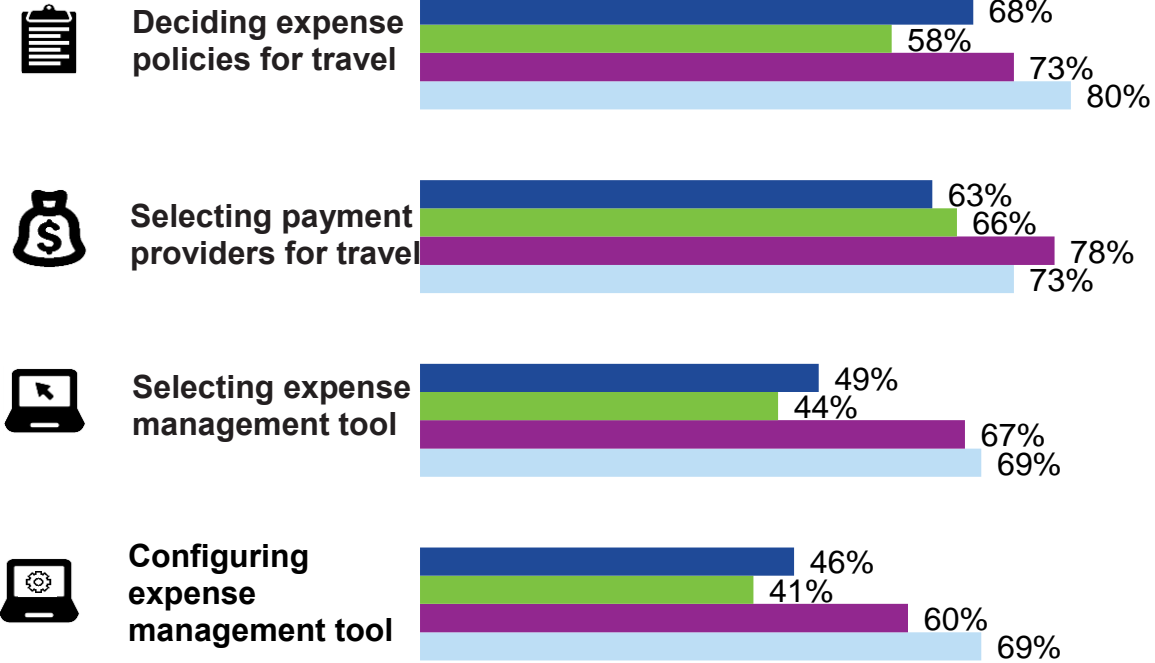


Figure 3. Involvement With Payment and Expense Management
 % “moderately” or “very” involved by region

■ North America (n=196-199) ■ Europe (n=108-109) ■ Asia Pacific (n=67-68) ■ Latin America (n=54-55)



Please rate your involvement when it comes to...

Note: Question only displayed to respondents who indicated their company has a “managed travel program”

“And for us, the quick answer is for many of these things that are sort of tangential to travel, if you will, so expenses in this particular case, the travel team does not really have much input at all. Our travel team is also very small, so beyond myself we have a woman that manages the team and she has two subordinates... So let's be honest, there's not a lot of influence that our travel team has.”

-U.S.-based finance/accounting professional



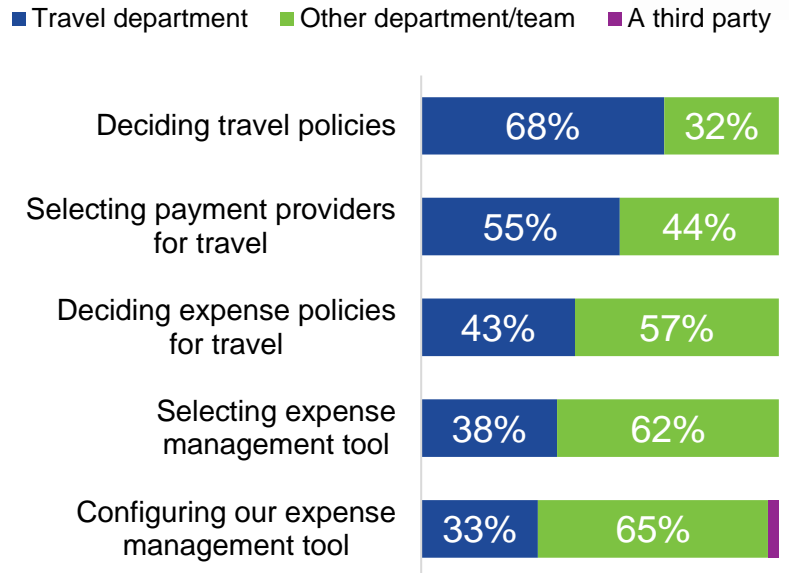
- **Most travel managers do not have primary responsibility for their company's expense management tool.** Fewer than two in five say their department has primary responsibility for selecting (38%) or configuring an expense management tool (33%).

- **Most travel managers make decisions about payment providers.** A majority (55%) say their department has primary

responsibility for selecting payment providers for travel. In Asia Pacific (71%) and Latin America (73%), travel departments are more likely to have primary responsibility for selecting payment providers, compared to North America (45%) and Europe (55%).



Figure 4. Who Is the Primary Owner of....?



Q. What department in your organization is the primary owner of the following functions? If multiple parties are involved, please select the one who plays the biggest role.

Note: Question only displayed to respondents who indicated their company has a "managed travel program"

Will integration drive collaboration?

- **Is integrated booking and expense on the rise?** In the U.S., most Travel Managers (69%) say their company's booking tool is integrated with its expense tool, according to a recent GBTA survey. In 2017, fewer than half of U.S. Travel Managers (47%) said their "travel and expense management tools [were] integrated." **Despite growth in the U.S., integration may be considerably lower in other global regions.**

Integration can simplify expense reporting and give companies a more complete picture of their spend. **Yet the travel team may need to collaborate with finance to select a solution that meets the needs of both parties.**

Sources:

GBTA, *The Travel Buyer of the Future: What's On the Horizon for the Ever-Changing Landscape of Business Travel and Meetings Management* (Alexandria, VA: Global Business Travel Association, 2019),11.

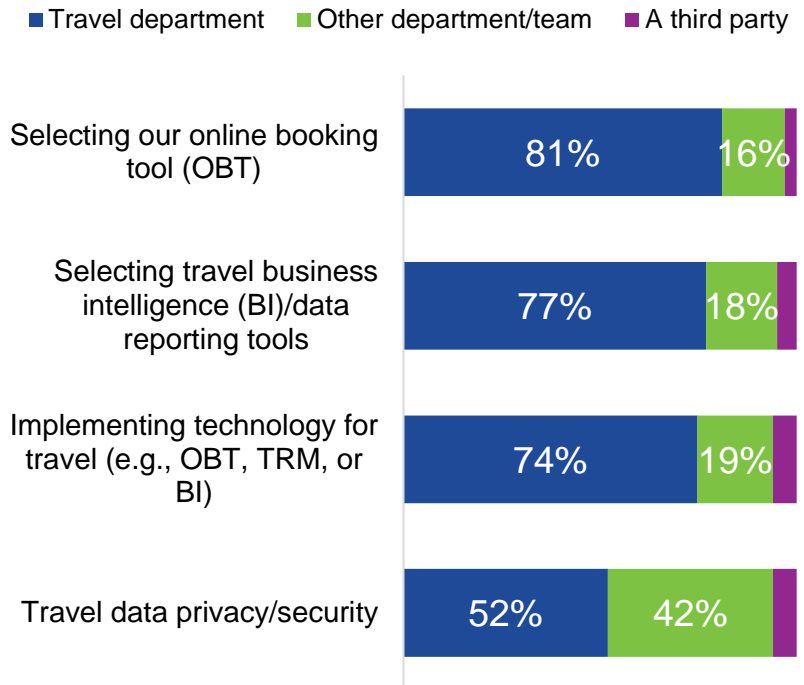
GBTA, *How to Close Risk Management Loopholes* (Alexandria, VA: Global Business Travel Association, 2017),7.

Technology

- **Travel departments commonly have ownership of their technology.** A large majority are the primary owner of selecting an online booking tool (81%), selecting travel business intelligence (BI)/reporting tools (77%) and/or implementing technology for travel (74%).



Figure 5. Who Is the Primary Owner of...?



Q. What department in your organization is the primary owner of the following functions? If multiple parties are involved, please select the one who plays the biggest role.

Note: Question only displayed to respondents who indicated their company has a "managed travel program"

"We actually don't involve IT. It's always FYI.... But, we really don't include them in our setup design and implementation on either expense or travel side. We have not found a situation yet where they need to be involved in the process. There is a lot of back end, I guess, maneuvering, if you will, with IT, and luckily with a lot of the travel categories there's independent proprietary and software end solutions that these companies offer. So, we don't necessarily need to get IT involved a lot. So, these companies already have their own troubleshooting groups."

-U.S.-based Travel Manager

- Half of travel departments spearhead efforts to protect traveler data.**
 In recent years, data privacy has become a growing priority, driven by new regulations (i.e. GDPR) and a series of high-profile data breaches. These efforts involve collaboration between different departments – including travel, legal and information technology (IT). Half of travel managers (52%) say their department has primary responsibility for travel data privacy/security (see previous page).

How Do Travel Programs Collaborate?

- Travel managers collaborate with a variety of stakeholders.** These include *finance/accounting* (79%), *procurement* (66%), *human resources* (66%), *security/risk management* (63%) and *C-level* (61%).





Infrequent travelers are frequent collaborators

Respondents were asked how often stakeholders actually travel.

- Most say their sales (87%) or marketing (60%) employees travel “regularly” or “frequently.” However, fewer than one in five travel programs collaborate with these stakeholders (see previous page)
- Fewer say their finance/accounting (29%), human resources (33%), procurement (37%), or security/risk management (39%) employees travel “regularly” or “frequently.” However, travel programs commonly collaborate with these stakeholders (see previous page).

In other words, the stakeholders that travel the *least* appear to have the *most* influence over the travel program. These stakeholders can make decisions without understanding how their decisions will impact travelers. For instance, they may put in place a difficult expense approval process, or have a strict lowest logical fare policy that requires frequent layovers. **It is important travel managers advocate for travelers when collaborating with other stakeholders.**

“Some of the positions... travel 50% of the time... We had a slew of people come on board, and this was some time ago now, but they had a higher turnover rate. And we dived into that: why is this particular department having such a high turnover rate? And one of the things that was discussed was how often they were traveling. And the employees that were leaving were saying, I didn't know that I was going to have to be on the road three weeks a year for this job. So then we did start putting [travel requirements] into our postings so that we were very fair and upfront. Shame on us for not realizing that our managers who were interviewing these candidates weren't [relaying] that information out.”

-Europe-based human resources manager





How can travel programs work with HR?

Two in three (66%) travel programs collaborate with HR. They collaborate to manage traveler profiles and develop and enforce travel policies. Yet deeper collaboration can drive value for both departments, and the wider organization. **What are some additional ways that Travel Managers can partner with HR?**

- **Understanding recruitment costs:** Employee recruitment commonly involves travel. Job candidates travel for interviews and HR travels for recruitment as well. Travel departments can help HR estimate the travel-related costs of filling vacancies, and budget accordingly.
- **Analyzing recruitment patterns:** Travel departments can help HR analyze recruitment patterns. Is recruitment more costly in some regions than in others? Do a large number of job candidates travel for interviews from a particular region or city? If so, would it make sense to emphasize recruitment in these areas, or conduct interviews locally?
- **Focus on wellness:** HR might be a natural ally when travel programs pursue well-being initiatives. These efforts not only improve traveler satisfaction, but can also boost recruitment and retention. HR can collaborate on these efforts, or help win support from senior management.
- **Analyzing the impact of travel:** In the future, companies might combine HR data with travel data. For instance, they can track turnover of frequent travelers. Do these travelers leave the company at higher rates than the average employee? In addition, companies might track “bleisure” trips. For instance, they can track how often vacation days overlap with work trips.
- **Job postings:** Travel departments can help with job postings. Some postings estimate the frequency of travel. Travel programs can use data to ensure these estimates are reliable.

Source: Turner, Anja. “4 Reasons Why Travel Should Partner with Human Resources.” GBTA Convention 2019, Chicago, IL. August 5, 2019.





- **Most travel programs (68%) are represented on a cross-department task force, committee, or working group.**

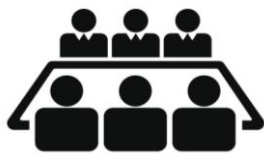
Travel programs in Europe (77%) and Asia

Pacific (74%) serve on these committees at slightly higher rates than those in North America (66%) and Latin America (54%).

“Then, we have another group that's a working group, that was put together more to look at the policy and compliance.We look at trends and booking data and try to decide if there's anything that we might need to tweak in the policy or any areas that we need to enforce better.”

-U.S.-based travel manager on cross-department collaboration

- **When travel programs serve on a cross-department committee, they commonly cover *travel policies (84%), expense policies (70%) and safety/risk management (66%)*. Almost half say their committee(s) covers *technology (48%), the employee experience (47%) and budgeting/planning (46%)*.**



68% of travel managers say they or someone from their program serves on a **cross-department, task force, committee, or working group**



What Do These Address?



Q. Do you or anyone from your travel program currently serve on a cross-department task force, committee, or working group?

Q. You mentioned your travel program serves on a cross department task force, committee, or working group. Which of the following areas do these group(s) address? **Please select all that apply.**



Sustainability: an opportunity to collaborate?

For many companies, sustainability is a priority. Fortune Global 500 firms spend \$20 billion annually on corporate social responsibility (CSR), according to the *Harvard Business Review*. In many cases, they have a cross-department committee or working group dedicated to sustainability.

- **Few travel programs serve on a sustainability committee:** Of the travel programs that serve on a cross-department committee, only 28% are on a committee that addresses sustainability or CSR (see previous page).

However, travel programs can still collaborate informally. Some possible ways include:

- **Policy:** Many Travel Managers work with stakeholders to decide travel policies. In this role, they can advocate for sustainable policies. These might include allowing more direct flights or adopting “gamification” tools that can reward sustainable choices, such as flying economy class when business class is allowed.
- **Sourcing:** Travel programs can work with their company’s sustainability team when conducting RFPs. They can consider age of fleet when evaluating airlines. With hotel RFPs, they can use the Sustainability in Travel Self-Assessment Tool developed by GBTA and BCD Travel [Link](#) to gather information about a property’s carbon emissions, energy intensity, or sustainability certifications.
- **Reporting:** Most large companies publish annual sustainability reports. When they report on “Scope 3 - indirect carbon emissions,” they typically estimate emissions from business travel. Travel Managers can provide data for these reports.

Source: Meier, Stephan and Lea Cassar. “Stop Talking About How CSR Helps Your Bottom Line.” *Harvard Business Review*. January 31, 2018.
<https://hbr.org/2018/01/stop-talking-about-how-csr-helps-your-bottom-line>



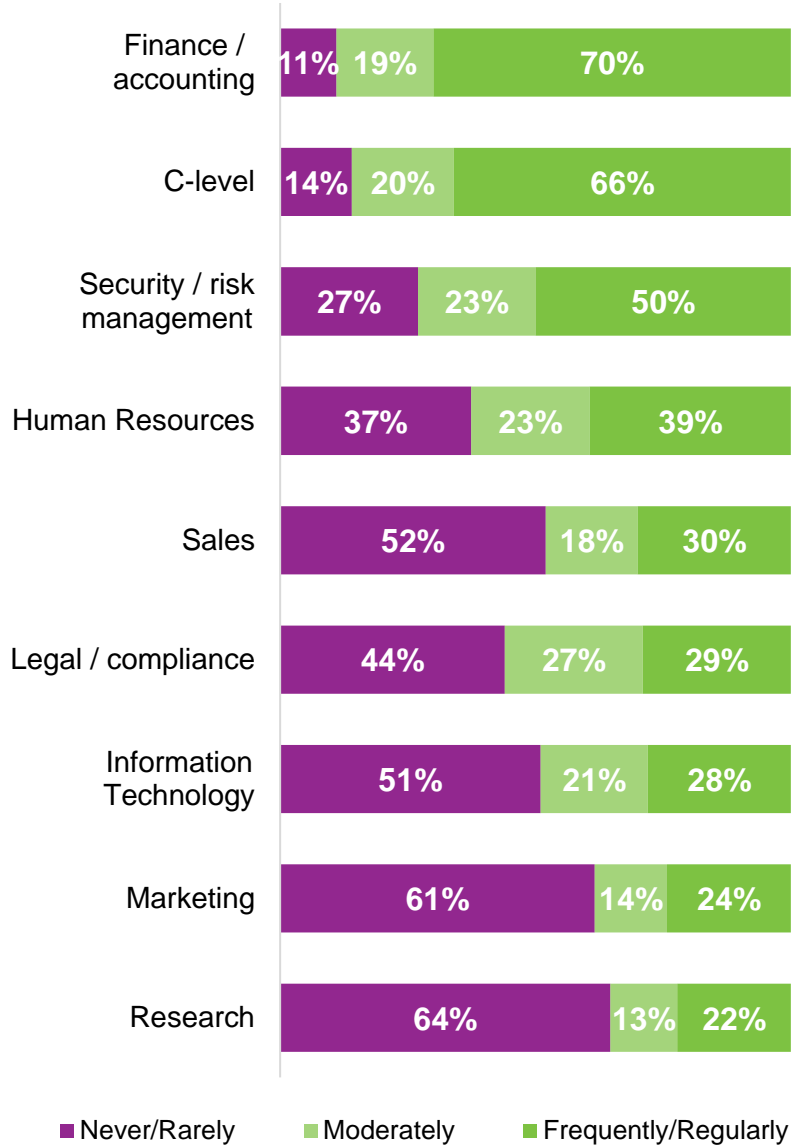
Using Data to Engage Stakeholders

Travel programs use data and metrics to engage stakeholders. These data mostly come from TMCs, which have invested heavily in reporting capabilities. Increasingly, TMC reports allow customization and peer benchmarking. In addition, some TMCs provide data-focused consulting services, helping clients with special projects, such as an airline RFP or a travel policy revamp.

Who receives data?

- Travel programs share data with different stakeholders (see Figure 8).** At least half “regularly” or “frequently” share data or reporting with *finance/accounting* (70%), *C-level* (66%),

Figure 8. How Often Do Travel Programs Share Data or Reporting With...?



Q. How often do you share travel-related data or reporting with the following stakeholders in your company?





and *security/risk management* (50%).

Fewer “regularly” or “frequently” share data with *human resources* (39%), *sales* (30%), or *legal/compliance* (29%).

- **North American travel programs rarely share data with Human Resources.** Only 28% of North American travel managers “regularly” or “frequently” share data with HR stakeholders. This is lower than the rate in Europe (51%), Asia Pacific (48%) and Latin America (48%).

What Is a CRM integration?

- **Travel programs rarely share data with their sales team.** Only 30% “regularly” or “frequently” share reports with their sales team, even though sales staff frequently travel (see Figure 8 on previous page).
- **Are existing metrics relevant?** Common metrics may have limited relevance to the sales team. When asked about the “primary information needs” of their sales team (see next page), Travel Managers most commonly mention “trip success rate.” Few reports include this metric, or similar metrics.
- **What is a CRM integration?** Some companies may integrate their booking or expense tool with their customer relationship management tool. This can allow them to compare travel costs against revenue. For instance, they might see that they spent \$100,000 on travel to a \$10 million account in the past year, and the account grew 10%. Will these integrations help sales teams make better decisions?

- **Different stakeholders value different metrics, according to travel managers surveyed (see Figure 9 on the next page).**

“[Companies should] really look at people who are on the road as part of their [job] and what their needs are and then adjust accordingly, because if you're taking one trip a year, really, it's not going to matter how that experience was to most people because it's one trip. But if you're taking 20 or more, you really should have a voice in how things are crafted for that experience because it's such a big part of your life and your personal time as well...”

-U.S.-based sales professional





Figure 9. What Are the Primary Information Needs of...?



C-level

78%

Spend/savings: average rate/ fare changes, cost avoidance, contract commitments

66%

Policy compliance: unmanaged spend, booking/payment methods, leakage

64%

Trip success rate: value/ ROI, productivity



Finance/accounting

83%

Spend/savings: average rate/ fare changes, cost avoidance, contract commitments

68%

Policy compliance: unmanaged spend, booking/payment methods, leakage

58%

Booking statistics: advance Booking, online adoption, hotel attachment, defects



Information technology

45%

Traveler engagement: method/ Frequency of interactions with TMC or travel department

42%

Call/contact center statistics: average speed of answer, average handle time

40%

Traveler satisfaction: net promoter score, surveys, service issues



Human resources

85%

Human resource information: recruitment, retention, attrition

82%

Traveler friction: wellness, health and safety, willingness to travel

57%

Traveler satisfaction: net promoter score, surveys, service issues



Security/risk management

70%

Traveler friction: wellness, health and safety, willingness to travel

42%

Policy compliance: unmanaged spend, booking/payment methods, leakage

28%

Traveler engagement: method/ Frequency of interactions with TMC or travel department



Sales

61%

Trip success rate: value/ ROI, productivity

53%

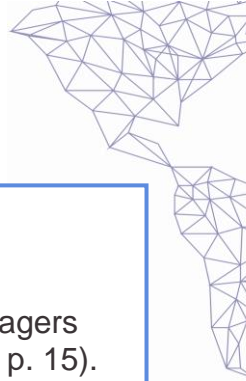
Spend/savings: average rate/ fare changes, cost avoidance, contract commitments

50%

Traveler satisfaction and booking statistics

Q. What are the primary travel program information needs for each department heads and/or senior leadership at your organization? **Please select all that apply.**

Note: Respondents only asked about stakeholders that they indicated they collaborate with.



What matters in the C-suite?

- **Are C-suites engaged with travel programs?** Two-thirds (66%) of travel managers “regularly” or “frequently” share data with C-level stakeholders (see Figure 8 on p. 15). These may include a Chief Financial Officer (CFO), a Chief Operating Officer (COO), a Chief Procurement Officer (CPO), or even a Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

What does the C-suite value?

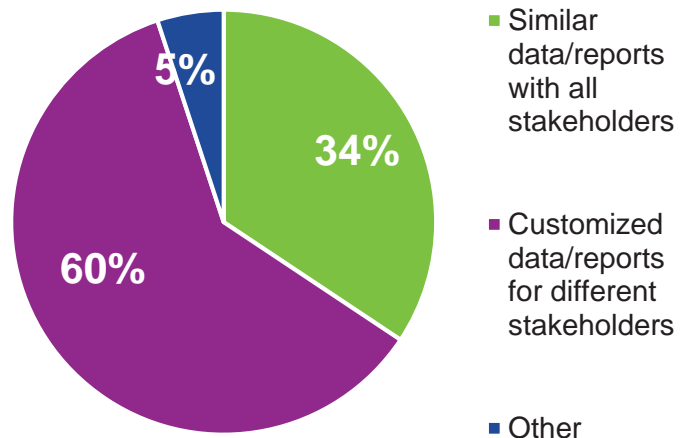
- **C-level stakeholders value cost-focused and traveler-focused metrics.** When asked about the “primary information needs” of their C-level stakeholders, travel managers most commonly indicate spend/savings (78%) and policy compliance (66%). However, a decent number indicate trip success rate (64%) and traveler satisfaction (55%).

In other words, executives appear to view travel holistically – not only as a cost category but also an investment in the productivity of employees.

Which types of reports do travel programs share?

- **Three in five travel programs (60%) provide customized reports to stakeholders.** However, one-third (34%) share similar reports with all stakeholders, suggesting room for improvement.

Figure 10. What Do Travel Programs Share?



Q. Which of the following best describes your efforts?



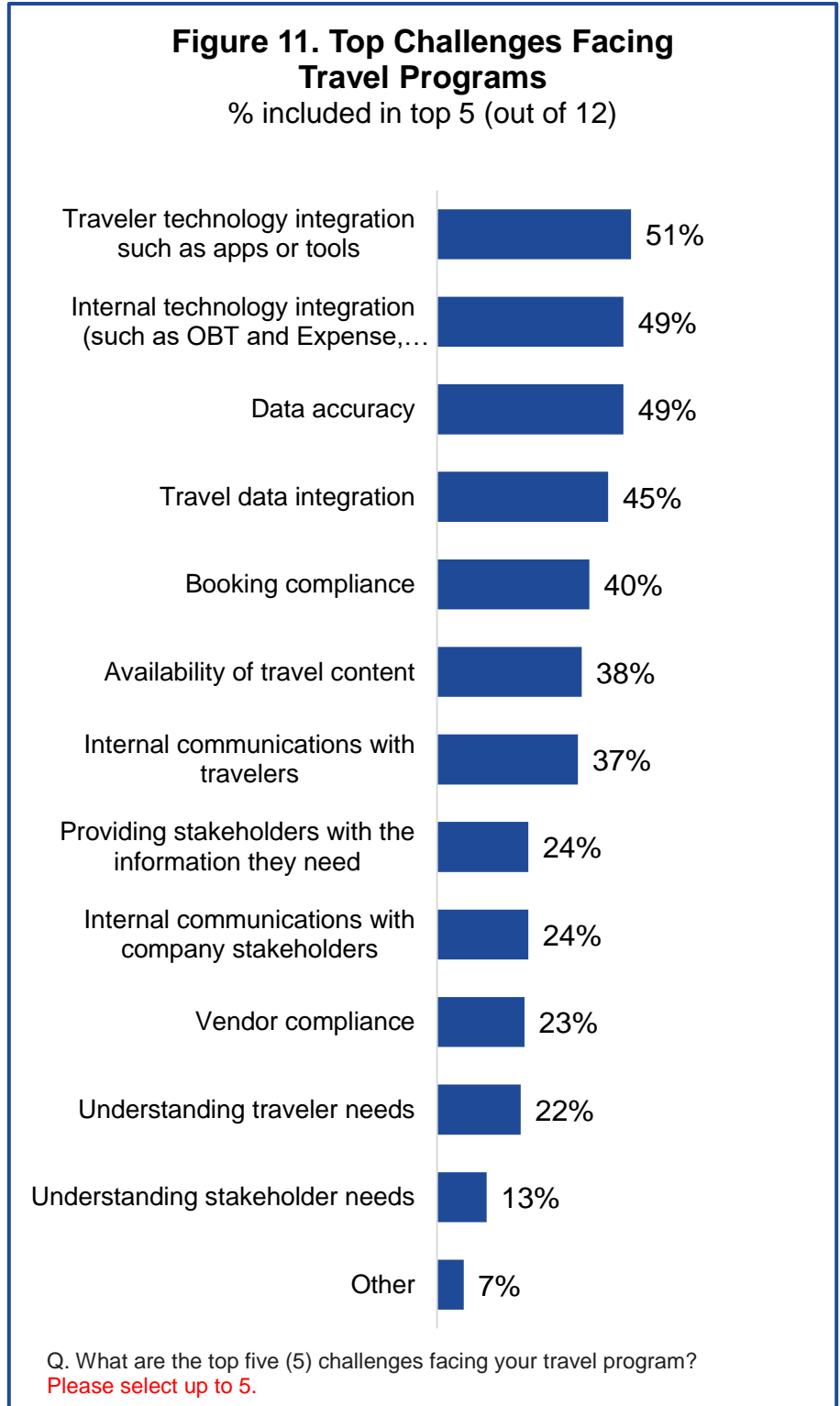


Travel Program Challenges

Stakeholder collaboration can enhance the value of a managed travel program – driving employee well-being, engagement and retention. At the same time, collaboration can pose challenges.

Respondents were asked to indicate the top five challenges their travel program faces (out of 12 possible options).

- They commonly say traveler technology integration such as apps or tools (51%) and internal technology integration (49%) pose a challenge. Expanded collaboration can make integration even more challenging. The tools and systems



travel managers use do not always integrate seamlessly with those used by their stakeholders – such as HR systems, risk management systems, expense tools, accounting systems and enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems. Travel managers must evaluate the importance of integration. When selecting

technology, they might choose between (1) their favorite solution and (2) an alternative that better fits their company’s technology ecosystem.

- Fewer travel managers mention *internal communication with company stakeholders* (24%) as one of the top five challenges they face.

Business travel apps: an integration challenge?

- **Business travel apps are on the rise:** A growing number of business travel startups have created apps that travel programs can adopt à la carte. Examples of apps include “gamification” apps, price reshopping apps, visa application apps and flight rebooking apps.
- **Will data integration become a challenge?** When travel programs use a variety of apps, integration can be a challenge, as observed in *Business Travel News*. It can be time-consuming to integrate various apps with the travel program’s technology platforms. In addition, some technology providers may not allow the sharing of some data. **Travel programs may rely on their TMC or booking provider to manage the integration process.**

Cohen, Amon. “Tech First: Equipping a Travel Program.” *Business Travel News*, May 3, 2019. Accessed August 21, 2019. <https://www.businesstravelnews.com/Business-Travel-Buyers-Techbook/2019/Tech-First-Equipping-a-Travel-Program>



Takeaways

Travel managers collaborate widely with stakeholders – sharing data and technology to improve traveler safety and well-being, and create value for their company. This research suggests several steps that travel programs can take to better engage stakeholders:

- 1) **Provide relevant metrics:** Stakeholders value a variety of metrics. While most travel programs (60%) provide customized reports to stakeholders, they have limited data about trip success, traveler satisfaction and return on investment from travel. However, these metrics are important to key stakeholders – including C-level executives and sales staff.
- 2) **Engage human resources:** Most travel programs (66%) collaborate with HR, but typically in a limited way. Only 39% “regularly” or “frequently” share data with HR stakeholders. In the future, travel programs might partner with HR to estimate recruitment costs and calculate turnover of frequent travelers.
- 3) **Evaluate the importance of integration:** Collaboration can make technology integration more challenging. Different departments use different tools, platforms, and data systems. Travel managers must evaluate the importance of integration. When selecting technology, they might choose between (1) their favorite solution and (2) an alternative that better fits their company’s technology ecosystem.





Methodology

An online survey was conducted of global travel managers who are (1) members of GBTA or (2) clients of BCD travel. Data collection took place between April 22, 2019 and May 14, 2019.

An email invitation was sent to 7,872 GBTA members and non-members globally. Four hundred and fifteen recipients completed at least one question, for a response rate of 5%. Of these, 382 qualified because they are “involved in managing or procuring travel on behalf of [their] company.”

In addition, an email invitation was sent to BCD Travel clients. Two hundred and sixty-eight BCD clients completed at least one question in the survey. Of these, 242 qualified because they are “involved in managing or procuring travel on behalf of [their] company.”

In total, 347 respondents completed the survey – including GBTA contacts and BCD clients. One hundred and sixty-three respondents are from North America; 81 are from Europe³; 56 are from Asia Pacific; and 47 are from Latin America.

In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with travel managers and a variety of stakeholders from different departments – including finance/accounting, human resources, security/risk management, and sales.

³ Note: These include respondents from Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA). However, of the 120 EMEA respondents who completed at least one question in the survey, 113 (94%) are from European countries. As a result, this group is referred to as “Europe-based respondents” throughout the report even though it includes a few respondents from outside Europe.



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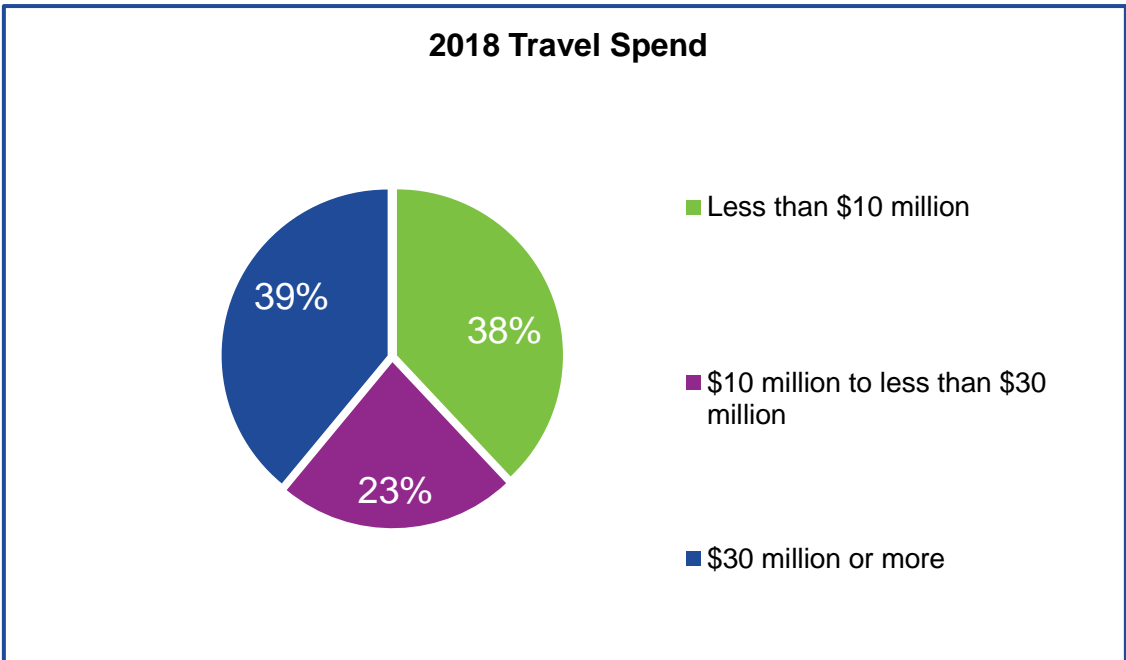
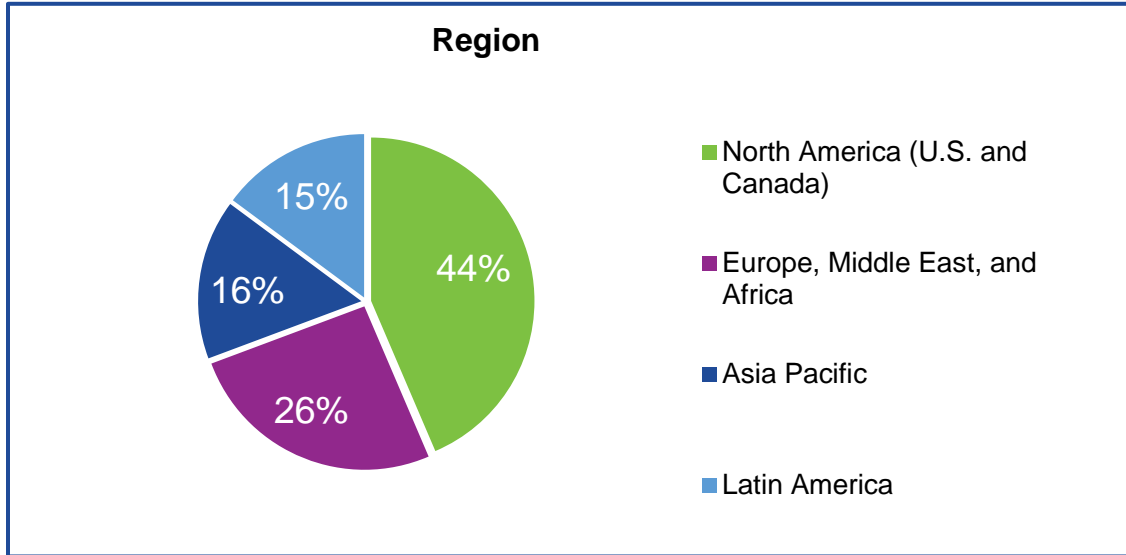
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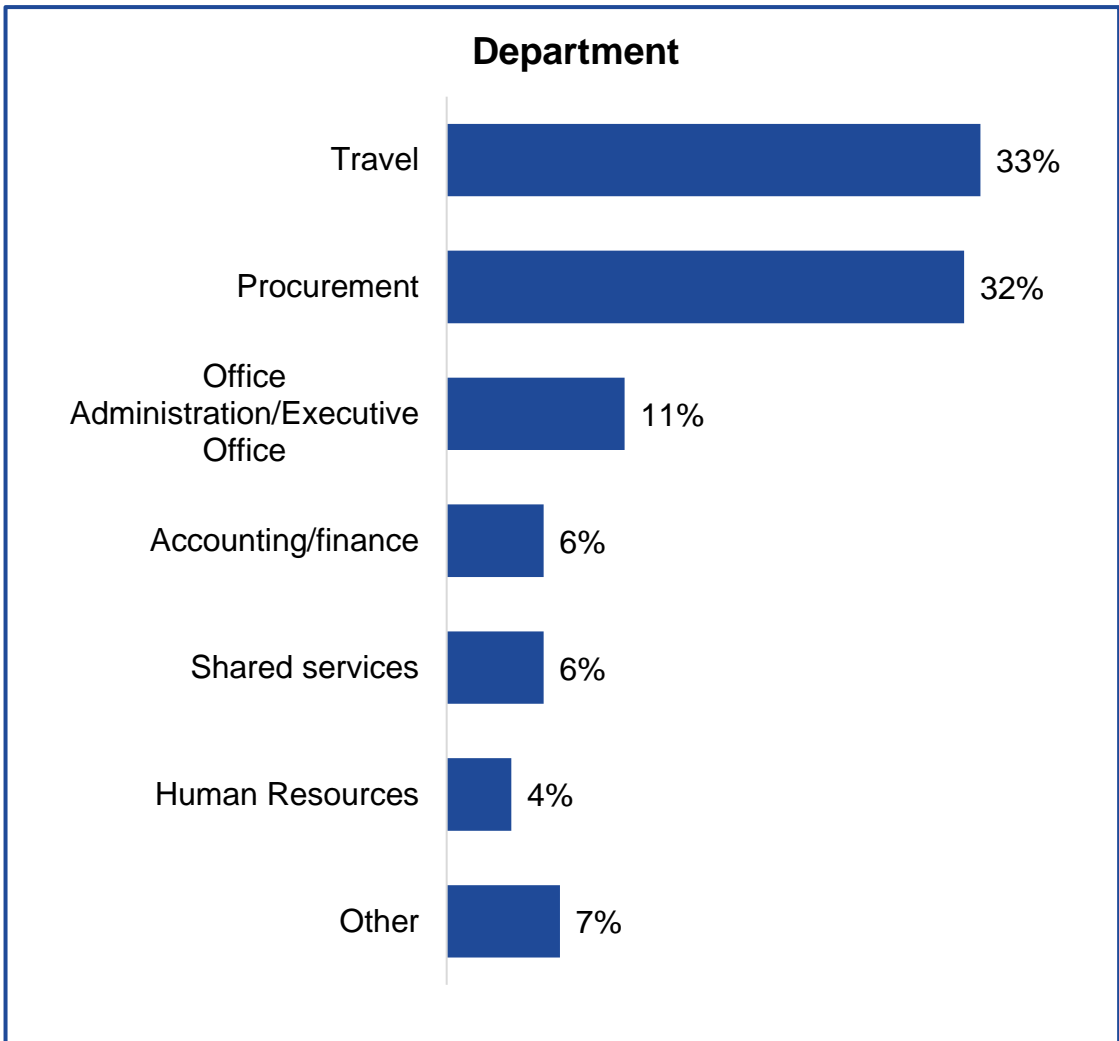
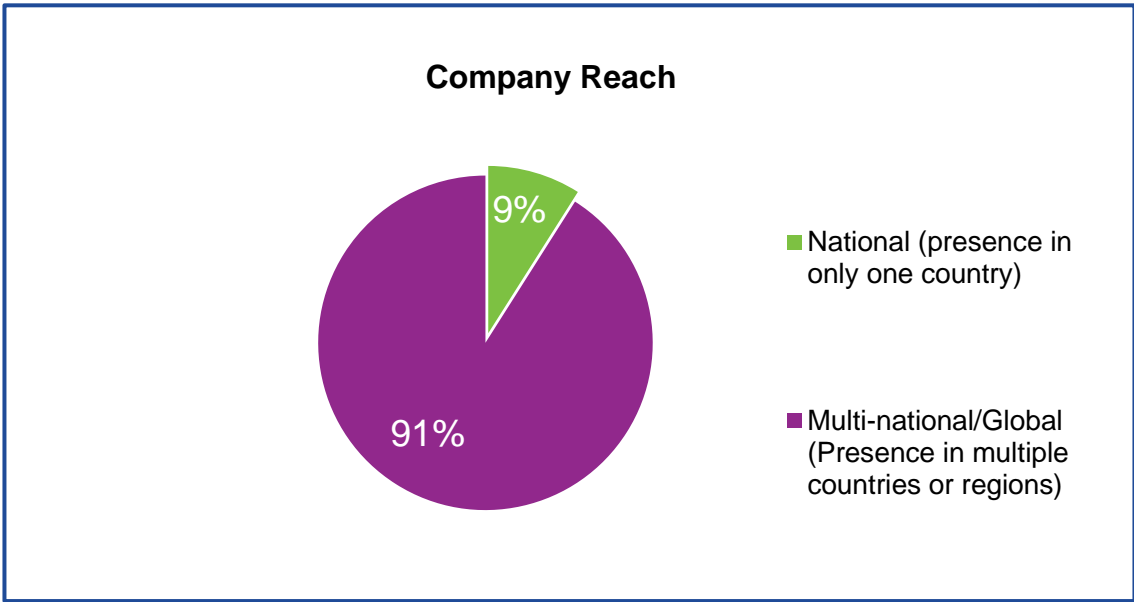
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Respondent Profile





About GBTA



The Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) is the world's premier business travel and meetings trade organization headquartered in the Washington, D.C. area with operations on six continents. GBTA's 9,000-plus members manage more than \$345 billion of global business travel and meetings expenditures annually. GBTA delivers world-class education, events, research, advocacy and media to a growing global network of more than 28,000 travel professionals and 125,000 active contacts. To learn how business travel drives lasting business growth, visit gbta.org.

About BCD Travel



BCD Travel helps companies make the most of what they spend on travel. We give travelers innovative tools that keep them safe and productive, and help them make good choices on the road. We partner with travel and procurement leaders to simplify the complexities of business travel, drive savings and satisfaction, and move whole companies toward their goals. In short, we help our clients travel smart and achieve more. We make this happen in 109 countries with almost 13,800 creative, committed and experienced people. And it's how we maintain the industry's most consistent client retention rate, with 2018 sales of US\$27.1 billion. For more information, visit www.bcdtravel.com.