

Redesign your travel program post COVID-19: The Toolkit



Getting back on the road

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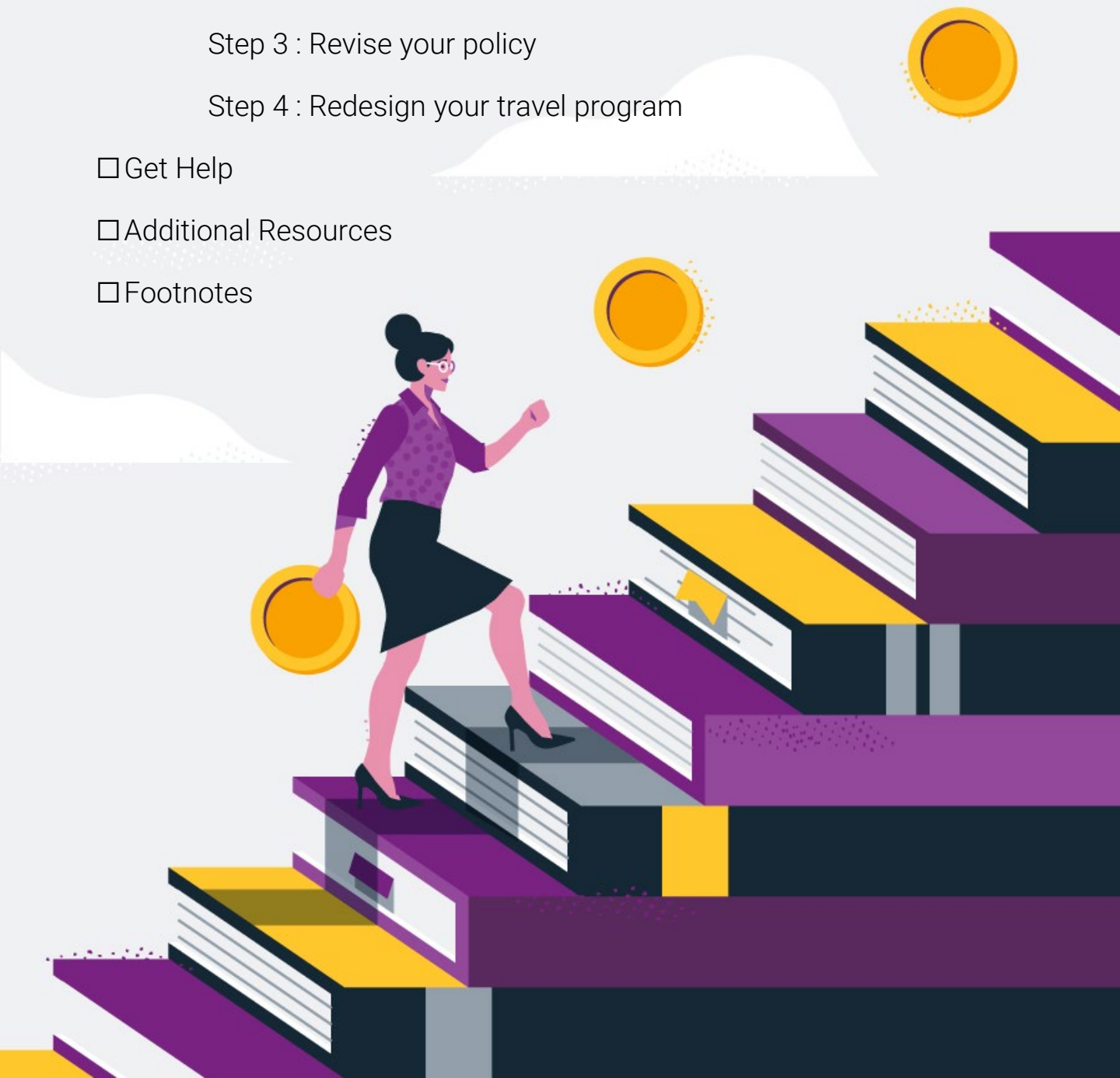
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Introduction

Business travel is changing. More than ever, traveler safety and risk management are front of mind. Your travelers will be worried about getting back on the road after an extended period, and your business will want to support and reassure them with the right tools, policies, and travel management company (TMC).

In the first weeks post COVID-19, the travel landscape was already markedly different. The corporate travel industry needs to come together to address traveler safety as we move ahead, understanding that a new normal is required.



So far, we've seen distinctive booking patterns and new health and hygiene initiatives, like the following:

- Travelers must prove their travel history ¹
- Social distancing is being enforced in airports and on flights ²
- No-touch facilities have been introduced ³
- Hotel booking windows are shorter ⁴
- Domestic air travel has started to recover ⁵



How to redesign your travel program

Your business travel program will likely need an overhaul to address the new normal. From defining new objectives to planning your communication strategy, follow this step-by-step guide to make sure you cover every angle.

Step 1: Define your new goals

Risk management technology

Risk management should be your priority. Your travelers need to feel reassured. And your business needs to feel confident that it's working with a TMC that provides the most effective, up-to-date technology and agile responses.

Egencia Traveler Tracker lets you locate where your business' travelers are scheduled to be, and where they have been in the last 30 days. The past travel element is particularly significant for travel in the new normal in case contact tracing is required.

Risk management support

Risk management specialists can help you look after very specific safety and security needs like on-the-ground medical assistance and traveler security. At Egencia, we have strong partnerships with multiple risk management companies, including both [WorldAware](#) and [International ISOS](#). Plus, our own travel consultants are available to support your travelers 24/7/365 too, including via callbacks with Click-to-Call and AssistMe.



Spend and savings

You need to be sure that your company's travel spend is going to the best use and providing the most value to your organization. For us, that includes machine learning technology, which tracks and automatically rebooks hotels and flights when the price drops. Egencia Savings Finder for Air and Hotel saved our opted-in customers an average of 14* percent per flight and 7** percent per hotel booking.

* Figures for 2019 financial year

** Figures between 26/11/2019- 06/03/2020

"Here's the brilliant thing about Egencia and the rate of return on investment that we get from you guys, the fee structure's low, and what we make up in unused ticket management pays for it, so it's fantastic."

- JJ Giachetti, corporate travel manager, Umpqua Bank



Coverage

If your business is global, you'll need to ensure that your TMC can reach everywhere your travelers go. Conversely, if your company is regional, the coverage you require will need to cover a smaller area. This must come into your strategic decision making and risk planning process.

Sustainability

Sustainability in travel is complex, and insights from technology and consulting professionals will help you make more informed decisions. For example, your travel analytics could reveal that one flight generated more CO2 than 10 others combined.

"The CO2 dashboard in Egencia's reporting is brilliant for us. It gives us visibility as to what's our carbon impact, and what's the footprint that we have as a business. We want to educate travelers as to what's the impact of flying long-haul business class, first class, or economy."

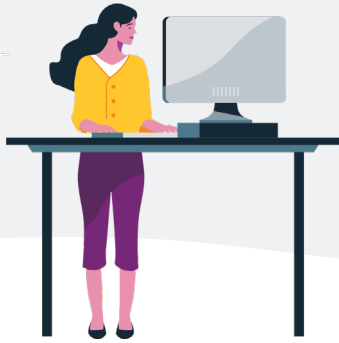
- Global head of facilities and support services, international talent acquisition and management company





Step 2: Analyze your performance

Your business' travel policies will need to change as you begin to travel again. Assess your travel program's current performance and how it will track against your new goals.



At Egencia, our intuitive, consumer-like user experience means we have an average global adoption rate of 84%.

Policy and compliance

Check that your travelers are staying compliant and following your policies. If your travelers aren't following a policy designed to promote their safety, then you can't manage risk and support safe travel. With our solution, your policy is woven into your booking tool, and your travel managers can update it quickly, anytime, and anywhere.

Adoption and leakage

Review your adoption rate to ensure it's high enough. Your adoption needs to be high to ensure that you can have good visibility of where your travelers have been and where they're going, to help you get in touch with them quickly in case of an emergency.

Overall travel policy performance

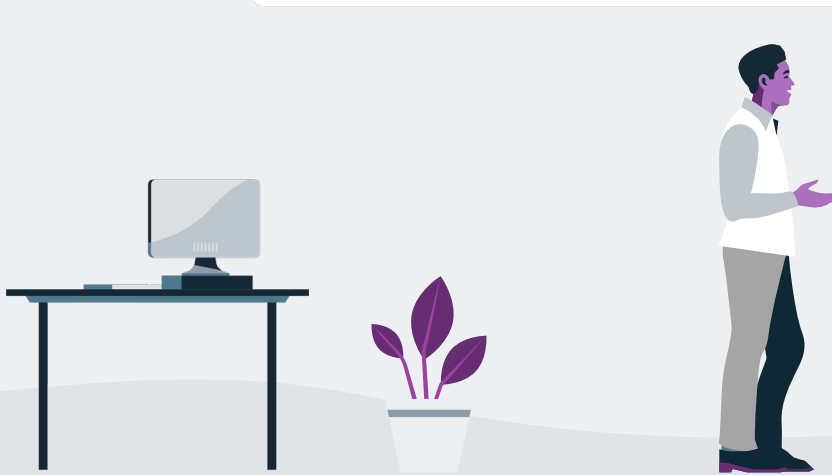
Assess your current policies for their effectiveness in supporting safety, risk management, and spend. Don't forget to check if your policies can accommodate a change in approach. For example, if you decide to pause mandating advanced purchases and promote bookings closer to the date of travel.

Assess your spend

Find savings opportunities with critical metrics like frequently visited destinations, types of bookings, types of travel, advanced purchase windows, and more. Insights from the Egencia Analytics Studio could help you measure a wide array of areas in your travel program, including seeing how your budget is being spent, pinpointing savings opportunities, and checking on your unused tickets. You can also see where your travelers go most frequently if you want to negotiate special deals with suppliers.

"I'm a fan of data. I love to work with it. I love seeing how figures can show what is happening, where we are going, what the trends are. I use it to generate different types of reports like compliance reports, global travel reviews, and more. This data is a great support for me."

*— Irina Kostyukova, head of business travel,
Kaspersky*



Benchmark your program

Optimize your travel program policy spend and travelers' behaviors. Have you wondered if your policy parameters are set correctly or if you're paying the right price for a flight route your company frequently takes? Take the guesswork out of managing your travel program by learning how other travel programs like yours are performing in key areas, as well as with your most traveled lodging and transportation habits.

Look at the following:

- Travel risk management
- Advance purchase/flexible cancellations
- Approval
- Air
- Lodging
- Rail
- Car
- Sustainability

Step 3: Revise your policy

Armed with your program's updated goals and past performance, you can address how your policies will look as you prepare to travel in the new normal.





Adoption

Mandate that your travelers use the booking tool from your TMC. At Egencia, that lets us give you complete visibility and means we can provide you with the technology to track, contact, and update your travelers in an emergency. We also remind travelers to make sure their contact information is up to date at log in.

- Egencia Preferred Rates are available at over 35,000 hotels and include extra amenities like free Wi-Fi and breakfast. And a massive 87% of these properties also offer cancellation policies of 24 hours or less.

- Our last-minute hotel deals can save you up to 70% off hotel bookings.

Policy on the go

Update policy directly in your TMC's tool. In our solution, travelers can't book anything that you've restricted, including high-risk destinations and specific carriers.

Approval

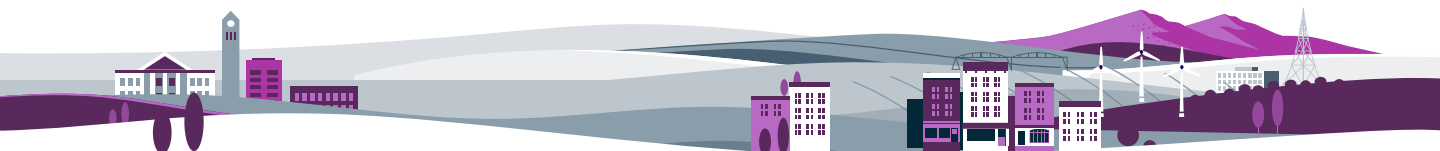
Amend approval settings for high-risk destinations to allow you to keep better control of specific travel risks.

Advanced purchase/flexible cancellations

You can change policy to support last-minute bookings during evolving crises. Or you can promote advanced booking but insist that travelers only book trips that come with flexible cancellation (while being aware that this could incur an extra cost.)

Air

Airlines may limit the number of passengers booking on flights or checking in at the airport because of social distancing. Look at your policy and define rules around cabins, carriers, and the number of travelers you allow to book on a single flight.



Trip duration

Update your policy to limit lengths of stay for spend or safety reasons. You may also want to add flexible cancellations as a priority in your policy, along with rate caps and post-booking approval for high-risk destinations only.

Lodging

Hotel chains may introduce new hygiene initiatives or no-touch check-ins that you want your travelers to use. Our solution will let you highlight your preferred hotels from a selection of over 650,000 and bring them to the top of the list for your travelers.

Rail

If you're in a region where rail travel is popular and efficient, think about cabin-class, carriers, and popular routes, with the understanding that domestic travel is increasing.

“Nordic Choice Hotels has had a strategy for several years to develop and implement no-touch services as an option for guests who prefer no face-to-face contact with the hotel staff. This includes the app and mobile key, in addition to check-in stations at the hotels and chat function in hotel rooms for room service, etc.”

– Kari Bente Lehmann, distribution and key account manager, Nordic Choice Hospitality Group



Car

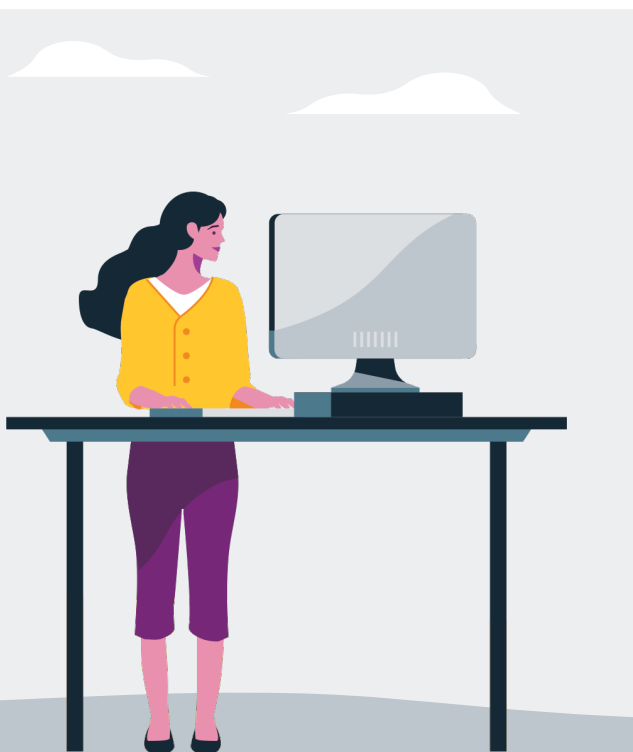
Like rail, car rental will play a bigger part in the new normal as a key component of domestic travel. With increased car rental adoption, it may be time to negotiate better deals or mandate per diems to save money in your program. You can also update your policy to include rules on car class and type to promote savings.

Sustainability

You need insights to support your sustainability goals with updated policies. Look at your current TMC and assess if they're able to help you track your CO2 emissions for air and hotel and educate your travelers.

Booking and approving on the go

You should encourage mobile adoption as part of your policy. This ensures that your travelers have the power to change their itineraries quickly and on the move in urgent situations. While for travel managers, it's easy to make approvals even when away from a computer, which is especially important if you've introduced new policies and approval lines.



“In the past, there were a lot of policies practiced within the company, so no one could hope to know them by heart. With Egencia, you don’t need to memorize anything. The policy is right there in the platform.”

— Tricia Lim, executive VP of the corporation planning division, NTT Singapore



Step 4: Redesign your travel program

There's a lot to think about, but you should now be a step closer to redesigning your program.



"For example, at the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, we decided we could not travel to China and Italy, and we put a ban on those countries. People trying to book to those countries got a message and didn't travel. With Egencia, the platform's set up in a way that's so easy to use, we can deal with an emergency, and turning on and off certain destinations when we need."

- Projects director, FMCG client

Your priorities

- Work with a TMC who has one single solution to provide you with consolidated booking, reporting, program management, embedded policy, traveler tracking, and more. Our innovative single solution makes managing and booking travel feel easy and natural for travel managers and travelers.
- Use travel strategically. You most likely know first-hand that in-person connections have value, so use data to set ROI for your trips, considering how you will balance in-person interactions versus virtual meetings, and assess the impact of your relaunched program.
- Ensure your updated policies support your new goals to promote risk management and make your spend go further.
- Train your travelers and arrangers on how the new normal looks in your program, with assistance from your TMC. We help our customers educate their people with webinars, training videos, and other materials. We make sure they are fully up to speed on any changes we've made to support their programs, including time-saving initiatives like self-service cancellations.
- Create a comprehensive communication plan to roll out your new program. We help our customers all the way, with downloadable toolkits including posters, banners, social posts, and more.
- Ensure there is a feedback loop available to your travelers. Hitting the road again may make some travelers anxious, and it's vital to hear what they have to say to support them and give them peace of mind.

Get help

There's no longer a need to push a blanket ban on worldwide travel. With the green shoots of a return to corporate travel already showing in some regions, the signs of travel picking up are slow but positive.

And you're not on your own. If you've decided it's time to relook at travel in your business and prepare for the new normal, we're here to help. We've always listened to our customers' needs and reacted to support them quickly and efficiently, and we'll continue to do so.





Additional Resources

- Is your travel program getting the biggest bang for its buck? Assess if your business is getting as much value as possible from its TMC with the [business travel savings checklist](#).
- Consider the most important areas of your program as you head into your next business travel RFP. Find every question you should be asking in the [RFP template](#).



Footnotes

1. Andrea Salcedo, Sanam Yar, and Gina Cherehus. [“Coronavirus Travel Restrictions Across the Globe.”](#) The New York Times. April 2020.
2. Marine Strauss. [“Air travel resumption will require social distancing, says EU.”](#) Reuters.com. April 2020.
3. Anu Pillai S. [“COVID-19: Can airports nip pandemics in the bud?”](#) International Airport Review. April 2020.
4. Patrick Trice. [“Same day bookings dominate demand amid COVID-19 pandemic.”](#) Kodi.com. April 2020.
5. Natasha Frost. [“China’s domestic aviation recovery is good news for the world’s airlines.”](#) Quartz. April 2020.
6. Nicole Kobie. [“The return of the night train.”](#) Wired. November 2019.