TRANSFORMING TRAVEL DATA TO ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

> ❝ **What gets measured gets managed.** ❞
>
> **–Peter Drucker**

Applying legendary management consultant Peter Drucker's oft-cited quip to travel management, the devil is often in the details of getting the data necessary to measure and better manage the category before the trip has been taken and money has been spent.
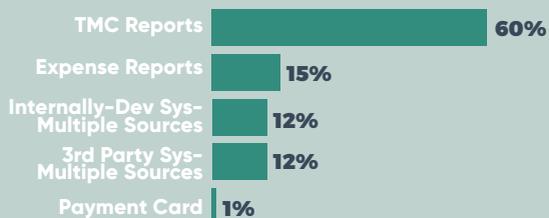
Travel managers are often inundated with historical data on where the dollars were spent but armed with little insight to how they might better influence purchasing decisions of travelers today and into the future. How can small and midsize travel departments—with limited resources and time—use real-time data to better manage and influence travel spending? Following are steps companies can take, as highlighted by presenters in a recent BTN Group webinar sponsored by Travel Incorporated.

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PRIMARY TRAVEL DATA SOURCES

Source	Percentage
TMC Reports	60%
Expense Reports	15%
Internally-Dev Sys-Multiple Sources	12%
3rd Party Sys-Multiple Sources	12%
Payment Card	1%

Source: BTN Group/Travel Incorporated webinar registration responses from nearly 300 registrants, June 2018

BIGGEST PAIN POINTS

- Inability to push data to stakeholders 6%
- Inability to push data to travelers 3%
- Inability to reconcile GL 4%
- All of the above 1%
- Inability to combine for true spending picture 45%
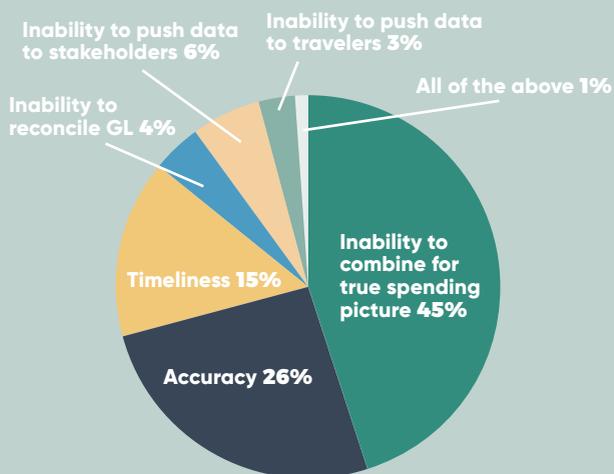- Timeliness 15%
- Accuracy 26%

Source: BTN Group/Travel Incorporated webinar registration responses from nearly 300 registrants, June 2018

START WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

Companies often rely on reporting from their travel management companies as their primary source of travel data. In fact, 60 percent of nearly 300 travel management professionals who registered for the webinar cited TMC reporting as their primary data source. While looking through the rear-view mirror shouldn't be the only way managers drive the travel program, historical TMC reporting can serve as a baseline to highlight saving opportunities from behaviors, policy or purchasing decisions.

Fewer than one-quarter of respondents cited use of either internally developed or third-party systems that combined multiple data sources to paint a truer picture of spending. Such companies are integrating TMC data, expense, payment card charges with supplier feeds and other sources to gain a richer view of the cost of each trip and exactly where company travel dollars are going.

The inability to combine data for a more complete picture of spending was cited as the single biggest pain point of data by 45 percent of webinar registrants, followed by accuracy and timeliness of reporting.

"The holy grail is to assemble as much of the complete cost of a trip as possible, to be able to identify ancillary expenses, shuttles, food and beverage, parking and ground transportation," said Tony Peter, Travel Incorporated Senior Vice President-Strategic Partnerships. But such integration requires data cleansing and normalization and often external resources to execute.

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with key stakeholders such as her company's corporate credit card manager, internal audit, finance, operations and her TMC to receive alerts of any card charges to non-preferred suppliers. Alsup then informs travelers of company policies and preferred booking channels/providers. Such communications, she said, sometimes serve to inform her of rate loading issues with the company's negotiated rates. More importantly, the data and strategy have helped to increase adoption and compliance by 5 percent.

E.W. Scripps Company uses scorecards to senior management and travelers to tell a story about compliance to five key metrics and the impact on travel spending. Since providing the scorecards to senior management, hotel compliance has increase 8.5 percent and increased 5.8 percent since the company began providing individual scorecards to travelers, said Kevin Betts, Director—Strategic Sourcing for Scripps.

DATA MUST TELL A STORY

"Data for the sake of data is meaningless unless it talks to you. It's got to tell a story," Peter added. "Start with what you have to set your goals and develop short- and long-term goals. Develop a plan around your strategy."

For example, to manage hotel booking compliance, Dollar General Travel Manager Tricia Alsup partnered

SAVING OPPORTUNITIES

Online Booking Adoption	⬆
Advance Purchases	⬆
Hotel Attachment	⬆
Reduce Exchanges	⬇
Preferred Vendors	⬆
Policy Changes	*evaluate*
Complementary Vendors	*evaluate*

Source: Travel Incorporated

IDENTIFY GOALS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Working with travel partners and internal stakeholders, travel managers can identify all the "savings opportunities that might come from better buying behaviors," Peter said. Small improvements across multiple opportunities can add up. Of course, managers must carefully consider company culture against any policy or behavioral changes. As Drucker also said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast."

By engaging travelers and other key stakeholders in the overall strategy to save money or stretch travel dollars by booking online, earlier, with fewer changes, or with preferred suppliers, travel managers can show incremental improvements and savings.

Sharing such success visually, via real-time dashboards to senior management, budget owners or even travelers can help companies boost buy-in to the saving strategies. Partners and third-party providers offer data visualization tools that are designed to make such presentations possible even without technical skills or huge budgets. "Make sure to articulate your success," Peter advised so travelers and managers understand the value of travel management and managers.

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About Travel Inc.

TRAVEL *Incorporated*

For over three decades, Travel Incorporated has cultivated a premier industry reputation on the foundation of personalized excellence in customer service, high-tech efficient technology, consultative cost savings, and is among the Top 20 U.S.-based travel management companies.

Travel Incorporated's vision and corporate philosophy is to be an easy company to do business with and the absolute best in customer service. This vision is fundamental and is an element of every business decision as we deliver to our business travel and government specialty divisions. The success of Travel Incorporated is largely driven by forward-thinking leadership, passionate associates, engaged customers, and trusted industry partnerships. It is our people who make the difference, as we tailor programs for our clients' management and highest satisfaction by their travelers.

Executives at TI sit on the advisory boards of the travel industry's largest airlines and technology companies, ensuring we are the voice of our customers, and thought leader to the future of business travel.

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