

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS TRAVEL GROWING IN IMPORTANCE



Most of European based companies (57%) have written sustainability initiatives into their company's travel policy, according to a new study on sustainability in travel programs conducted by the research and education division of the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) Foundation.

This represents a significant increase from 39% in 2012, and is mainly attributable to the financial benefits, and security and safety enhancements that are provided by the programs. **The study also discovered that more United States companies are integrating sustainability programs into contracts (from 11% in 2011 to 19 %), but they are still lagging behind their European counterparts.**

Joseph Bates, the vice president of research of GBTA Foundation, said that generally sustainability initiatives seem to be more incorporated in Europe based organizations, with opportunity for improvement among United States based organizations. Bates said that they discovered that European companies have focused on efforts that bring about both environmental and financial benefits, while American companies have maintained a strong focus on the human relations facet of sustainability.

The Sustainability in Travel Programs of the GBTA Foundation study was sponsored by Enterprise Holdings. Nearly 300 United States and European based Travel Managers were surveyed to get a better understanding of their current view of sustainability initiatives and the function sustainability plays with ground transportation. Additionally, the GBTA study focused on the future intentions regarding integrating sustainability into programs as well as differences and similarities across time and by regions.

Apart from the initiatives, the survey also analyzed the impact of sustainability initiatives, and showed that among the companies that measure their environmental footprint, almost all measure air travel activity (96% in Europe and 92% in the United States).

Jim Burrell, the Senior Vice President of Enterprise Holdings in Europe, said that it does not surprise him to see issues about sustainability rising up the agenda for Travel Managers. Sustainability in the travel supply chain has been one of the core components of contractual discussions for several years. Nevertheless, there is a definite shift to this becoming more about impact and measurement than just a nice thing to have.

Jim also stated that Enterprise Holdings has been working with other organizations to assist them in understanding the long term effect of corporate travel, not only in terms of cost, but also efficiency, environmental considerations and employee safety. He also said that this goes beyond the supply of cars and that they also are noticing a stronger stress on questions about how they manage their own supply chain in relation to sustainability.

Key highlights of the study:

Most European Travel Managers (52%) think that sustainability is now more vital to their organization compared to 2 years ago. Almost 50% of Europeans companies find the

environmental impact of rail suppliers and car rental to be important /very important (44%, each). A similar amount report receiving carbon dioxide emissions data from the suppliers (rail suppliers: 44%, car rental suppliers: 47%). Security and safety considerations are the main drivers of sustainability investments in both areas (72% in the United States and 74% in Europe). Long term cost savings (71%) was ranked second in Europe, while American companies were mainly focused on contributing to society (68 percent). 40% or more of European and American companies credit more efficient business processes, a stronger public image and improved employee morale, as the benefits of their investments in sustainability.

Date: 2015-02-02

Article link:

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