

AI IS INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT FOR BUSINESS TRAVEL



A recent study by SAP Concur has revealed that artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly used in business travel. However, companies still have concerns regarding data protection and copyrights. The study also found that virtual meetings cannot fully replace business trips, as 70% of the 1,022 German employees surveyed believe that business trips are crucial for building business relationships and having personal encounters.

According to a survey, 65% of respondents feel less productive while traveling than working from the office or home office. However, 49% believe that artificial intelligence (AI) can help them analyze, research, or create text while on the move. AI can also be used to simplify and streamline business travel-related processes, such as travel booking and billing.

AI is still rarely used as a business travel companion

On average, 28% of employees currently use tools based on artificial intelligence to complete text-based tasks such as proofreading or translations faster while on business trips. However, it's surprising that these solutions are rarely used for research or analysis while on the go, even though they are mostly accessible and anyone can experiment with AI. This circumstance may be due to employers' requirements regarding the use of such tools, as most employees can envision using them not only for text creation (57%), research (58%), fact-checking (61%), and creating graphics (62%). Furthermore, 38% of those surveyed assume that integrating AI-based tools can significantly reduce their workload.

Due to data protection and copyright concerns, many companies are still uncertain about fully embracing new technologies. According to the data, 33% of respondents said that their employers are waiting to mitigate any risks of data breaches before approving the use of AI tools. While 64% of employees support this cautious approach, they still expect their employers to adopt AI quickly (47%) and implement it where it can provide significant value (62%). For example, 60% of respondents believe AI could benefit travel expense reporting.

AI analyzes patterns

Incorporating AI tools in business travel management necessitates a digital travel booking and billing solution. However, it is not yet a standard practice, as demonstrated by the fact that 37% of respondents still submit their billing on paper or in Excel tables. Nevertheless, nearly 40% of employees can scan receipts and add them digitally to their billing.

Digitalization has already simplified the billing process, but AI can further optimize it by helping to capture receipt information digitally, review submitted receipts, and compare them against travel policies. AI can also analyze patterns that indicate possible oversights, such as receipts submitted multiple times. According to the survey's results, 45% of respondents would like these optimizations to make billing quicker and easier in the future. Additionally, 38% of respondents would like an interactive assistant on the go. For travelers, faster reimbursement of expenses is an important aspect, with 42% of respondents indicating that they would like to see this improvement. Manual processing of expenses can take two to four weeks, according to 36% of respondents.

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