

AI BECOMES THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR BUSINESS TRAVEL



Artificial intelligence (AI) will have the most significant impact on business travel in the next 15 months, says a recent survey. However, there are obstacles to embracing the technology, according to travel managers.

These are the findings of the Business Travel Show America's survey of more than 200 business travel decision-makers in North and South America. For the first time in the three-year history of the survey, **AI tools have topped the list of factors set to influence business travel, at 22 percent.** This beats advancements in technology and data (17%), global economic pressure and inflation (16%), dynamic pricing (16%) and geopolitical issues (11%). Economic pressures and inflation headed the list last year with 26 percent.

While the results indicate optimism about the potential of AI to affect change in corporate travel programs, there are barriers to its adoption. Twenty-one percent of respondents identified the slow pace of AI as one of the biggest technology challenges they face. In general, respondents were not enthusiastic about the lack of flexibility of current solutions. Forty-four percent named slow adaptation as a problem; 41 percent said there was a lack of configuration options, and 37 percent cited additional costs involved. Other issues included difficulties in interoperability of tools (31 percent) and lack of access to data (26 percent).

Technology stacks themselves received mixed reviews. Only 7 percent of respondents gave their current stack the maximum score of five. Respondents want more flexibility, better analytics and online booking tools, easier administration and more integration between travel, expense and payment tools. Some respondents recommended proof-of-concept pilots to allow organizations to fully understand the potential of AI tools before adopting them across their travel programs.

According to the survey, **successful transformation requires more than just the adoption of AI tools, however.** Achieving successful outcomes also requires reliable data, system integration and demonstrable value.

As business travel transforms in response to economic and geopolitical headwinds, this research identifies AI as a rising priority for corporate travel managers while revealing substantial barriers to its adoption.

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