

Booking.com **business**

Tools  
that will  
help you  
**Influence  
travellers'  
behaviour**





# Tools that will help you influence travellers' behaviour

What if every traveller stays within the travel policy, books their trips using the company's selected systems and claim their expenses on time, without any mishaps?

Your work and life as a travel manager would be a lot simpler. Your desk would be tidy and organised as you'd have more time to spare. Procurement would be happy, too. No more nagging complaints about numbers that don't match. You'd feel like you could trust the human race again.

*You want that, don't you?*

You can have it all by learning to do just one thing: mastering the art of influencing travellers.

No, there is no need for scheming, plotting or manipulating. It is about sympathy, empathy and compassion. In plain English, you learn to understand travellers, put yourself in their shoes to feel their pains, needs and wants, and show them that you care.

Don't worry, though. It's not too much work, and the rewards are enormous. Even better, many excellent tools are out there to help you with all the tasks.



# Feedback platforms

## *Why do you need a tool for feedback?*

You don't often have time to check the details of all hotel bookings and invoices. Buyers' focus on numbers which tends to keep them away from the human side of travel. Without a channel to communicate, the three parties: travel manager, procurement and business travellers, drift apart. This can result in the travel policy being out of touch, travellers being unhappy and a lot more work for everyone involved.

A feedback platform helps to promote two-way communication. Travellers give their feedback and voice the level of their satisfaction. Travel managers and buyers can listen, learn and incorporate the input into creating a more relevant policy. Travellers are more engaged and more likely to comply with the new system if they helped to establish it.

Here are some useful things you can ask travellers on a feedback platform:

- Their input on potential improvements for the travel policy
- Their level of satisfaction after each trip
- Their regular feedback regarding general pain points, new ideas or whatever comes to their mind

## *What makes the perfect feedback platform for you?*

Here is what you will want to look for in a feedback system, if you want it to enable two-way communication:

### **User experience**

Asking, giving, reviewing and analysing feedback should be quick and smooth.

## **Cross-device synchronisation**

Ideally, the system works online, in mobile apps for both iOS and Android devices and desktop apps for Mac, Window and Linux. A seamless cross-device synchronisation will allow travellers to start providing feedback on the road from their phone and then finish it in a hotel using their laptop.

## **Types of feedback**

It is useful to know how a traveller rates a hotel on a scale from one to five, but they should also be able to explain the reason. Thus, you want a tool that enables both scale questions and open-ended questions.

Scheduled and periodical surveys are necessary, and so are free forms for spontaneous feedback giving.

## **Participants**

You want the ability to pick and choose participants for running focus groups.

It's a bonus if the tool allows anonymous feedback as sometimes it's the only way to get an honest opinion.

# **Some of the best feedback tools out there**

The so-called best option should meet the criteria described above as well as your budget and specific needs that come with the number of travellers you manage.

Here are some potential tools to consider:



### TINYPulse

You can send short and frequent pulse surveys to check morale via anonymous responses and peer recognition. The data reports can point towards positive changes in travel policy. There are options for yes-no, scale and open-ended questions.



### 15Five

It takes 15 minutes for employees to answer a survey and five minutes for managers to review it. That's the basic idea behind this employee engagement and performance management software. You can use it to create custom surveys. For example, you can ask your travellers to rate their latest trip on a scale of one to five and provide an explanation.



### Typeform

Unlike the previous two tools, Typeform is built as a customer feedback tool. It has an extremely user-friendly interface to help you put together beautiful and engaging surveys. You can talk to the inner-consumers inside your travellers! Even the free version offers unlimited questions and answers, custom-designed themes, data exporting and reporting. Your business travellers can do the surveys on their smartphone or from the browser of their choice.

If you are looking for a quick start to getting more feedback, you can use this [Business Travel Feedback Form](#) in the handy toolkit that Booking.com has developed for busy travel organisers.



# Visual creation tools

## *Why do you need visuals?*

Let's admit it: some travel policies can be tedious to read. The jargon, the numbers, the many rules.

And the challenge doesn't stop there. Even though business travellers do a lot of work on the road, the planning and reporting before and after each trip doesn't feel like work so many travellers don't consider it a priority to thoroughly read the travel policy. They skim the pages, get distracted, close the document and turn rogue.

## *What can you do?*

The first thing is to get the attention your travel policy deserves, and using visual communication could be the way.

Let's look at Facebook. You might no longer read any long, ranting post that requires clicking the "More" button, but you see all the photos, right? You even stop to give a thumbs-up or a heart, I know you do. Images draw immediate attention.

Why do you think IKEA is so successful? It is thanks to their showrooms. You are more likely to buy a piece of furniture when you see it in a room, not because somebody describes it in the best words possible. Their assembly manuals are excellent too. You probably don't read the user manuals for many items in your home, but you can build any of the IKEA items from their picture instructions. Diagrams are simple. They are not glamorous, but efficient.

When you swap words for images, replace long paragraphs with diagrams and infographics, and explain complicated rules with animated videos, you will get more attention and engagement as your communication is easy to digest and exciting to view.

## *What makes the perfect visual creation tool for you?*

Here is what you will want to look for in a tool that will help you create some impressive visuals, quickly and painlessly:

### **User experience**

The software must be intuitive to learn and use as travel managers aren't often designers by night.

### **The types of visual**

Ideally, you want get a tool that enables you to create visual content as infographics, digital signage, presentations and so on. You want to make statistic information, complex rules and tedious checklists more engaging.

Video content is also a great way to explain your policy. You can, however, produce a video quickly with a laptop or a smartphone, and host it on platform like YouTube or Vimeo.

## **Some of the best visual tools out there**

These tools help you create visual material yourself, and you don't need to be a designer. With Booking.com's tool, you don't even need to worry about the graphics.



### **Booking.com's Visual Travel Policy Builder**

Using the builder, travel managers can create a custom travel policy infographic, download and share it with their business travellers. It comes with standard fields such as booking, budget, transportation and claiming expenses. All you need to do is fill in the blanks, generate the policy and print it to an image or a pdf.



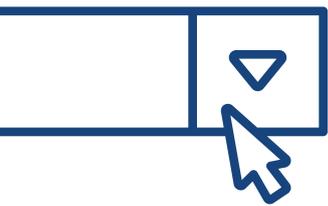
### **Canva**

Canva makes designing fun for non-designers. You will find yourself creating professional-looking presentations, posters, infographics and many more visual materials. Pre-set layouts, graphics and image libraries help the creation happen even faster.



### **Piktochart**

Piktochart has over 600 templates to help you create engaging infographics, presentations and printable materials. Though they might not have as many options for visual content as Canva, their libraries of images, objects and graphs are plentiful. You will be able to create a beautiful design in a quarter of an hour.



# Metasearch engines for travel deals

## *How can a metasearch engine help you?*

Many travellers don't want to use their company's booking system as they think they can get a better deal somewhere else. If they can, it means they can travel more comfortably within the allocated budget. You can understand their motive, right?

Technology advances empower travellers and gives them a lot more options at their fingertips. You can no longer control them with statements like "what you find in our system is the best out there". It is more sensible to embrace changes, including metasearch engines.

You need to know that metasearch engines for travel deals are different to online travel agencies (e.g. Expedia and Priceline) and booking providers (e.g. Booking.com). They don't (or don't yet) sell products but offer information about flights, hotels, car hire and the like. "Meta" means they aggregate deals from various websites (from different search engines) so that users can compare options and choose the most suitable one.

Due to their custom algorithms, search results for a flight or a two-day stay somewhere, might vary from engine to engine, but a savvy user can always learn to work the system.

As a travel manager, you might see the benefit of allowing travellers to consult these engines and find the deals with the best value. Take a step back, give them the freedom of choice. Opt for recommending and guiding instead of controlling and restricting.

## *What makes a metasearch engine useful for your travellers?*

Before letting your travellers use a search engine, make sure it has the following:

### **User experience**

It should be able to pull the information in fast. Results for a flight or a hotel search should appear in transparent detail. It means including any extra connection, booking or hidden cost.

### **Functionality**

Ideally, it offers a price watch so travellers can choose the moment to book a flight and get the cheapest ticket. Searching for deals using flexible dates might not always be useful for business travellers, but the feature could be a bonus.

### **Security**

With your duty of care, it's vital to make sure that any search engine used by your travellers is secured. Even though booking would often happen on another website, scams can occur during the redirecting process.

## **Some of the best options out there**

Here are some secured metasearch engines for travel deals that you can check out:



## Kayak

Together with Skyscanner, Kayak is one of the first in this game. Your travellers can use the platform to find deals on flights, hotel rooms and rental cars. Additional features include algorithms to predict price trends and deal email alerts.

You should know that Priceline owns Kayak. The search engine might encourage a user to book a hotel through Priceline though it will still send him or her to the actual website of the hotel.



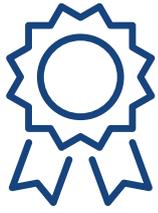
## Skyscanner

Skyscanner has one of the best interfaces and travellers will find it relatively easy to grab great deals. Thanks to the site's flexible search option, a traveller can find the cheapest ticket for a flight in the whole month, in case they want to combine business with pleasure.



## Hipmunk

Being the new kid on the block, Hipmunk incorporates many of Kayak and Skyscanner's features, while offering alternative travel options like Amtrak train routes or Airbnb listings. Younger or environmental-conscious travellers might consider those extras a plus.



# In-policy rewarding incentives

## *How can in-policy rewarding incentives help?*

If you want to reinforce the desired behaviour, such as booking a hotel using the company's chosen system or booking a flight within budget, you should reward it. It's something most of us understand. The question is how to do it effectively.

The answer depends on the culture of your company and the demographics of your travellers. While straightforward and practical rewarding systems, like collecting points in exchange for free nights, works fine with the older generation, the millennial generation might be more motivated with something sociable and immediate.

In the world of social media, public and instant recognition is becoming the norm. If social media users make up the majority of your travellers, you can't afford to stay behind. When a traveller saves money for the company in her last trip, think about giving her badges, gems, and thumbs-up so that she can show off with her peers. Gamified incentives like that work better with youngsters than a note in the company's newsletter.

Financial rewards still go a long way, though. You just need to be creative and make it fun. For example, if those gems the traveller mentioned above earned can be used in an online store to buy travelling products, their motivational values will increase significantly.

These are just some examples, but you get the idea. By picking the right rewards, you show not only that you care about your travellers' efforts to stay within policy, but also that you understand their preferences, wants and needs. Remember we talked about this at the beginning?

## What make the perfect rewarding tools for you?

Again, choosing the best tools depends on the culture and the travellers in your company. However, you want to look for the following in a tool:

### User experience

It should be simple to use. Just like how milage points are automatically added when one books a flight, you don't want your travellers to have to do a lot more than show their loyalty card at the check-in desk. Ideally, it should be less work with a digital tool.

### Types of reward

Fun, interactive and social rewards are to be expected, just like how people spend their time on social media. A robust tool should also offer some types of financial rewards.

## Some of the best reward tools out there

Here are a couple of tools we have found out there for you:



### Rocketrip

The idea behind this tool is that if you help your company save money on business travel, you get half of the savings. There is a gamification element in the tool's "budget to beat" feature. The software also works seamlessly with traveller's preferred booking sites or company's existing travel solution.



## Ovantage

Ovation's customer loyalty programme Ovantage rewards business travellers for smart travel decisions. If they adhere to the company's cost-saving policy, they earn points to redeem in digital stores.

Additionally, Ovation offers a gamification programme with real-time, online budgets to beat that motivate employees to save more.

Technology is empowering employees, business travellers included. That means they have the power to say no, which in turn means your best option is to persuade travellers to work with you. It is time you gave up the controlling grip and embrace the art of influencing. The basics of influencing lie in understanding motives and creating things that resonate with those motives. Tools like feedback platforms, visual makers, search engines and rewarding incentives can help you with the practicality of understanding and creating. Soon, you will have travellers that happily stay within the travel policy, and all will be better.

Disclaimer: All companies and products mentioned in this eBook are examples to demonstrate to readers what a useful tool could be like. There are no endorsement or affiliation involved.

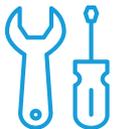
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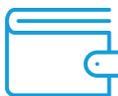
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