WINGS GLOBAL TRAVEL

A CHANGE IN MINDSET

'Business travel should be enjoyed, not endured' is the new slogan for **Wings Global Travel. Head of Growth, Matt Forbes,** explains the thinking behind the message



What does "enjoyed, not endured" mean, and why do you think it resonates with corporate travel buyers?

"Enjoyed, not endured" means recognising that we can give travellers what they want without surrendering cost control or oversight of travel programmes.

I'd go further and say that an enjoyable experience is not only for travellers but for the travel manager, the arranger, finance and HR teams and any other individual who touches travel. Their working lives improve when we minimise frustration by eliminating unproductive tasks.

For the traveller it's about preferences, amenities, comfort, reward points, in-trip support, leisure opportunities or the ability to extend a business trip with leisure time. Or it might simply be a complex multi-leg trip that runs like clockwork.

It means continuing to push for efficiency through automation, but it also means recognising that it doesn't matter whether we're talking about travellers or travel managers, people still value personal, responsive and adaptive service.



The priority for travel managers, finance departments and procurement teams is cost control. Do you really see that changing?

No, but my argument is that traveller experience and effective cost control are complementary, not contradictory.

Our current mindset is wrong – we tend to think that travel policy exists to limit choice, restrict options and tick the duty of care box on HR forms. If we continue to think like that, we'll continue to struggle with compliance.

I'm not defining good traveller experience as the expensive, do exactly as you please option. I'm saying that happy, comfortable, well rested travellers make great business sense.

Are companies really willing to spend more on 'experience'?

At Wings Global Travel, we believe that focusing on experience is one of the strongest levers on costs.

We recognise that travellers deviate from the travel policy not out of wilful disobedience but because they feel they can make better, cheaper, quicker bookings themselves.

If you make compliance the best and easiest option, people will stay on policy. That not only means better control of costs, but an improved ability to fulfil duty of care.

You're only going to know where your travellers are if their booking was made inside the travel programme.

How are younger business travellers changing expectations around corporate travel?

Millennials and GenZs will soon account for a majority of business travellers. While the usual conclusion is that these generations want everything to be instant and digital, the truth is more nuanced.

Technology is mainly exciting for the over 50s. For everyone else, it's a given. Maybe that's why we're seeing a growing appetite for traditional service values, particularly among younger travellers.

We're also seeing a change in attitudes to work and a blurring of traditional work/life boundaries. Travel is now more likely to be seen as an opportunity rather than a chore or a sign of status, and as leisure travel becomes more expensive, business travel is increasingly where people seek enriching experiences.

We've believed for decades that people are more productive when they enjoy work, but I've never heard a client ask: "How will you make business travel more enjoyable for travellers and travel managers?" It's time we changed that. ***wings.travel***

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