

# connect

CWT's business travel magazine | UK & Ireland | Spring 2020

## **Hotel strategy**

Creating a "more with less" hotel strategy

## **Risk & reward**

Mapping risks for travellers, no matter where they go

## **Getting personal**

How data and machine learning are changing travel

## **SMARTER VIENNA**

The Austrian capital is packed with history but it is embracing the future

**CWT**



## Welcome to our first issue of Connect for 2020!

The world is changing at a rapid pace and understanding the impact of new technologies is not always as immediately clear as we would like it to be. It's no different in business travel.

A major challenge for travel managers is to come up with a strategy for cutting hotel spending without reducing the number of business trips that a company does. As our article on this topic (pages 8–13) highlights, however, it is possible. It comes from continuously monitoring spend, spotting opportunities, diversifying your rate mix to ensure you drive savings, and using traveller-engagement tools to drive hotel programme compliance.

The Austrian capital of Vienna is a city that has similarly embraced the opportunities afforded by new technologies. Vienna is recognised as a world-leading “smart city”, and as our article shows (pages 14–17), it uses “interconnected digital solutions” to modern urban challenges.

Also in this issue of Connect, we find out why it's so vital to assess risks when travelling, look at ways to keep fit in your hotel room and review our sustainable-focused 2019 CWT Connect conference. We end on a sweet note by showcasing some of our favourite chocolate shops.

Enjoy this first Connect of the year, and we wish you success in 2020.



Dave Falter  
President, RoomIt



“... a strategy for cutting hotel spending without reducing the number of business trips that a company does.”

### Imprint

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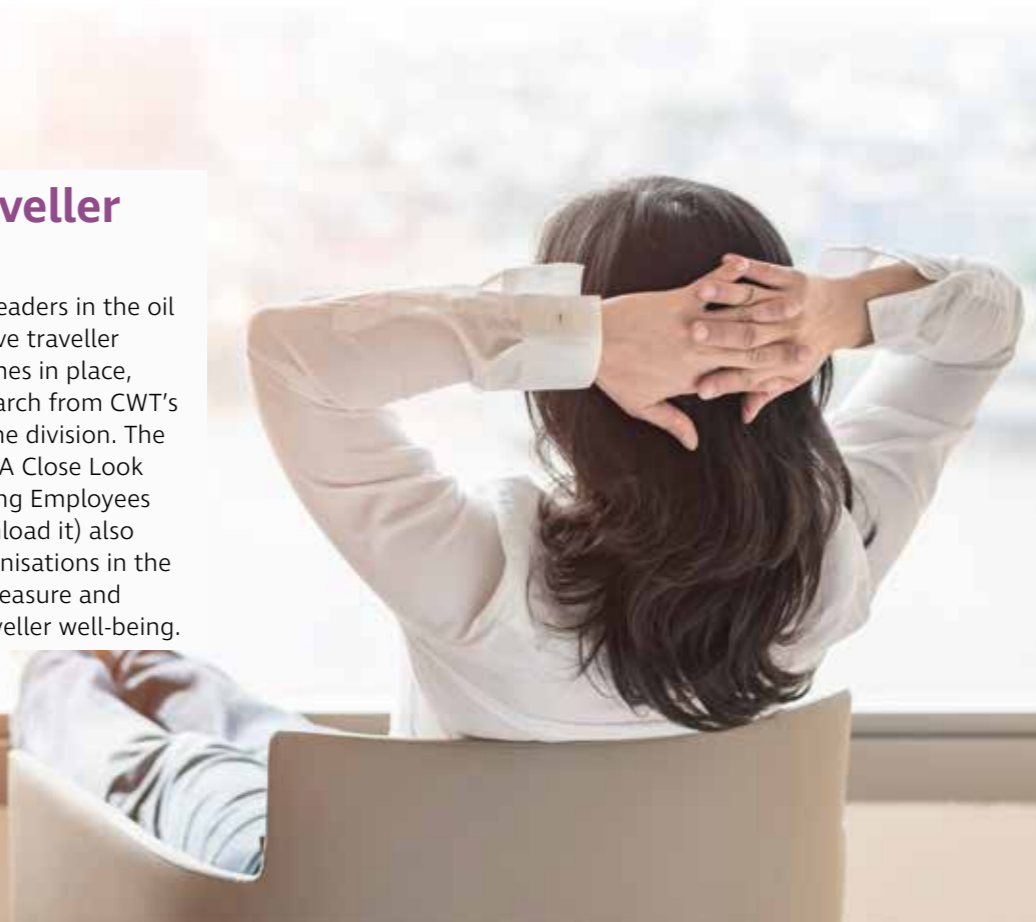




# In brief

## Looking at traveller well-being

Only around half of global leaders in the oil and gas sectors say they have traveller health and safety programmes in place, according to the latest research from CWT's Energy, Resources and Marine division. The annual report (2020 Vision: A Close Look at the Well-Being of Travelling Employees – scan the QR code to download it) also found that only 32% of organisations in the energy industry currently measure and report on the impact of traveller well-being.



## Robots deliver at hotels

South Korean telecoms company KT has launched a robot service at the Novotel Ambassador Seoul Dongdaemun Hotels & Residences in Seoul. Guests can ask the voice-activated robot, known as N bot, to bring items to their rooms, such as towels, slippers and bottled water. The robot can carry the requested items and access the hotel's elevators through wireless technology to reach guests' rooms. For information about restaurants and tourist attractions in the city hotel guests can also consult the robot.



## Badly behaved passengers

New rules have come into force designed to give countries more powers to deal with "unruly" behaviour on board flights. The Montreal Protocol 2014 took effect on 1 January 2020, and aggressive behaviour, causing damage to aircraft, and boisterous and argumentative behaviour are all included – so, we can't say we haven't been warned! It works by now giving legal jurisdiction to the country where the aircraft is registered, instead of where the aircraft lands.



## CWT podcast Business Travel On the Fly

Business Travel On the Fly is the new business travel podcast from CWT. Since January, the entertaining and informative monthly radio show has been created for business travellers on the road, with a main topic, guest interviews, and other tips and comments. Travellers can also enjoy entertaining observations from people they meet on the road, such as taxi drivers. The new edition of the English-language podcast is published on the 20th of every month. It is accessible via all major platforms, such as Stitcher, Spotify or Buzzsprout, and the CWT website ([www.mycwt.com/podcast](http://www.mycwt.com/podcast)).



## myCWT launches in China

CWT's flagship platform myCWT has been launched in China using an omni-channel approach tailored specifically for the needs of the Chinese market and based around offering a digitally driven customer experience. The Chinese version of myCWT has been purpose built as an open API-based platform featuring content and payment through integration with local third-party suppliers and apps. CWT has worked with several Chinese travel, technology and e-commerce specialists to develop this tailored version of myCWT.





# A “more with less” hotel strategy

**Cutting your hotel spending without reducing the number of business trips can seem like mission impossible. It doesn't have to, as long as you have the right strategy and technology in place.**

**TEXT:** Rob Gill

**H**ere's a dilemma facing many travel buyers: you need your travellers to stay on the road meeting clients and bringing in new business, and the last thing you want to do is to cut the number of hotel room nights that you are booking. At the same time, however, you are also under some pressure from your bosses to cut your overall hotel travel spending.

On the face of it, this seems like a difficult equation to solve: how can you book the same or more hotel rooms for less money? Fortunately, there are now a series of tools and hotel sourcing tactics that make achieving this “more with less” strategy possible. It just requires, however, a different mindset and strategy to better manage your hotel programme – such as managing and reviewing it continuously throughout the year (see continuous sourcing box on page 13) as well as by getting travellers to book through corporate tools rather than doing their own thing and undermining your strategy.

The importance of getting more value out of hotel programmes is a high priority in 2020, which is expected to be a year of economic uncertainty. Rising geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and the ongoing conundrum which is Brexit are just two further imponderables to deal with. »

⇒ How to book the same or more hotel rooms for less money is an ongoing challenge



### Examine hotel industry trends

Simply relying on traditional negotiated corporate deals with hotels is no longer enough if you want to get the best prices and value for your travellers. That's not to say these deals don't have a place; they can certainly be very beneficial in markets or cities with constantly rising prices or high occupancy rates.

It's vital to consider the dynamics of the hotel industry and what's going on with prices – according to CWT's 2020 Travel Forecast\* overall global hotel rates will see a much lower increase in 2020 (around 0.8 per cent) than in the previous seven years, when price growth was in the 2 to 3 per-cent range each year. A flat hotel market means that those fixed rates that took so long to negotiate may suddenly not look so good and could even be uncompetitive compared with what is available on the open market. This is where concepts such as continuous sourcing, agency rates and price optimisation tools come into their own.

Offering a mixture of rate types to travellers is key to making your hotel spending go further – agency rates can really pay off in cities or destinations where you don't have enough room nights to secure a decent negotiated price. RoomIt Rates, for example, offer up to 20 per cent off the Best Available Rate (BAR) and often include business-friendly amenities

such as Wi-Fi, Last Room Availability, loyalty points and flexible cancellation.

Another strategy is to negotiate "dynamic" rates with hotels, which can offer discounts of between 10 and 25 per cent off BAR, although they generally offer limited or no amenities. Dynamic rates don't give the same kind of discounts as a fixed rate but they can pay off when prices are decreasing. Best practice is to generally use dynamic rates for around 10–20 per cent of a hotel programme.

"Rates may decrease in the coming year due to excess supply. If they do, it's important to leverage dynamic rates because they can potentially give you a better deal than a fixed negotiated rate," says Heidi Bonjean, senior marketing communications manager at RoomIt by CWT. Another option is to use price optimisation tools for hotels to look for lower prices after a booking has been made.

"These tools use algorithms to check for lower prices – if the price drops, it will automatically rebook the room at the same property at this lower rate,"

\* The 2020 CWT Travel Price Forecast is available here: [www.mycwt.com/travel-price-forecast/](http://www.mycwt.com/travel-price-forecast/)

⇒ Offering a mixture of rate types to travellers is key to making your hotel spending go further

explains Bonjean. "This ensures travellers get the best rates but they don't have to do anything as it's totally seamless."

### Supply and demand in key destinations

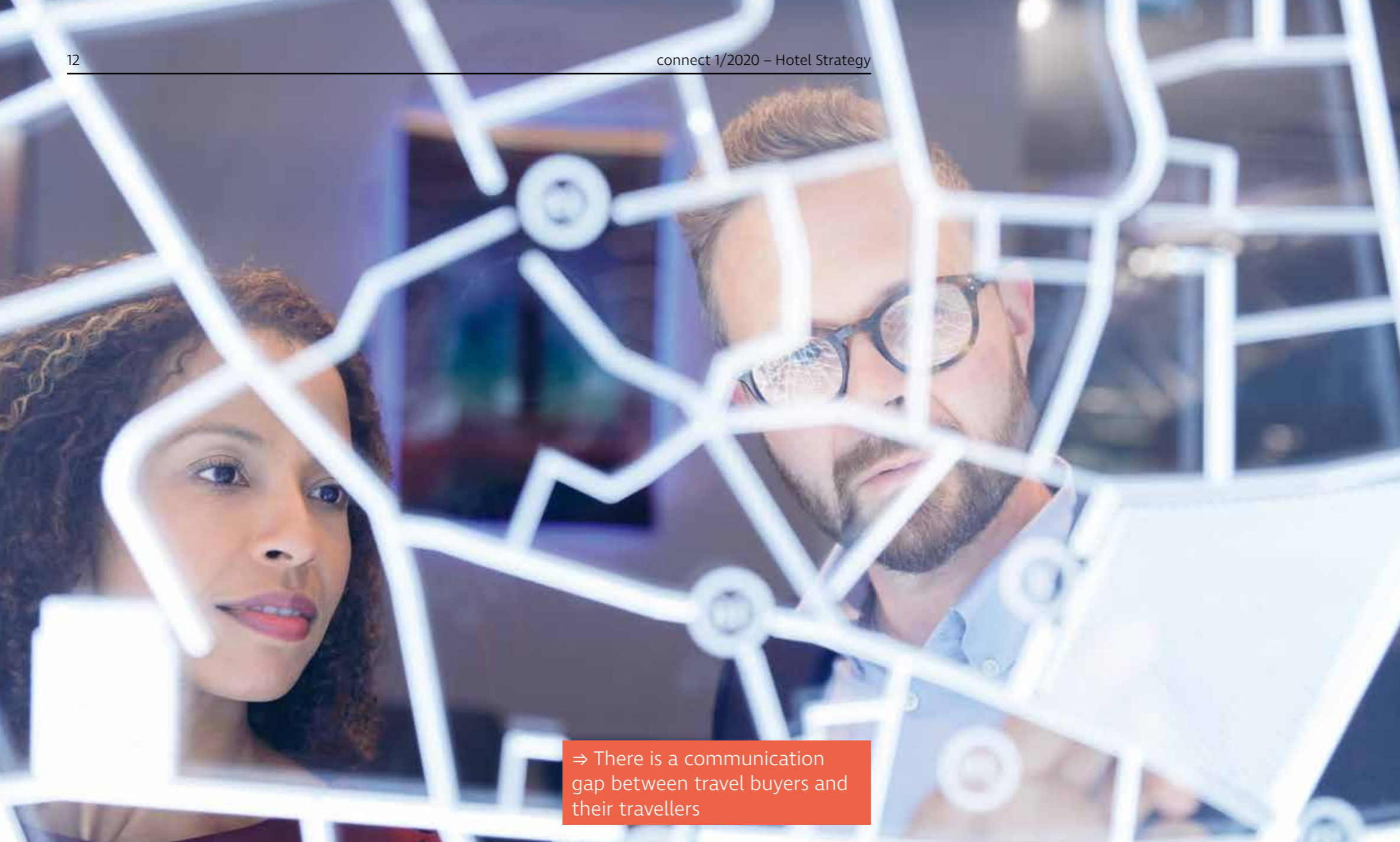
While agency rates and price optimisation tools offer effective ways to get more value and better prices from a hotel programme, buyers also need to be more aware of the specific hotel market dynamics in the key cities and destinations they travel to.

Even though global hotel prices are not expected to rise much during 2020, there are some destinations, such as Silicon Valley, Seattle and Vancouver in North America, where the market is more robust with prices increases of more than 5 per cent expected. And price movements in Europe will vary between cities, with London expected to see a small increase in 2020 and rates falling in some destinations. Prices are also set to fall in Asia Pacific due to softer demand and the continued surge in new hotels.

Keeping an eye on supply-and-demand dynamics in key destination cities can also pay off. If new hotel properties are opened, for example, buyers need to think about how they can potentially get travellers to stay there at an attractive room rate. Or use these new openings to drive a better deal with hotels already in the programme. »







⇒ There is a communication gap between travel buyers and their travellers

Having the ability to shift volumes between properties can be one of the most effective strategies to drive increased savings. Similarly, securing benefits that travellers would appreciate, such as free WiFi and breakfasts, and even discounts for eating in a hotel restaurant, can also be highly effective.

#### The communication gap

But all of these tools and strategies are only going to be effective if travellers book through corporate channels – managing suppliers and securing better prices is undermined if the majority of travellers are still booking on other platforms. And any negotiated deal is going to soon fall flat on its face if you can't deliver the promised volumes.

Research suggests there is still a communication gap between travel buyers and their travellers who often don't seem to be aware they should be booking through corporate channels. A RoomIt/

GBTA study\*\* revealed that even though 69 per cent of travel buyers said using preferred hotels was a policy requirement, only 30 per cent of travellers said they were required to do this. Despite this disconnect, the vast majority of travellers (82 per cent) still believed they were compliant with their organisation's policy.

"We recommend making sure you communicate frequently using automated tools to remind them about the importance of sticking to the policy guidelines. But also thanking them when they book within policy," says Bonjean. "It's not about adding restrictions but making their lives easier. Explain the benefits of booking hotels in the programme. Travellers often don't even realise the impact of booking outside the policy, so there's a need to raise the awareness of what the travel policy is."

Being able to continue booking the same or more

hotel nights while reducing the cost of a hotel programme isn't a magic trick – it's a matter of having the right strategy, keeping your eyes on what's going on in the hotel industry and using the latest technology to secure the best available prices and amenities. But even more important is making sure travellers book within policy and help drive the savings you need to achieve. ■

\*\*GBTA Business Traveler Sentiment Study sponsored by RoomIt, July 2019

Photos: Bloom Productions/Getty Images



#### How to manage your hotel programme

Scan this QR code with your mobile device to download an e-book that provides tips on how to manage your hotel programme.



#### Let continuous sourcing do the work

Continuous sourcing allows buyers to constantly monitor the performance of their hotel programme in order to ensure it is meeting objectives and securing the projected savings expected.

It has actually been around for more than a decade in various guises, but it's started to become more effective and efficient thanks to improvements in data science, visualisation tools and predictive analytics. This makes it much easier to manage hotel programmes on an ongoing, real-time basis. It's not the end of traditional RFP negotiating fixed rates with hotels on a one-year or multi-year basis. Continuous sourcing is a way of making sure these deals are living up to expectations.

In order to ensure you are getting the best from your hotels, you need to ask yourself the vital questions. Are the hotels in your programme holding true to the terms negotiated? Are your travellers using the hotels selected in the programme? Are the projected savings being achieved? This is where continuous sourcing comes in. Technology can quickly flag up potential issues within a programme, such as a particular preferred hotel not being used by travellers; or it can help buyers to react to a change in market dynamics, such as a fall in rates.

If one hotel is receiving far more bookings from travellers than originally expected, then it may be time to pivot and negotiate a better rate with that property. Or if you find that travellers are actually paying EUR150 for a room when the negotiated rate is EUR120, you will need to have a conversation with the hotel to fix the problem. Several tools are making this process easier, including automated rate availability audits, which establish whether negotiated rates are available for travellers to book. Another rate management tool, Rate Guard Audit, identifies "missed" savings from preferred bookings made above the negotiated rate. This can identify hotels not keeping to their end of the bargain in honouring fixed rates.

Predictive analytics can also help improve sourcing via an algorithm that can forecast future prices in specific cities based on information such as occupancy rates, pipeline data on new hotels, average daily rates and client information. The next vital step is pulling in data of bookings not made through corporate channels – this so-called "leakage" currently accounts for up to 40-50 per cent of hotel spend in many cases. This will give a more holistic view of what's being spent by an organisation and act as a driver to increase the percentage of bookings made through corporate channels.





The Hofburg, former imperial palace of the Habsburg rulers



The radically modern University of Economics by Zaha Hadid

# Smarter than your average city

**In Vienna, you encounter history at every turn. But the city is also facing the future with a lot more confidence than many other European cities at this time. That's because Vienna has transformed itself into one of the "smartest" cities in the world.**

TEXT: Stephan Burianek

Once the heart of Europe's mightiest empire, Vienna was a capital that sparkled like a gloriously bejewelled crown, a city that attracted the world's foremost thinkers, musicians and artists. In recent times, however, it had seemed more like a proverbial sleeping beauty, just waiting to be revived. But now it seems to have done just that, and there are signs that this great city on the Danube is becoming something of a shrewd catwalk model. And it is led not just by legions of visitors eager to take in its history and magnificence but by a transformation of philosophy that has seen it embrace a "smarter" sort of existence.

For a long time, the Austrian capital – politically in the west, but geographically more to the east than Prague – existed as if in the shadow of the Iron Curtain. Even its special diplomatic status as a seat of the United Nations could do little to change this. Only when the hated barbed wire fell along its eastern border from 1989 did the former world metropolis, with its magnificent buildings and renowned cultural provenance, move back into the international spotlight. Suddenly, the city was back in the middle of Europe; and suddenly, companies started to choose Vienna

as the central location for their businesses, particularly those doing business in Eastern Europe.

Fast forward three decades and the Smart City Index published by management consultants Roland Berger says that Vienna leads a list of 153 large and small cities across the planet as the "smartest city in the world". Unlike most competitors, the city on the famous river Danube even has its own Smart City Agency, and it promotes trend-setting concepts such as strengthening industries that have excellent environmental credentials. Similarly, and to name just one example, this year the Vienna Business Agency is providing 7.5 million euros to support innovative media start-ups.

Smart Cities are those that address modern urban challenges using interconnected digital solutions. According to criteria from the above-mentioned Roland Berger, an "e-mobility strategy, for example, should always be integrated into intelligent traffic management systems and powered via smart electricity grids. So, an integrated strategy that is planned and managed centrally is crucial."

Of course, Vienna's visitors benefit from well-thought-out planning and development. In recent decades, for instance, city authorities have done just about everything possible to encourage residents to sell their cars. It means that today Vienna is one of the most pedestrian-friendly capitals in the world. In the city centre, you can stroll through pedestrian zones and "meeting zones", areas where cars are allowed to drive, but pedestrians have the right of way. Even in other districts, the distances are comparatively short for people to traverse the city. Moreover, the public transport network is exemplary, and often the Wiener Linien (which runs much of the public transport infrastructure) provides faster options than travelling by car. At weekends, the five underground lines and the rapid transit trains run all night, and night buses even run during the week.

In the Smart City Index, Vienna was praised "not just for the fact that it has integrated solutions for mobility and the environment, an advanced e-health approach and ... open government data. It has also introduced a standardised monitoring system for all of its Smart City projects. Everything is coordinated by the central Smart City Agency, a »



unit that pools technical expertise and promotes links between the city administration, research, business and industry."

The city's reasoning for its transformational thinking is as simple as it is clever: the city is growing extremely fast and a smart strategy was necessary if Vienna was to once again thrive. A few years ago, Vienna replaced Hamburg as the second largest city in the German-speaking world. It's true that Vienna also had 1.6 million inhabitants in the 1990s, but demographic studies say the two million mark will be exceeded in around a decade. Then the former Habsburg metropolis will again have as many inhabitants as during its last heyday, around 1900, when the city was a cutting-edge centre of culture and science, burning with radical political ideas on the left and right.

Of course, the needs of the people have changed since then, and now they need more space. Above all in the area east of the Danube, where construction is being carried out. This includes on the former tracks of the Nordbahnhof at Praterstern, and around the site of a former slaughterhouse in St. Marx, where new districts with handsome, modern architecture have been designed, creating an exciting contrast between old and new buildings in the city. In a similar vein, the campus of the University of Economics designed by Zaha Hadid north of the Prater has been a famous attraction ever since it opened six years ago.

### Overnight stays in Vienna are booming

In 2018, Vienna recorded 16.5 million overnight stays, more than ever before. Nevertheless, hotel prices are still comparatively moderate, which is probably not so much due to alternative rental platforms such as Airbnb

(which are being fought by the authorities and the hotel association in Vienna, as in many other places in the world). But rather because of the fact that many new hotels in the three- to five-star categories have been launched on the market in recent years. For example, in the new area around Vienna's main railway station, a Motel One (a company originating over the border in Munich) with more than 500 rooms has opened next to an Andaz hotel.



### Viennese evenings & wines

**1 Classical music/opera:** Vienna sees itself as the world capital of classical music and has three opera houses (Staatsoper, Theater an der Wien & Volksoper) and two large concert halls (Musikverein & Konzerthaus). In July and August, however, these venues are closed or rented out to external event organisers – at the same time, the Film Music Festival on Rathausplatz and the new Freu deNOW Festival at the historic racecourse in Freudenau attract visitors.

**2 Dining at the Museum:** every Thursday evening from 6:30 to 10:00 the marble domed hall of the Kunsthistorisches Museum is transformed into a gourmet restaurant. Between the aisles you can stroll individually through the comparatively empty exhibition rooms. One Tuesday a month the Kuppelhalle also becomes an "art treasure" cocktail bar.

**3 Heurige:** the traditional "Heurigen" at the foot of the vineyards on the outskirts of the city serve local wine. Their number has declined over the past two decades, but the quality has increased. Warm, down-to-earth food is served from a buffet. Recommendable are Weinbau Obermann (Grinzing), Hengl-Haselbrunner (Oberdöbling), Fuhrgassl-Huber (Neustift am Walde), Zahel (Mauer) and Gerhard Klager (Stammersdorf).



New buildings overlooking the river (below) contrast with imperial architecture (right) and remind visitors that Vienna continues to evolve

The meetings industry also has much to celebrate: 4,685 congresses, corporate events and other similar gatherings set a new record in 2018 with around 631,000 conference participants and over 1.9 million overnight stays. This means that around one in eight overnight stays can be attributed to a conference guest. Exactly 401 of these events were international conferences according to the criteria of the Union of International Associations (UIA), putting Vienna in fourth place worldwide. In total, there are around 300 congress organisers active in Vienna.

Vienna's international popularity is due to a large degree to its rich cultural and culinary offerings, many of which include popular characterisations that are still lived out in an authentic way. The legendary coffee-house culture is still very much alive, despite being increasingly displaced by international coffee chains. There are more first-class opera performances and classical concerts than in any other city of comparable size. And in the magnificent buildings from the periods of monarchy and empire one can visit the works of world-famous artists. In addition to the down-to-earth traditional cuisine (serving, of course, Wiener Schnitzel and goulash), there is a good selection of haute cuisine and trendy bars. And then, of course, there are the Austrian wines, which are now measured against some of the best in the world.

### Certified quality of life

Vienna was declared the world's most liveable city for the tenth year in a row (ahead of Zurich and Vancouver) in the annual Mercer Quality of Living study in 2019. The study assesses data on "employees sent to work abroad", ranging from climate, disease and ease of communications to crime, environment and the political situation. The city is proud of its fresh, calcareous drinking water from the Austrian Alps and its smooth-running infrastructure. Moreover, the Viennese can quickly and easily get into stunning

countryside: the vineyards in Grinzing and the Heurigen are only 20 minutes by tram from the city centre. And yet the beauty of the city and its quality of life seem to be hard to bear for some, because the Viennese may be smart but some people consider them fussy, rude even. Similar to liveable city titles, this has become almost quasi-official, with the latest International Expat study listing Vienna as the third most unfriendly city in the world (only surpassed by Paris and Kuwait City). The Viennese themselves have always taken the unfriendliness they are accused of with self-irony: "How beautiful Vienna would be without the Viennese", sang the legendary Viennese cabaret artist Georg Kreisler in a humorous song in the 1960s.

For Vienna, a city famous for its high culture and its grand history, this isn't a bad response. The Viennese might even call it "smart".



### Travelling to and in Vienna

**Plane:** regional trains and the S7 rapid transit railway run regularly from Vienna airport to the city. The fastest connection is provided by private provider City-Airport-Train (CAT), which takes 16 minutes non-stop to Wien-Mitte station.

**Public transport:** a one-way ticket costs €2.40, a day ticket €5.80, a 24-hour ticket €8.00.

**Bicycle/scooter:** the city has numerous cycle paths, and rental bike providers are Citybike Vienna and the Danish provider Donkey Republic. E-scooters are also popular, for example from Lime, Bird and Thier.

**Uber/Taxis:** There are various certified taxi companies; Uber still functions but is being opposed by the established taxi companies with increasing success.

**Walk:** Vienna is extremely pedestrian-friendly and particularly in the city centre you can generally get around best on your own two legs – and you can see even more.

The Vienna Staatsoper is a world-class opera house that puts on around 350 performances every year

The Kunsthistorisches Museum provides the perfect ambience for gourmet dining







# Original rather than predictable

Comprising hotels in 15 UK cities, Malmaison offers a service that is personal and based on quality – and that quality is the same whether for its loyalty programme or its sustainability measures.

With a quirky name like Malmaison, a hotel group has a lot to live up to, and Malmaison does that in style: with attitude, strong décor, tasty, seasonal food, prepared with a dash of the unexpected, and service that manages to embody the quirkiness of the name, while losing none of the personal service, attention to detail and warm hospitality that makes guests feel welcome and celebrated.

Keeping up to date with guests' requirements and preferences has been made much easier by the ever-increasing power of technology. GDPR, rather than acting as a barrier, has ensured that all those Malmaison is in touch with have actively subscribed and are therefore already engaged with the brand. Rather than being an invasion of space or an irritation, emails and other messages are embraced.

It also helps that the group recognises guests as individuals, tailoring communiqués to personal requirements and preferences; Malmaison does not do blanket communication. Better quality and better kept data ensures the company knows its customers well and a new point-of-sale system will elicit further details, allowing Malmaison to match offers even more closely with people.

And good communication comes from the heart, from inside out. Malmaison gathers together employees from numerous disciplines – housekeeping, reception, restaurant and more – to paint a truly 3D picture of the people who use the hotels, whether for a business lunch or for a three-night stay with meetings and meals. As a result, all communication is relevant, lively and engaging.

## Small but perfectly formed

Malmaison is small – it comprises hotels in 15 of the UK's most dynamic cities, from traditional to trendy –

and this allows the group and its people to provide personal service at a high level. Not only do they listen but guests know they do, which brings customers back time and again. Everyone loves a good conversation, whether by email or face to face, and Malmaison promises that from the moment they walk through the door.

Club Mal, Malmaison's loyalty programme, rewards its members with generous discounts, such as a 20% discount on food & beverage and 10% off room rates. The hassle of accumulating points and redeeming them by a prescribed date is removed and there are VIP offers for their most loyal customers. This includes exclusive access to offers and availability, 48hrs prior to general sale. Malmaison and sister brand, Hotel du Vin, are very attractive options for extending your weekends. On Sundays, when guests spend £75.00 in their Bistros or Brasseries – definitely a culinary treat – they get that night's accommodation for £25.00. Superb value for money.

A lot of effort goes into offers, which are sometimes tailored to individual appeal and sometimes to all guests. This contributes to the relationship building that Malmaison takes to heart and invests a lot of time and effort nurturing.

Malmaison is also hot on sustainability. We've all seen the photo of the seahorse carrying a cotton bud. Malmaison is implementing a highly effective CSR campaign, carefully trialling all ideas in miniature before rolling them out through the 15 properties. "We aim to save the planet, one cotton bud at a time," says Group Director of Sales Tracy Gent. "The tone is light but the message and our intentions are heavyweight." Malmaison was one of the first hotel companies to ditch plastic straws and recently moved from single-use plastic bathroom toiletries to pumps. "We made sure that we were compromising neither »

Wherever the location, Malmaison's personal service motivates guests to keep coming back for more stays





the planet nor the quality of our goods. It is not a cost-cutting measure. Our toiletries are still premium products, but delivery is a lot less wasteful," she says.

Trials are currently underway to introduce in-room recycling; as well as making guests aware that if they reuse their towels, we can cut down on the use of detergents, which is also a positive step forward in our eco-friendly mission. The group had always encouraged guests to take the smaller bottles of toiletries home with them and they questioned the decision to change this. "We explained to customers that we wanted to move away from single-use plastics and that the quality of the toiletries was better than before, and they were immediately reassured," she says. "Transparency and clear communication are key."

Although Malmaison properties are small, meetings facilities are generous and across the 15 hotels have an average capacity of 77. Known as 'Work+Play', the product echoes Malmaison's quirky personality for each hotel, ensuring meeting space with character, which is reflected in the artwork, the food offering and necessities such as pads, white boards and technology. The group's most corporate space is in Malmaison Birmingham, which has a dedicated meetings and events floor, with adjacent catering area and a capacity for up to 120 theatre style in the largest room.

Diversity and versatility are Malmaison watchwords, and spaces are created in response to demand. As a result, in Malmaison Liverpool, which hosts a large number of private events and weddings, the artwork, colours and carpets are designed for a more celebratory occasion. "We punch above our weight and work



Food for Thought: Malmaison offers a range of dishes, even a fish finger wrap

hard to maintain that position," says Scott Harper, COO. "We preserve brand integrity and the 'Work+Play' influences run throughout our spaces. We are always about individuality. We have very high standards and are consistent and original; there is nothing predictable about Malmaison."

#### All in good taste

Appropriately named for events catering, Malmaison's Food for Thought is designed to keep the wolf from the door, sustain creativity and activity throughout the day, encourage networking, i.e. manageable while on the hoof, and reflect the tasty, innovative menus in the hotels' bars and brasseries – no easy task, and definitely not beige. Sandwiches, wraps, subs and salads run the gamut of fillings, including chicken, avocado and peppers, as well as the more eccentric, a fish finger wrap. These can be replaced with soups in winter, while bowl food such as short rib of beef with crunchy vegetables tempts the palate and allows delegates to move around while eating. "We balance the practicalities of networking and eating, with inspiring, nutritious dishes. And feedback from our guests has been outstanding – it is gratifying to know how much our efforts are appreciated," says Malmaison's Chef Director, John Woodward.

Malmaison combines the best of all worlds. Launched in 1994, its wealth of experience and knowledge ensures the kind of practised, attentive service that guests love. With the Mal factor – individual, independent and empowered – this combines to create a compelling brand that gives comfort, a warm welcome and a streak of the unexpected that strikes a chord in the heart of guests. Having celebrated their 25th anniversary in September, they are more determined than ever to challenge the norm and stay ahead of the curve. Arguably they were the first boutique brand in the UK and still maintain their place as a leader in the lifestyle hotel sector. ■

Photos: Malmaison



# Fitness to fit in your bag

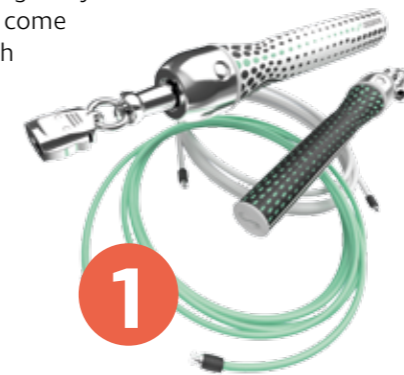
Sticking to a routine of heading to the gym, jogging or a regular workout at home is one thing. But doing the same when on the road is another. With these five mobile fitness "gadgets" you can continue to keep fit in your hotel room.

TEXT: Paul Wheatley

## Lean machine

Get Lean by Crossrope is a jumping rope designed to get your blood pumping and keep you fit. The newest version can be ordered with redesigned slim handles and comes with tangle-free weighted ropes (the slim-handled versions weigh as little as just 0.2kg but you need to pay extra). They come in different sizes to match height, with small, medium, long and extra long. The new handles have a new "fast-clip" design to quickly change the weight of your ropes.

£75 [crossrope.com](http://crossrope.com)



## Get fit, with resistance

Another easy-to-pack fitness-boosting device for travellers is resistance band sets. They are available in a number of ranges, depending on your strength and the activity you wish to do. Black Mountain produces a variety of sets – they have different resistant strengths, and allow you



## Fitness-card instructions

You can have all the exercise equipment in the world but if you don't know what to do with it all it isn't going to be much use. Take a pack of exercise cards to give you easy-as-you-like instructions and get you motivated to stay fit when on the go. NewMeFitness packs include yoga, stretching, Pilates – and, of course, one set of cards is exclusively related to the aforementioned resistance bands. **Packs**



## Stick to your yoga plan

For some people, no matter where they travel, they can't do without their regular yoga session. And why should they, particularly when there are now so many lightweight, ready-to-use yoga mats available? Manduka's eKO Superlite Yoga Mat weighs 1kg, is 1.5mm thick and folds to



## The lightweight runner

No matter what fitness you like to do when travelling, it helps to wear a decent pair of trainers. The downside for travellers is the weight and bulkiness can be a pain. This is made easier with New Balance's Minimus 20v7 trainers, which look stylish, weigh just 194g and are flexible enough to be squeezed into a small space. For travellers who want to do a run or



# Risk & reward: mapping international travel risks

It's simple good sense that people who travel for business gauge risks, no matter how big or small, or where they are going. The International SOS Risk Forecast and its Travel Risk Map help us do just that.

TEXT: Vicki Sussens

It's February 2019, a period blighted by escalating tensions between India and Pakistan. The experts at medical and travel security services provider International SOS know what to expect, and they are well prepared. They soon receive 264 requests for assistance. Within hours, it has deployed an incident management team to Islamabad to assess the risks and support clients. One client in Lahore wants to get out as soon as possible because of the uncertainty. But it's dangerous to move by road and many flights are disrupted. International SOS helps him find a secure transport route to Islamabad, secure accommodation there, and arranges a commercial flight out of the country.

Wherever a crisis erupts (such as with the coronavirus that started to have an impact at the turn of this year), a company's global workforce is inevitably affected. "Instability, unpredictability, rapid change and escalation are the key characteristics of many incidents in our modern world," says David Johnson, CEO of Security Services at International SOS.

## Beyond the headlines

To help firms prioritise risks, International SOS issues an annual Risk Forecast, and in 2020 it assessed that risks borne from geopolitical shifts will be the most important mobility challenge for businesses. Infectious disease outbreaks from established and newly emerging pathogens will increase. And climate change will exacerbate the occurrence of environmental disruptions. "Established organisations need to have their eye on all these crises to protect their

human capital and build resilience within businesses," says Johnson. "The need is only going to increase, as over 40 per cent of the workforce head to being mobile in some way."

Unfortunately, risks go way beyond the headline-grabbing events. Travellers also face security risks in areas previously regarded as safe, says Johnson. For example, choice of accommodation – even for an overnight stay – can be critical if there is civil unrest. And risks can arise as much in emerging economies as in highly developed ones. Firms should also not underestimate common risks. Road safety, for one. With a whopping 40 per cent of global road crashes being work-related, it is a big disruptor of business, as International SOS knows.

A common, yet underestimated risk, is cybercrime. Everyone talks about it, but firms are still too slow in dealing with the risk, according to the Forecast.

Another challenge, identified in a recent study by International SOS, is that over a third of workers engage in risky behaviours on business travel. They tend to drink too much, visit bars and nightclubs, eat in unhygienic places or travel in vehicles without adequate protection. And a third also experience emotional exhaustion – a core feature of burnout – on a weekly basis.

Yet, while most firms provide adequate logistics support for their global workers (even including bleisure offers), less than a quarter address wellness or mental health issues. "For each USD1 invested by a company in improving the mental health at its workplace, an average of USD2.3 can be expected in return," Johnson says. Interestingly, however, the queries that keep the 26 International SOS assistance centres most busy (and they handle over 4.2 million calls a year) involve minor medical ailments, such as stomach problems.



## TOP 5 HEALTH & SECURITY RISKS 2020:

1. Risks borne from geopolitical shifts will be the most important mobility challenge for businesses
2. Mental health issues will increase in importance
3. Physical health: organisations will be more proactive in safeguarding physical health
4. Cyber-crime is likely to grow and be an increasing risk to security
5. Climate change will exacerbate the occurrence of environmental disruptions

## Reading the map

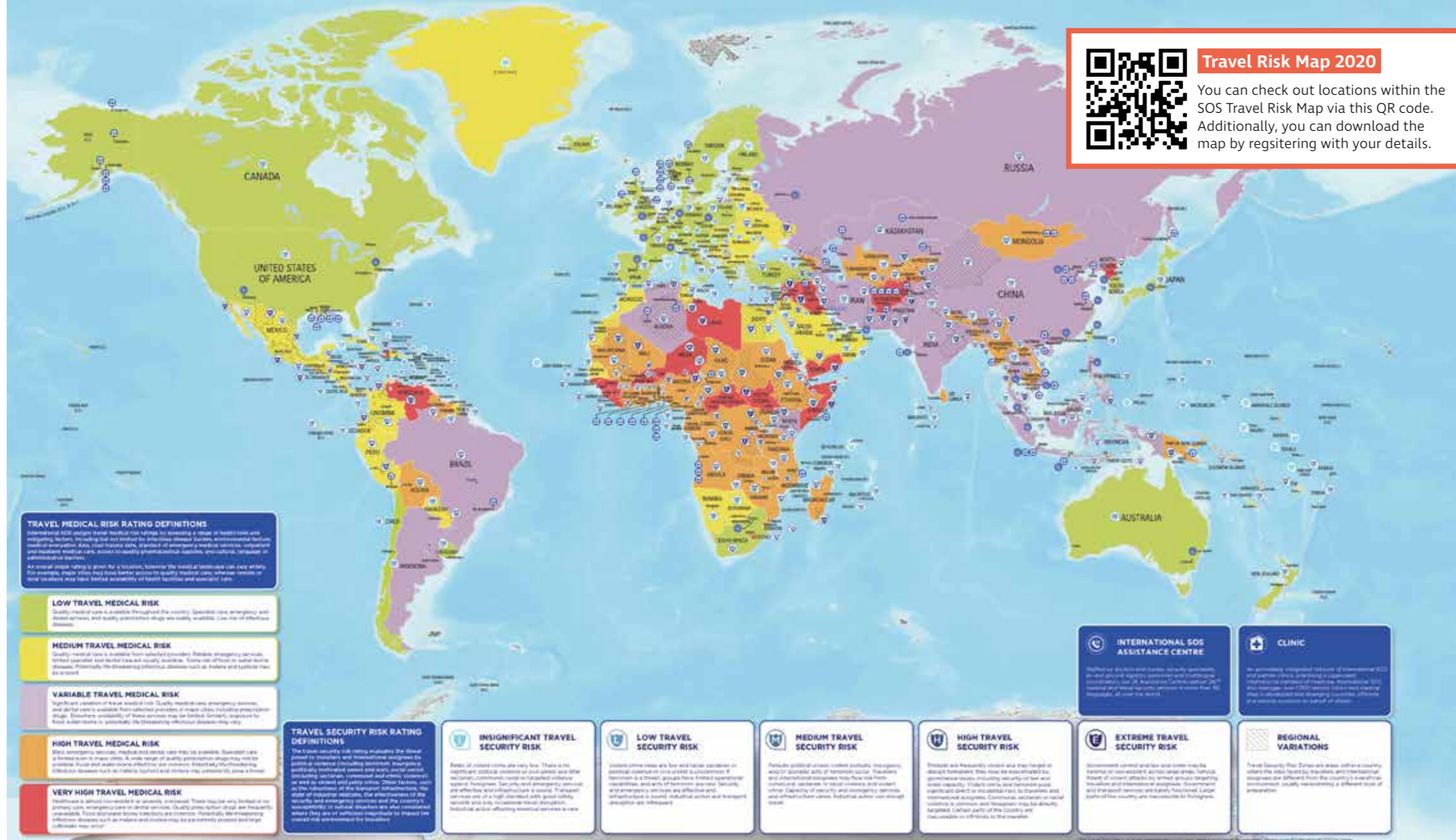
To help firms prioritise all these risks, International SOS puts out its annual Risks Forecast. It includes »

### Staying safe in a crowd

International SOS' Rob Condina, Security Director, Europe, gives five tips on how to be streetwise:

1. Familiarise yourself with your surroundings, and be vigilant and aware
2. Identify exits in case you need them
3. Have a charged mobile phone with you in order that you are able to get access to necessary information about disruption or any on-going incidents, as well as call for help
4. Follow advice from local authorities, and have confidence in police, intelligence and security agencies to prevent/disrupt, or warn them appropriately
5. To increase reaction times, walk against the direction of traffic if walking on main thoroughfares or bridges





**Travel Risk Map 2020**  
You can check out locations within the SOS Travel Risk Map via this QR code. Additionally, you can download the map by registering with your details.

**Stay healthy**

Plan travel logistics well to save stress, anxiety and time. Get advice from International SOS on location health risks if the following is relevant:

- In malaria regions: start prophylaxis on time and take enough with you. If you're going remote, take a rapid detection kit and standby treatment
- Check what vaccinations are required or recommended
- If you have a chronic condition, take your medication and also repeat prescriptions
- If have a chronic condition, get a check-up to ensure you are fit to travel
- Pack a hand sanitiser and use it frequently
- Keep up your fitness regime and get advice on safe places to jog
- Remember a hat, sunscreen, insect repellent and sunglasses
- Pay attention to local safety briefings and take frequent mobility breaks
- Stay well hydrated with non-caffeinated and non-alcoholic beverages (especially when flying)
- Be careful with food sources to avoid diarrhoea
- If you fall ill, especially with a fever or flu-like symptoms when you return home, alert your healthcare practitioner to your travel history

Yet, according to International SOS, employers are not aligning travel policies with new potential risk factors. And people are choosing not to act within policy if it restricts the use of their preferred mode of transport or accommodation. This is creating "grey zones of risk". "Surprisingly, less than a third of organisations include cyber security in their travel policies," says Johnson. "This could potentially open organisations up to litigation and reputational damage if they are not adhering to their duty of care, as well as negative consequences for employees and business."

Other risks absent in many firms' travel policies include accounting for diversity of the mobile workforce, including female travellers, travellers with disabilities or mental health issues and LGBTQ+ travellers. "Organisations invest thousands in new tech each year, but very little seems to go on the safety of their people. Despite new technology providing excellent solutions to protect employees," explains Johnson. "From the use of AI in situational intelligence, to e-learning courses and traveller tracking. All of these efforts to keep people safe are made possible thanks to new technology." ■

the Travel Risk Map, which rates countries according to their medical risks, security risks and road safety. This is accompanied by the Business Resilience Trends Watch survey of over 1,300 business travel decision-makers. It highlights critical "grey zones of risk" and missed opportunities in harnessing technological innovations to protect the workforce.

So, what does the Travel Risk Map tell us? The open-source map provides an indication of medical, security and road risks worldwide, based on in-depth analysis by global risk experts at International SOS. For clients and members, the firm provides a range of other travel-risk analysis, information and support. This includes individual briefings, alerts, 24/7 accessible e-learning and assistance.

The interactive map is freely available to clients and media to embed on websites and share the

**In 2020, the four riskiest countries on the Travel Risk Map have been graded as "extreme" in all three criteria of "medical risks", "security risks" and "road safety". The four countries are all in Africa:**  
The Central African Republic, Libya, Somalia and South Sudan

**Many countries have variable levels of travel security risks, including:**  
Egypt, India, Mexico and Ukraine, for example, all score generally "medium" in travel risk ratings, but they have higher risk ratings in specific regions of their countries.

**There are no shocks for the countries graded as "extreme" for security risk:**  
Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Yemen in the Middle East and Mali in west Africa

**Those with an extreme medical risk are more geographically diverse:**  
Venezuela, Haiti, North Korea, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Eritrea, Burkina Faso, Niger, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Guinea-Bissau and Burundi.

**And the safest? They are all in Europe:**  
Iceland, Norway, Finland, Denmark, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Andorra.

information and educate travellers. "Many of our clients and members hang a map on the wall for easy reference," explains Johnson, but the online map is regularly updated. "Our members receive threat alerts in near real time, usually within 20–30 minutes of an issue coming to our attention. This allows for our verification process and an initial recommendation of what actions a client and/or member needs to take."

**The Business Resilience Trends Watch findings**  
Seventy per cent of business travel manager respondents in the Business Resilience Trends Watch expect to change travel itineraries in 2020 because of security threats. Over half of the 1,300 firms surveyed felt that health and security risks had increased in 2019, and 47 per cent expected an increase in security unrest, civil unrest, geopolitical unrest and natural disasters in 2020.

Photos: iStock (2), International SOS

**CWT & International SOS**  
CWT's partnership with ISOS protects business travellers through enhanced medical and security assistance. For more information please get in touch with your CWT contact. For further information scan this code with your mobile device or contact your local CWT office.



# Time to get personal

**Faced with an array of choices in so many areas of our lives, digital personalisation is helping to shift and optimise content, also within business travel.**

TEXT: Nick Easen

In a world where there can seem to be just too much choice, whether in retail, travel or media, highly personalised digital content is increasingly essential if we are to make informed decisions. We already have great expectations in our consumer-driven lives – and now business travel is fast catching up. It is getting a lot smarter, with better data and tools, and some impressive results.

“The trend is driven partly by the dilemma of choice,” explains Utpal Kaul, head of new product incubation at CWT. “Simply put, this means there is a negative correlation between way too many choices and conversion. If you give people more than the optimal number of choices, they are less likely to make a

quick decision. Keep choices optimal, highly relevant and targeted, and decision-making becomes a lot easier. However, what is optimal and relevant can vary from person to person, and this is where personalisation driven by data science comes in.”

This means that in the future, highly personalised content won’t merely be a good thing to have. Instead, it will be a necessary requirement, since it saves time when travellers have to search. This can also facilitate much better policy compliance, in-channel conversion and greater visibility on travel spend.

“There is value to be found everywhere,” states Kaul. “In recent years, we’ve seen an enormous develop-

ment in the use of artificial intelligence, machine learning and deep learning, using neural networks. These mimic how the human brain works.” The upshot is that you don’t have to constantly train a computer anymore. It is able to constantly learn on its own, while observing the behaviour of travellers talking to a chatbot, for example. “All of these developments have had a profound impact on delivering personalised content.”

Similarly, data-science technology, for instance, can now predict accurately whether a flight will be delayed or cancelled. By overlaying policy compliance, personal data and preferences, the traveller can be given the best alternative options. Stay overnight somewhere and predictive analytics can now offer on-trip services straight to a smartphone. Seamlessly guiding you on what relevant restaurants to dine in with a business partner, targeted bleisure options for a weekend off – just like a digital concierge, it includes proactive personalised assistance.

Kaul is eager to point out, however, that it’s not just one area in which personalisation is relevant. It’s in every aspect of a traveller’s journey. “We can increasingly utilise technology to offer rich, customised content throughout every stage of someone’s trip” he says.

So, what’s next? Gauging human empathy is one frontier. “We haven’t been able to create an algorithm to gauge mood or sensitivity just yet,” explains Kaul. “Also leveraging AI to predict a future need with high precision and creating personalised content could offer enormous potential. Say if we can predict that you will most likely travel to New York, London and Mumbai next month, we could proactively create personalised options that are the most economical, most convenient and less likely to be delayed.” The future seems to have endless possibilities. ■



Photos: iStock

ID: 4859/896  
Gender: male  
Age group: adult  
Country: UK  
Flight to Moscow cancelled  
Extra hotel night  
Hotel with quality dining

ID: 4859/476  
Gender: female  
Age group: young adult  
Country: USA  
Checked in for UK flight  
Vegan restaurant  
Hotel with gym

ID: 4859/258  
Gender: female  
Age group: young adult  
Country: Germany  
Flight to India on time  
Dine near hotel  
Hotel with conference facilities

ID: 4859/774  
Gender: male  
Age group: young adult  
Country: Spain  
Missed connecting flight  
Vegetarian restaurant  
Hotel in city centre

ID: 4859/513  
Gender: male  
Age group: adult  
Country: Brazil  
Flight to Mexico on time  
Local food restaurant  
Hotel with good transport links



# Keen to be green

**From biofuel to beer made from surplus bread, the CWT Connect carbon-neutral conference tackled sustainability head on.**

TEXT: Karen Bamford

While Extinction Rebellion activists defied a protest ban to gather in Trafalgar Square in October, across town a very different meeting was taking place as travel industry leaders met for one of the most important conferences of the year, CWT Connect.

Ironic? Perhaps not, as the challenges surrounding biofuels, carbon footprints and sustainability were hot topics that delegates kept returning to throughout the informative and energised event. Held at Hilton London Bankside, the conference had a more relaxed feel than in previous years. Speakers addressed attendees from a central podium surrounded by informal seating for the audience, who had many opportunities to ask questions and engage online.

Jo Hillman and Rob Coomer, leaders of CWT's customer management and sales team in the UK, introduced the event theme, "Think bigger picture", highlighting how individual choices impact travel. Rob explained the importance of the employee experience – ensuring people thrive in a productive environment – including while they travel. "We need to make sure people are looked after when they are on the road," he said. "How do you balance giving choice in your travel policy while still controlling travel policy?"

## Food for thought

Inevitably, for many speakers and attendees, the "bigger picture" included responsible business objectives and concerns about the environmental impact of travel. However, there are worse offenders than transport when it comes to climate change, as keynote speaker and environmental expert Tristram Stuart pointed out. "Food is the single biggest impact humans have on the environment. It blows aviation fuel out of the water," revealed the award-winning author, speaker and campaigner.

Farming soy and beef leads to deforestation, which is the main cause of habitat loss that leads to species extinction. Food is also the biggest user of extracted water. "There's still hope," Tristram assured delegates. "I do feel angry when I see waste in countries where people are starving. And grief when forests are on fire for beef farming when we would benefit from

eating less meat. I try to upcycle that depressing outlook. Eating your leftovers is an extinction rebellion."

## Taking flight

Addressing the environmental impact of aviation, Sylvain Bosc, senior vice president Europe of Qatar Airways, pointed out the potential for electric engines in trains, trucks, cars and boats, but said transcontinental flying was unlikely to be feasible without jet fuel in the foreseeable future. "We are concerned about the footprint. We want to be responsible. We aim to be a leader in sustainability at airports and hotels," he said.



The event saw lively panel discussions on topics ranging from safety and security to new technology

Qatar's fleet is young, with each plane tending to be 20 per cent more efficient than the one before. The airline has also reduced weight on flights by removing inflight magazines and duty-free trollies, and investing in tech to allow passengers to order goods online for collection when they land. United Airlines uses 4.1 billion gallons of jet fuel a year and is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 50 per cent by 2050, revealed Aaron Stash, manager of environmental strategy and sustainability.

Having built one of the greenest homes in Chicago for his family, Aaron admitted: "It's hard being an environmentalist and working for an airline." His



Sustainability was the main theme of the day as travel managers gained valuable insights into this topical subject

passion was evident as he described United's regular use of sustainable aviation fuel, which is created from household rubbish. In June 2019, United flew the most environmentally friendly flight ever, with recyclable and compostable waste. "Our biofuel is the same as normal jet fuel, so engines do not have to be modified," he said, calling for polices to support lower carbon travel.

## Carbon offset

CWT designed Connect 2019 as a carbon-neutral event. Delegates were invited to vote via the event website for a project to offset the day's carbon footprint. The clear winner was a project against

Photos: Jon Bradley

deforestation in Peru. Delegates were also challenged to participate in an online game created by RoomIt by CWT, called "Truth or dare, are travellers playing a risk game on the road?" As guests struggled to correctly answer conundrums, the game revealed surprising facts, such as:

- A third of travellers would stay in a risky hotel just to earn loyalty points
- The safest rooms in a hotel are on floors three to five
- Your laptop is safer kept at your side rather than left in your hotel room

A complimentary bottle of Toast Ale was the perfect way to finish the day. The beer is made from surplus fresh bread and it was the brainchild of Tristram Stuart after he became aware of a factory throwing away an incredible 13,000 slices of fresh bread every day, leaving only "perfectly sized" slices to make packaged sandwiches.

As Stuart said: "Bread shouldn't be wasted and neither should you." Cheers! ■



## Off to market

Industry experts laid out their wares at CWT Connect's pop-up marketplace. Delegates were free to browse and chat while also enjoying delicious food and drink. Here's a snapshot of what was on offer:

Amadeus, **Oliver Ernst**: "I'm hoping to tell people about our online booking tool, Cytric, and also about how we service CWT clients using our tools."

CWT Solutions Group, **Felix Ehmann**: "I'm here to talk about travel services outsourcing, travel management and category management. Also, Travel Consolidator, which provides full visibility of spend."

SAP Concur, **Victoria Evans**: "I want to get across the end-to-end message and the core of what we do – expense, travel, invoice. After talking to customers and prospects about what's important to them, I will give feedback to our product teams."

RoomIt by CWT, **Joachim Nordby**: "I'm hoping to improve understanding of RoomIt integration. Why and what's in it for the customer? It's about creating more availability."

United Airlines, **Aaron Stash**: "I'm here to talk about sustainability. Customers are focused on what they are doing internally to reduce waste and they want to know what we are doing. Why would they improve their carbon footprint if they're working with someone who doesn't?"

Other marketplace stands at the event were Chrome River, Hilton, Qatar, Yapta, Enterprise, CWT Meetings & Events and myCWT.



# Chocolate shop heaven

Developed by the hands and hearts of creative artisans, making great chocolate is an art form. Many showcase their creations in accompanying chocolate shops and cafés. We have selected five of the most interesting that are definitely worth a visit.

TEXT: Paul Wheatley

## The London artisan ▶

With two London shops, Paul A Young is established as a star innovator in the world of chocolatiers. Young doesn't lack confidence, labelling himself as the "only chocolatier in London working in a truly artisan way". His small team lovingly creates every piece of chocolate at the shops, without using "concentrates, essences, preservatives and additives". [paulayoung.co.uk](http://paulayoung.co.uk)



## ▼ A legendary Parisian

There's something wonderful about learning that a chocolate shop can trace its lineage back to 1761 – probably making À La Mère de Famille the oldest in the world. Add in that the shop is located in Paris, and its look, feel and design makes you think you've stepped back in time. Looks count for nothing without world-class chocolate, something this shop has in abundance. [lameredefamille.com](http://lameredefamille.com)

## ▲ Distinguished, Viennese

Founded by Wolfgang Leschanz in 1995, the eponymous Leschanz Viennese Chocolate Manufacturer has its own shop in the Austrian capital, where else but right next to Stephansplatz? For his café, Leschanz, formerly at the world famous Vienna Demel bakery, chose a building that dates to 1844. With its dark wooden interior, this is a shop with a distinguished, refined ambience. [leschanz.at](http://leschanz.at)



## ▲ From bean to bar

Grenada is making a name for itself as home to a small band of independent chocolate producers. The 1999-formed Grenada Chocolate Company is a bean-to-bar story. It's run by a farmers and chocolate-makers cooperative – from harvesting the famous Trinitario cocoa beans to producing its organic bars, they do the lot. They've now opened the Bonbon Chocolates shop on site. [grenadachocolate.com](http://grenadachocolate.com)



## ◀ Zurich's chocolate zenith

Switzerland has an enviable reputation for high-class chocolatiers, such as Läderach and Teuscher. Honold is another, which has maintained its position not only because of its reputation (it's been going since 1905) but also because of its ongoing attention to quality. You can indulge yourself in one of their seven tea rooms. But the entire range is only on show in Zurich. [honold.ch/en](http://honold.ch/en)

Photos: Alamy, iStock (2), Roberta Valeria, PR

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