


GLOBETRENDER™

Business Travel Trends 2024

In association with

 cytricity

BY amadeus

Introduction

Welcome to *Business Travel Trends 2024*, a Globetrender report produced in association with Cytric Easy by Amadeus, and published in January 2024.

This year, business travel spending will likely exceed pre-pandemic levels for the first time (US\$1.5 trillion, compared with US\$1.4 trillion in 2019) according to the Global Business Travel Association.

However, the way employees are traveling – and corporations are managing that travel – is changing. In this report, Globetrender (the UK’s leading travel trend forecasting agency) and Cytric Easy by Amadeus have together identified seven trends that will define business travel in the coming year.

These trends are: AI PAs, Executive Field Trips, Objective Stacking, Blended

Itineraries, Net-Zero Heroes, Digitized Expenses and Power Networking.

The decision of whether or not to meet face-to-face or screen-to-screen requires more careful thought than five years ago. These days, it’s no longer simply a financial decision based on the cost of flights and hotels or picking up the lunch bill. Instead, it’s a series of “is it worth it?” decisions. For example, is it worth the time out of the office, the additional CO2 emissions and the extra admin required to process expenses?

There are, of course, many compelling reasons to travel for business. It helps strengthen connections and facilitates micro-collaborations between colleagues that are made possible while sharing a ride, flight or hotel stay. Then there is the social capital generated from teambuilding trips or meeting clients and customers on their own turf, as in-person interactions build stronger

bonds than video conferences.

A study by *Harvard Business Review* found that 95 per cent of people say face-to-face meetings are a key factor in successfully building and maintaining long-term relationships, reflecting what many executives call the “high impact” of in-person communication.

To help companies manage these decisions, Amadeus is working with Microsoft to realize a joint vision to reimagine the corporate travel experience, reinventing the employee experience and changing the way users meet, collaborate, travel or claim back expenses.

Cytric Easy by Amadeus is today the only travel management solution embedded in Microsoft 365, uniquely positioned to revolutionize the world of business travel. Combining search and the booking of flight, rail, hotels, car rentals, transfer,

and expense management – all without leaving Microsoft Teams – it’s built to enhance collaboration through the planning process and support more informed decisions on the worth of each business trip.

From the decision to travel at all, through to increasing the value potential of each travel moment, it maximizes micro-collaborations throughout to enhance the ROI (return on investment) of each trip, building trust among the workforce and supporting employee wellbeing through transparency, simpler engagement, game-changing innovation and, yes, more collaboration.

For teams and businesses, these are tools for more cost efficient, policy compliant, and more purposeful trips. Every time. We hope you enjoy reading our *Business Travel Trends 2024* report, and it inspires you to rethink how you manage business travel.



Deborah Mahoney
Head of Sales and Business Development – Americas
Amadeus Cytric Solutions



Jenny Southan
Editor, Founder and CEO
Globetrender

**FLEW 2,000 MILES
FOR ONE LUNCH.
NO TIME TO SEE
MY TEAM.
MAKE TRAVEL
WORTHWHILE!**

Join the movement



“We believe the future is knowable”

Globetrender is the UK’s leading travel trend forecasting agency and online magazine dedicated to the future of travel.

- Founded by Jenny Southan, Globetrender delivers cutting-edge insights into how people will be travelling in the 21st century, giving professionals the knowledge they need to future-proof their businesses through actionable strategic foresight.
- Globetrender’s trend reports are read by thousands of travel industry professionals, as well as executives from a wide-variety of multinational corporations looking for insights into the future of travel and consumer behaviour.
- Globetrender also publishes two newsletters – free weekly innovation briefings and a premium product called VOLT, which explores emerging travel trends in depth.
- Consulting and trend-based strategy is central to Globetrender’s offering. Jenny is also available to book for public speaking engagements including webinars, talks, live broadcasts, workshops, panels, conferences and conventions.



PODCAST

Hosted by Globetrender founder Jenny Southan, *Blue Sky Thinking* presents the visionary entrepreneurs and innovators whose big ideas are shaping the future of travel.

Series 1 of *Blue Sky Thinking* is sponsored by Kayak.

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BY AMADEUS

Transform meeting collaboration and planning

Cytric Easy by Amadeus is the only travel and expense management tool in Microsoft Teams. It transforms the experience of planning and booking business travel, and boosts collaboration.

Natively integrated in a platform already familiar to corporations worldwide

- Microsoft Teams
- Cytric Easy saves time and removes frustration by enabling

employees to book travel without leaving their collaboration platform.

The ability to book flights, rail, hotels, car or transfers or claim travel expenses with a user-centric, intuitive and simple interface, without leaving their everyday collaborative application helps reduce disruption in the workday and increase productivity.

Companies can let employees focus on what matters most by making the process easier, faster and more collaborative than ever before.

All in Microsoft Teams:

- Search, compare and book flights (including NDC), rail, hotels and

rental cars for your next business trip straight from Microsoft Teams.

- Manage your next booking from a personal dashboard in Microsoft Teams with all your trip information.
- Receive a reminder for your expenses and claim them without leaving Microsoft Teams.
- Only one login across your workplace ecosystem, no more toggling between applications.

Collaborate with your colleagues:

- Connect and collaborate with your colleagues by sharing your trip itinerary in a Microsoft Teams chat or booking the same trip as your colleagues.

- Get recommendations to meet with close collaborators at your destination.

Make travel more sustainable:

- Share a ride from the airport or rail station with colleagues arriving around the same time.

Planning for events is easier than ever:

- Create a dedicated channel in Microsoft Teams to centralize all event information (dates, location, documentation).
- Simplify travel co-ordination among attendees by planning your trip and sharing any itinerary updates.
- Enabling travelers and non-travelers to have an

easy and consolidated access to relevant event information in Microsoft Teams Channels.

- Available as a Microsoft Teams app in the Microsoft Store and in the Microsoft Azure Marketplace, an online store providing applications and services for use on Azure.

With Cytric Easy by Amadeus, customers can take advantage of the productive and trusted Azure cloud platform, with streamlined deployment and management. Focus on what matters most by making the T&E process easier, faster and more collaborative than ever before.

[Visit cytriceasy.com](https://www.cytriceasy.com)

Analysis & Trend Forecasting

At Globetrender, we focus on qualitative research underpinned by quantitative data. We always consider how the life cycle of a trend moves from the innovators that trigger them on the minority fringes to the early adopters, early majority, late majority and, finally, the laggards.

Email jenny@globetrender.com for bespoke consulting on the future of travel

- When searching for trends, we apply the “three times” rule. A one-time occurrence is an anomaly, twice is a coincidence and three times is a trend, worthy of further exploration.
- The identification and naming of trends is based on IOI: Intuition, Observation and Investigation. This is both a creative and academic process.
- For every “micro” trend, we also consider the “macro” trends that represent the wider cultural shifts in consumer desires, motivations, values and behaviours around the world. These are based on STEEP – Social, Technological, Economic, Environmental and Political – forces.
- Innovation is at the root of every trend, so we are always looking at what is new and disruptive. Just like news reporters, we ask the questions “who”, “what”, “where”, “why” and “when?” – but like investigative journalists, we then dive much deeper.
- By discovering multiple examples of a trend, conducting desk and field-based research, interviewing insiders and producing case studies, “qualitative” proof of it is generated.
- At Globetrender, we rely on our unique access to travel industry experts and ongoing consumer observation to remain ahead of the curve.

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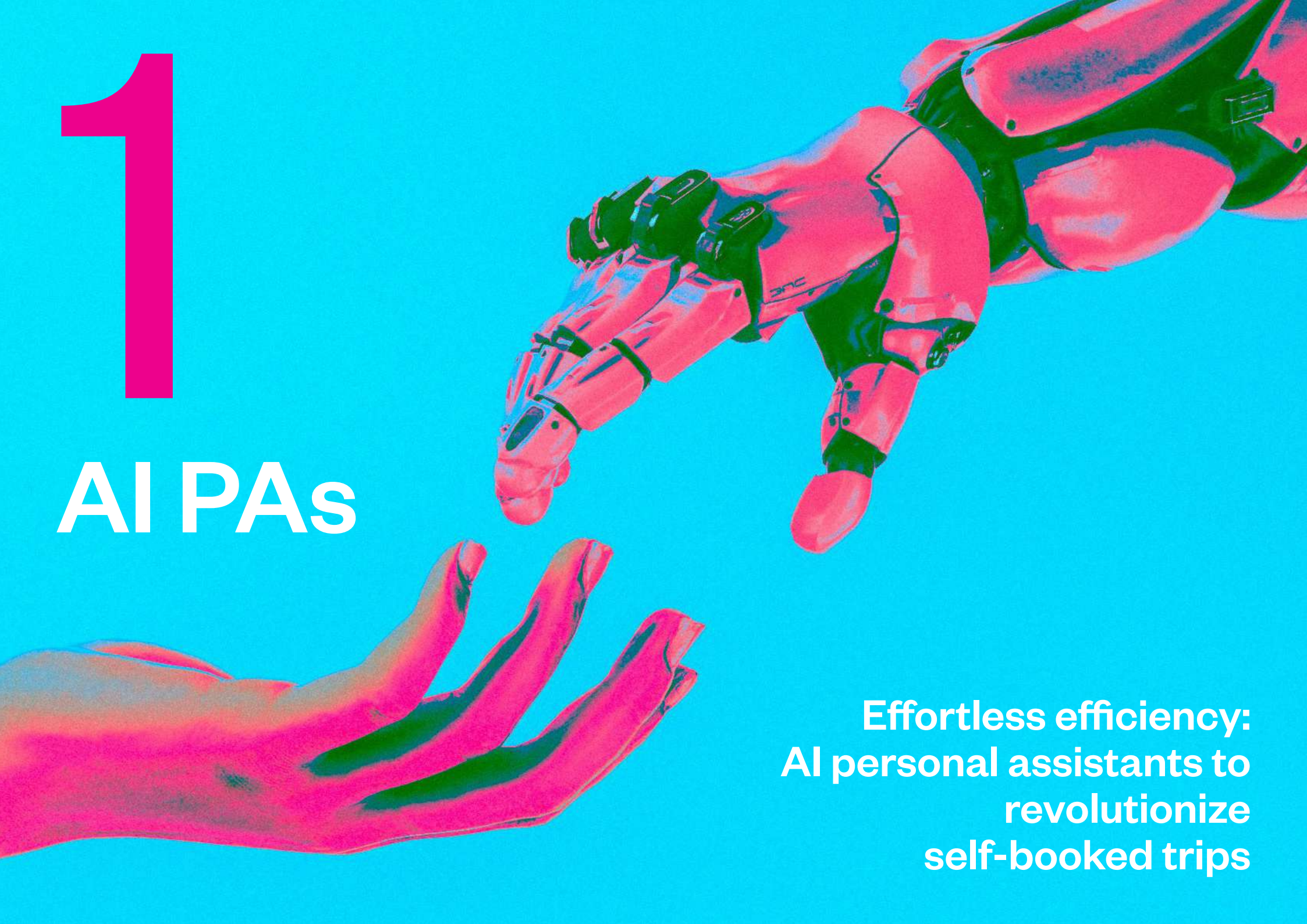
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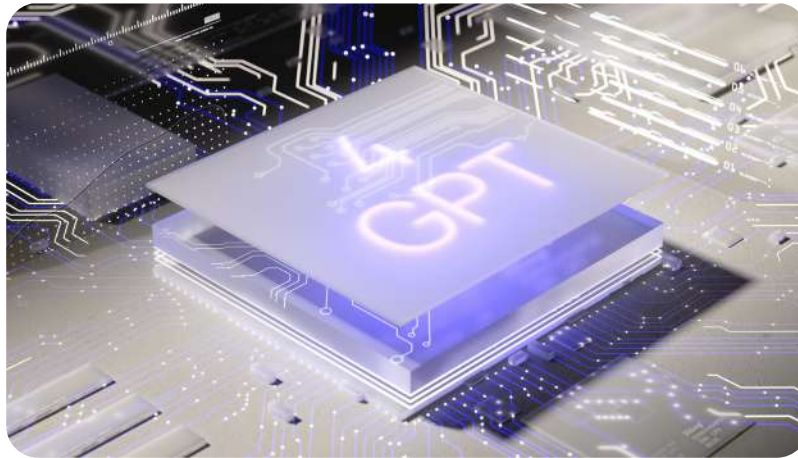
AI PAs



Effortless efficiency:
AI personal assistants to
revolutionize
self-booked trips

AI PAs

Since Open AI's ChatGPT made its debut in November 2022, millions of early adopters around the world have been experimenting with the capabilities of "Generative AI". Other contenders include Elon Musk's Grok chatbot, Meta's Llama 2, Google Gemini and Perplexity AI, which is taking on Google Search as the go-to source of information about pretty much anything.



Google and Alphabet CEO, Sundar Pichai, said in a statement: "I believe the transition we are seeing right now with AI will be the most profound in our lifetimes, far bigger than the shift to mobile or to the web before it. AI has the potential to create opportunities – from the everyday to the extraordinary – for people everywhere."

For corporate travelers, the shift to Gen AI has catalyzed the emergence of "AI PAs" – intelligent, 24/7, personal assistants who can patiently help with everything from processing complex travel bookings using natural language to advising on itinerary options.

Travel technology giant Amadeus is leading the way,

working with Microsoft and Accenture to develop new Gen AI-powered integrations between its travel management solution, Cytric Easy, and Microsoft 365.

Arlene Coyle, Senior Vice President, Commercial, Amadeus Cytric Solutions, said in a statement: "Gen AI-powered chatbots will offer a different experience when it comes to business travel. Today, business travelers enter their travel destination and criteria in tools outside their workspace applications. We are working to change this experience into one where – without needing to leave Microsoft Teams – business travelers will be able to converse with a Gen AI-powered chatbot like they

do via mail, or chat. They will get trip recommendations aligned with policy, they will be prompted on when to travel or the best choices to get there. The impact will be profound and will change completely the lives of our business travelers and corporate stakeholders."

Taking a broader view of AI PAs in travel, consumer-facing meta-search and online travel agencies such as Expedia, Booking.com, Kayak and Tripadvisor have all integrated ChatGPT into their apps and websites as a way of making research and planning more akin to speaking to a human advisor.

In short, next-gen chatbots can perform the role of highly knowledgeable, multi-lingual

digital assistants that can respond to a detailed trip brief rather than a smattering of keywords, in the way that Google does. After inputting an initial prompt, the output generated is friendly and helpful in tone, and it's easy to continue the dialogue with follow-up questions. The amazing thing is, it will get increasingly advanced and intuitive at a rapid rate.

According to McKinsey, Generative AI heralds the "next productivity frontier", adding trillions of dollars in value to the global economy. For corporations, managing business travelers and implementing policies will become more streamlined and automated. Far less time will be wasted along the way too, be it on searching for flights and hotels, conducting risk assessments, optimizing routes for complex trips, or delivering cultural briefs. Human checks and balances will always be needed, of course, as an over-reliance on technology could lead to mistakes being made and a general lack of responsibility among employees (because you can always blame the bot).

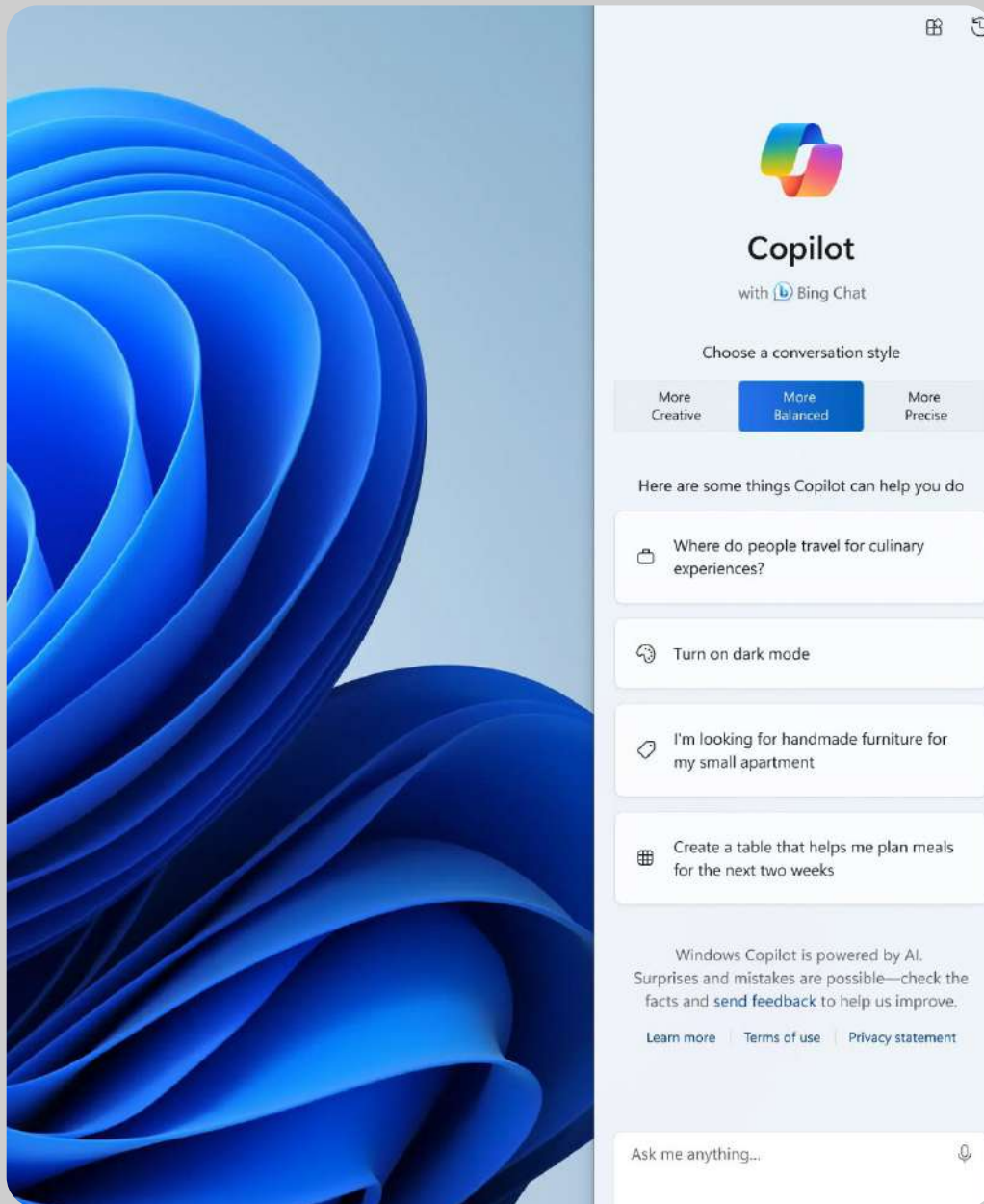
Julie Shainock, Managing Director Travel, Transport and

Logistics at Microsoft, told Globetrender: "ChatGPT is here to stay and will make business travel easier, smarter, and greener. Business travelers have high expectations for their travel experiences, and Amadeus and Microsoft are demonstrating how natural language processing can help them achieve these goals."

Emily Weiss, Senior Managing Director at Accenture and Head of its Travel Practice, told Globetrender: "Ultimately, Gen AI has the potential to revolutionize the travel industry. It could transform the end-to-end travel experience, with Gen AI infused throughout the research, booking and the trip itself, making customers feel more confident, informed, engaged and secure."



Case Study: Copilot for Microsoft 365



“Harnessing the power of AI, Copilot for Microsoft 365 turns your words into the most powerful productivity tool on the planet.”

A Generative-AI powered virtual assistant, Copilot for Microsoft 365 made its debut in March 2023, combining the power of “large language models” with business data and Microsoft 365 apps, to “unleash creativity, unlock productivity and up-level skills,” says the company.

Heralding an “entirely new way of working”, Copilot works alongside Microsoft 365 customers in two ways: first, it is embedded in the Microsoft 365 apps such as Word (for writing and editing), Excel (for creating data visualizations) and Teams (for meeting summaries); and second, via a new experience called Microsoft 365 Chat. Responding to natural language prompts such as “tell my team how we updated the product strategy,” Microsoft 365 Chat will generate a status update based on the morning’s meetings, emails and chat threads.

In September 2023, Amadeus announced it had started working with Microsoft and Accenture to explore new AI-powered integrations between its travel and expense platform Cytric Easy and Microsoft 365. Accenture,

together with Avanade, is now working with Amadeus to develop and test the travel assistant, which will leverage Microsoft technologies including GPT models from Azure Open AI Service, Microsoft 365 and Teams.

Integrated with Amadeus’ Cytric Easy platform, the “AI PA” will align travelers’ preferences with company policies for a more efficient and cost-effective experience (from planning, booking and pre-departure, through to the trip and post-trip). In a conversational style, the chatbot will ask for clarifications and propose itineraries.

Amadeus is also working with Microsoft to develop a new plugin for Copilot for Microsoft 365, which brings the power of next-generation AI to Microsoft’s workplace productivity tool. Currently in development, the Cytric Easy plugin for Copilot for Microsoft 365 could make it easy for colleagues to quickly match and book travel itineraries in a single, sophisticated workflow within Microsoft 365 using natural language.

Feliz Montpellier, General Manager, Global Partners for Microsoft, said in a statement: “We are at an extraordinary moment in the technology landscape. Through expanded integrations between Microsoft and Amadeus, we will create more value for corporations and much more personalized and productive experiences for travelers.”

Executive Field Trips

2

Strategic getaways and
nature-based team retreats
set to soar



Executive Field Trips



In 2024, companies will be doubling down on “culture”, especially when many employees are home- or hybrid-working, or traveling frequently for work (by 2025, Upwork predicts that 32.6 million Americans will be working remotely).

Scheduling teambuilding days has often been used to bring people together, but a shift

towards longer trips away, often in nature, is giving rise to a burgeoning trend for “Executive Field Trips”. These corporate off-sites are being taken to the next level with an ever-greater array of immersive, surprising and sometimes even extreme experiences, in domestic locations as well as abroad.

According to Skift, company retreats are an “exploding niche”

in a corporate travel market expected to surpass US\$500 billion by 2030, and they are being popularized by the likes of TV shows such as *Succession*, which saw its cast of billionaire media moguls gather in Norway where they stayed at the Juvet Landscape Hotel and went hiking on Nesaksla mountain.

Leading the way have been forward-looking proponents such as Google, Shopify, PayPal and Uber. According to *Inc*, team-building excursions are “reaching new heights as companies try to recreate a water-cooler atmosphere for virtual teams”. In fact, the publication is describing it as an “arms race” and that founders “swear they are worth every cent”.

The Economist says: “Ice baths, infrared saunas, white-water rafting, fly-fishing, archery workshops, whisky tastings, yoga at sunrise, shooting clay pigeons, go-kart races, mountain-biking in Norway, falconry in Ireland, climbing up a glacier in Alberta, singing ‘kumbaya’ around a campfire. These seemingly disparate activities have one thing in common: all of them are real examples of the contemporary

corporate off-site. The idea is that, by disconnecting employees from their day-to-day routine, companies can build camaraderie and foster creativity. And it has grown in importance.”

Forging camaraderie is seen as essential to cementing positive relationships between employees, boosting company loyalty and motivating people to work towards a common goal. To facilitate this objective, people need to be taken out of their comfort zone and forced to leave their ego at the door, which is why Executive Field Trips are incorporating everything from white water rafting to tropical bushcraft. Take Desert Island Survival, which can organize for US-based C-suites to be “marooned” on an uninhabited island in Panama for four days, where they will be taught basic survival skills and then left alone to build a camp and find food.

Evidence that Executive Field Trips are going to be running hot in 2024 comes from Canada-based Moniker Partners, a creative corporate retreat planner who says 2023 was its busiest year yet (it launched in 2013). One client – Scott Olechowski, co-founder of

media streaming company Plex – told Hubspot that “there is always this amazing post-retreat glow that lasts for six to 12 months” and that the bonds built “last forever”. Olechowski has taken his team to Colorado, Switzerland and Thailand, among other places. Other companies that are tapping into Executive Field Trip design and organization include Nomad Pass, the Offsite, Happied, TeamBonding, Flok, BoomPop, NextRetreat and WorkTripp.

Chantal Godwin, Director – Employee Experience, Diversity and Inclusion for Amadeus, told Globetrender: “In the mosaic of modern work, Executive Field Trips transcend geographical boundaries – proving that the power of social connections remains instrumental in strengthening distributed teams. Immersive off-sites are like adding mortar between the solid bricks of our individual strengths to architect more meaningful collaboration. By cementing camaraderie through face-to-face activities, we can forge connections that last beyond the virtual space, fostering resilience, loyalty, and shared success in an era where collaboration knows no physical limits.”

Case Study: Getaway



Getaway is a US-based company that was founded in 2015 by Jon Staff (pictured). Born in rural Minnesota, Staff grew up with a love of the great outdoors, but after a period of burnout working in the world of start-ups decided to retreat back to nature to rejuvenate. It was then that Getaway took flight.

“At Getaway, we believe that free time should be a right and a ritual for everyone,” is the company’s mantra. The hospitality business now has more than 1,210 cabins located in wooded areas across 30 US outposts – each no more than two hours from major cities such as Atlanta, Boston, Chicago and Dallas. New locations include Detroit, Orlando and Kansas City.

By 2021, Getaway had raised more than US\$81.8 million in venture capital funding, with backers including investment firm Certares and Starwood Capital. Up until recently it has been targeting couples and solo professionals looking for an antidote to technological overload.

Then in spring 2023, it announced a partnership with immersive event company Mint Collective that would

allow it to branch into corporate off-sites through a new concept called “Getaway Retreats”. The company said in a statement: “During a time when group travel is on the rise, Getaway Retreats offer curated group experiences at Getaway Outposts nationwide, inviting large groups and corporate partners to reconnect in nature with customizable itineraries, full-service experiences and interactive workshops.”

Carlos Becil, Chief Experience Officer at Getaway, said in a statement: “Getaway is dedicated to providing free time in nature to all, and we’re thrilled to extend this offering to large groups looking to build community and connection in the great outdoors for the first time ever. Getaway Retreats provide highly customizable group experiences designed to reinvigorate guests’ imaginations and spark creativity.”

Jayne Sanders, Owner and Founder of Mint Collective, said: “At Mint Collective we believe that magic happens when we are able to get out from behind our screens and into nature.” Event logistics, design and décor, branded activations, wellness experiences, local adventures and culinary experiences are designed to meet each group’s individual needs. Getaway says the offering is “particularly well-suited for companies looking to build strong bonds”.



Objective Stacking

3

Multiple goals
amplify value of
business travel

Objective Stacking



Traditionally, business trips were undertaken for singular objectives, such as attending a meeting or a conference. After the pandemic there was a resurgence in business travel to make up for lost time and in many cases those bookings were again for one sole purpose.

However, as pressure grows to adhere to company sustainability mandates and manage outgoings in the face of high prices, there will be increased demands on employees to justify work trips. At the same time, employees are keen to travel but are adamant to make the most of every trip, justifying being away from the office. In the coming

years, “Objective Stacking” – a term coined by Globetrender to describe trips that are planned to fulfill multiple goals – will become the default way of operating to maximize efficiency and value.

What does Objective Stacking look like? Instead of flying in and out for one meeting, sales pitch or event, business travelers will be building in time to meet clients, conduct event reces, forge deals, investigate expansion opportunities, conduct competitor analysis or they might even want to tag on holiday (see “Blended Itineraries” on page 16). Even a trip with colleagues can function as an opportunity to brainstorm ideas and build connections.

The future of business travel will involve a more strategic approach, with trips being planned and justified based on their potential to deliver measurable, value-added outcomes to the company. Greater attention will be paid to longer-term planning and team management to ensure no trips are wasted, which means every departure will need to undergo a cost-benefit analysis.

Technology is a critical enabler in this shift towards Objective Stacking. Advanced analytics tools help in identifying opportunities to combine different travel objectives, while mobile apps and online platforms simplify itinerary management, booking, and suggest opportunities to stay connected with colleagues.

Cytric Easy by Amadeus is geared towards facilitating multi-objective trips, helping to plan journeys that are efficient in terms of cost, time, and environmental impact. It provides tools and insights that enable businesses to track and manage their travel expenditure and carbon emissions, supporting informed decision-making. Cytric Easy in Microsoft

Teams also makes it easy to co-ordinate itineraries via “Match My Trip”, share rides with colleagues and identify “close collaborators”.

The move towards Objective Stacking is not just a passing trend but a new paradigm that reflects a more thoughtful, purpose-driven way of planning, balancing the needs of businesses with fiscal and environmental responsibility. It’s also driving innovation. To assist firms in calculating the ROI (return on investment) from business trips are platforms such as US-based Itilite Mastermind, which compares expense data against industry standards and

suggests where companies can make savings. It uses machine learning and predictive analytics to analyze employee spending, policy violations, and last-minute bookings to boost compliance.

Graeme Milne, Director Sales and Account Management UK, Ireland and Nordics at Amadeus Cytric Solutions, told Globetrender: “I see a shift from ROI to ROO (return on objectives) as there is a far greater focus on making every trip worthwhile. It is worth noting that the objectives will not always be business related; the individual traveler will have their own motives. If both sides can be met, the trip is worthwhile.”



Blended Itineraries

Employee experience
takes center stage as
rigid travel policies
bow out

4



Blended Itineraries

There has always been friction between adhering to company travel policies and enjoying the flexibility of adding on a holiday to a work trip. However, new automated systems are enabling “Blended Itineraries” for business travelers, which go beyond simple “bleisure” trips that see a weekend tagged on to a few days of meetings. They are also a great tool for enabling “Objective Stacking” (see page 14).

From a macro perspective, bleisure is continuing to gain traction. Allied Market Research states that the global bleisure travel industry was estimated to be worth US\$315.3 billion in 2022 but is anticipated to grow to US\$731.4 billion by 2032, registering a compound annual growth rate of 8.9 per cent.

Central to what’s taking off in 2024, though, is the relaxation and personalization of once rigid corporate travel policies that now place employee experience at the heart. Why is this happening now? According to human capital management consultant China Gorman in an article for *Inc*, “work-life blending



is the key to happiness”. While previous generations were willing to sacrifice their health and mental wellbeing to get ahead, Generation Z seeks “whole life” success (healthy bodies, good relationships and fulfilling work). What’s more, by 2025 they will represent 27 per cent of the global workforce, meaning employers need to adapt to shifting demands, especially when it comes to business travel. This also ties in with generational shifts towards “Lazy Girl Jobs” – defined on TikTok as a fully remote, low stress role with a good salary

and minimal management. (“Lazy Boy Jobs” could become a meme for 2024.)

This underscores an important shift towards mitigating burnout, which is a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress. In 2019, workplace stress was estimated to have cost the US economy more than US\$500 billion dollars. According to a 2022 survey of almost 11,000 people by Future Forum, 43 per cent of US workers now show the highest incidence of burnout globally

with more than two out of every five employees saying they are burnt out. At the same time, 4 million American workers per month quit their jobs in 2022.

What this illustrates is that pushing people to dedicate themselves entirely to company protocols and responsibilities only ends up creating a disenfranchised, sick and forlorn workforce. With output rather than hours now the measure of success for savvy employers, travel policies that allow for Blended Itineraries will be the “holy grail”

for forward-looking companies in the years ahead.

Blended Itineraries can boost morale, aid in employee retention, and even enhance productivity. One tangible manifestation of this is the rise of the lifestyle clubs such as Soho House for creative professionals, and co-working hotel brands such as Moxy, the Hoxton, Eaton DC, Public and Kimpton, which have turned lobbies into buzzing productivity hubs.

Business travel of tomorrow will also encompass the needs of families, driven by the lifestyle requirements of Millennials who are parents to Gen Alpha children. Many now seek to go abroad every school holiday and are even prepared to take their children out of school during term-time to take workations, “world-schooling” as they go. Noma Collective is an innovative travel company that is catering to this parent-professional demographic, hosting family remote work retreats in places such as Belize. In 2024 and beyond, employers will also begin to better support the needs and ambitions of remote working parents.

Net-Zero Heroes

5

Corporates get smarter
to help hit 2050 carbon
reduction targets

Net-Zero Heroes

In December 2023, the COP28 global climate summit concluded with an agreement to “transition away” from fossil fuel consumption and ramp up clean energy production, with the goal of achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050.

When it comes to travel, decarbonization (via innovations such as sustainable aviation fuel and electric planes) will be essential over the coming years because annual global passenger traffic will rise from 6.6 billion passengers in 2022 to 19.3 billion by 2041, according to summer 2023 data from Airports Council International.

Corporations in other industries also need to meet certain carbon footprint reduction targets, which means business travel will come under increasing scrutiny in 2024 and beyond. The European Commission now legally requires large companies and listed companies to publish regular reports on the social and environmental risks they face, and how their activities impact people and the environment. (This is known as the CSRD or “corporate sustainability reporting directive”.)

In autumn 2023, a survey of 896 senior decision-makers commissioned by Amadeus showed that 90 per cent of travel firms had a strategy in place to reach sustainability objectives or are planning to implement one in 2024.

Given that there is a significant “say-do” gap between what consumers say they care about when it comes to sustainability and how they actually travel, companies can lead by example and encourage a greater sense of responsibility. Take PwC, which is planning to be net zero by 2030 by switching to renewable energy for all global offices, halving air travel and challenging staff who book business class (which has a greater carbon footprint per passenger).

Another example is Microsoft, which is also working towards becoming “carbon negative” by 2030. By 2050, it says it will remove from the air all the carbon the company has emitted either directly or by electrical consumption since it was founded in 1975.

Emily Weiss, Senior managing Director at Accenture and Head of its Travel Practice, told

Globetrender: “Accenture has implemented an internal carbon price on travel. Additionally, we use analytics and reporting to help travelers and business runners estimate future travel or use less carbon-intensive modes of transport. Our climate-smart travel toolkit shares policies, resources, ideas and templates to support project teams in their carbon reduction journey, and our aviation carbon calculator highlights actual emissions differences between flights to inform booking decisions.”

As pressure grows to justify the environmental impact of business travel, companies will increasingly embrace “Objective Stacking” (see page 14) as a way of ensuring employees maximize the value of trips. “Blended Itineraries” (see page 16) will also facilitate this thanks to more flexible travel policies. The good news is that there will be plenty of ways for “Net Zero Heroes” to achieve their goals. For example, the World Economic Forum recently reported that a four-day week can equate to a 29 per cent reduction in individual carbon footprints, due to reduced energy use in offices and fewer cars on the road.

In France, the government

has banned domestic short-haul flights of less than 2.5 hours on routes where regular direct rail links exist, indicating a shift towards train travel for regional business trips in Europe. In the US, new high-speed rail links could transform travel between certain cities too. In December 2023, the Biden-Harris Administration announced US\$8.2 billion in new funding for ten major passenger rail projects across the country, including building a new high-speed rail system between California and Nevada, which will serve more than 11

million passengers annually; and a 220 mph rail service through California’s Central Valley that will ultimately link LA and San Francisco (reducing the journey time from over ten hours to under three hours).

Meanwhile, users of Cytric Easy are encouraged to compare trips and make the best decision for the environment, track their CO2 budget or even identify colleagues they can share a ride via “Share My Transfer” in Microsoft Teams. This means they can save money and reduce their carbon impact.



Case Study: Virgin Atlantic

In November 2023, Virgin Atlantic operated the world's first commercial transatlantic flight that was 100 per cent powered by sustainable aviation fuel, which has a far lower carbon footprint than traditional jet fuel.



Virgin Atlantic's "Flight100" flew from London Heathrow to New York JFK with the B787's Rolls-Royce Trent 1000 engines powered not by fossil fuel, but energy derived from waste fats and plant sugars. The SAF used on Flight100 was a unique dual blend; 88 per cent HEFA (Hydroprocessed Esters and Fatty Acids) supplied by AirBP and 12 per cent SAK (Synthetic Aromatic Kerosene) supplied by Virent, a subsidiary of

Marathon Petroleum Corporation. (SAK is needed in 100 per cent SAF blends to give the fuel the required aromatics for engine function.)

Dubbed "sustainable aviation fuel" or SAF, the flight was a milestone event because up until now no commercial airline has flown entirely on SAF – the fuel has always had to be mixed with conventional fuel (usually a blend of up to 50 per cent SAF).

The Virgin Atlantic flight had dozens of (non-paying) passengers onboard including founder Richard Branson himself. In a statement, the airline said the flight proved that SAF is a "safe 'drop-in' replacement for fossil-derived jet fuel and the only mid-term viable solution for decarbonizing long-haul aviation". Branson said: "The world will always assume something can't be done, until you do it. The spirit of innovation is getting out there and trying to prove that we can do things better for everyone's benefit."

SAF has a significant role to play in achieving net zero flights by 2050. The fuel, made from waste products, delivers CO2 "lifecycle emissions" savings of up to 70 per cent, whilst performing like the traditional jet fuel it replaces. (For clarity, the emissions from the London-New York flight are the same as any other flight but the fuel itself has a lower lifecycle carbon footprint due to how it is



produced and the ingredients it uses as an alternative to fossil fuel.)

While other technologies such as electric and hydrogen remain decades away, SAF can be used now in planes that may still have a ten- to 20-year lifespan. However, today, SAF represents less than 0.1 per cent of global jet fuel volumes.

As part of Amadeus' commitment to support the industry on its journey toward sustainable travel, Amadeus acquired a minority stake in Caphenia, a future producer of synthesis gas, which

is the feedstock of SAF. The German-based company has developed an innovative approach to produce SAF in a more affordable and scalable way.

Shai Weiss, Chief Executive Officer for Virgin Atlantic, said: "We need to push further. There's simply not enough SAF and it's clear that in order to reach production at scale, we need to see significantly more investment. This will only happen when regulatory certainty and price support mechanisms, backed by government, are in place. Flight100 proves that if you make it, we'll fly it."

Digitized Expenses



Financial automation means death of expense reports comes closer

Digitized Expenses



The world of corporate finance is leveling up, propelled by the transition to “Digitized Expenses”. The shift marks the end of an era dominated by cumbersome manual management of expense forms and the constant juggle of paper receipts.

For many companies this change signifies not just a procedural update, but a fundamental overhaul of how business transactions are recorded, processed, and analyzed. Digitized Expenses will boost personalization and enhance the user experience, while ensuring data security and

travel policy compliance.

Up until recently, the process of managing expenses was often a labor-intensive task. Employees had to keep track of paper receipts, manually fill out forms, and wait for approvals and reimbursements. This system was not only time-consuming but also prone to errors and inefficiencies. According to 2022 data from the Global Business Travel Association, the cost of a human processing just one expense report was US\$58. To make matters worse, 19 per cent had errors that cost another US\$52 to correct them. For employees, Digitized Expenses means an end to

hoarding receipts and spending hours on expense reports, only to make mistakes. For businesses, digital expense management systems offer real-time visibility into spending, enabling better budgeting and financial planning. They can integrate with accounting software, ensuring that expense data flows seamlessly into financial records, reducing administrative burden and improving accuracy.

Moreover, the data collected through digital expensing opens up new avenues for analysis and optimization. Companies can track spending patterns, identify cost-saving opportunities, and even negotiate better rates with frequently used vendors. This level of insight was virtually impossible with manual systems, where data was often outdated or incomplete.

Leading the way, Amadeus launched Outpayce by Amadeus in 2023, evolving and consolidating its existing payments business under a wholly-owned payments subsidiary. New game-changing solutions will include virtual credit cards in Cytric Easy with pre-set limits in line with a corporation’s travel policy that can be used

during trips. For on-the-road payments, digital wallets can be loaded with a virtual card created for a specific journey with all the controls in place to ensure it is only used for in-policy expenses.

Outpayce SVP Global Head of Product Management and Delivery, Jean-Christophe Lacour, said in a statement: “We have been looking at it from our technology DNA and how can we deliver smooth, connected payment experiences to our customers and their travelers at every touch point along the journey.”

Having one single digital solution means that bookings, captured receipts, e-invoices, and payment data are immediately available in the expense portal. “Allowances and per diems can be deducted from the traveler’s booking data. Even before they return from their trip, expenses are ready to be approved, reducing the administrative burden” explains the company. In the future, paper receipts and cash will become a thing of the past, making transactions totally traceable, and eliminating the need for travelers to advance cash.



Power Networking

7

**Global events industry
takes off as desire for
connection surges**



Power Networking

Although handshakes were off the menu during COVID-19, they are now firmly back in business, as corporates prioritize face-to-face meetings to perform everything from winning new clients to closing big deals. Video-calls will continue to be great for day-to-day conversations but lockdown proved that too much technology can leave people feeling fatigued and isolated.

Looking ahead, data from Allied Market Research indicates huge growth for the global MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) industry – in 2021 it was valued at US\$345.8 billion but by 2031 it is projected to reach US\$2.1 trillion.

With “Objective Stacking” (see page 14) being a key tactic in ensuring a solid return on investment for business trips, “Power Networking” will emerge as a new hyper-focused approach to acquiring and building new connections. Gone will be the days when delegates sneak off early from conferences or hide in their hotel room to avoid making small talk – in 2024 and beyond, every opportunity will



need to be maximized. After all, if employees are taking time away from their desks and families then they will need to ensure it is worthwhile. This means crafting richer itineraries with multiple meetings outside of the core agenda.

In the US, Amadeus has noticed an increase in satellite events that are piggy backing off bigger industry events. Kristen Goldman, Global Head of Events at Amadeus, told Globetrender: “With the rise of remote working, people are embracing every opportunity to have meaningful face-to-face interactions, and they are making the most of the

events already happening to do this. Gone are the days of sitting in sessions day after day – attendees and organizers realize that organic human interactions (such as socializing and networking) are equally as valuable as a plenary or lecture.

“We are seeing an uptick in breakout sessions, ‘add-on’ meetings, teambuilding activities, and built-in networking opportunities such as happy hours, walk-around lunches, dinners and city tours. With all of this, not only does this foster human connection, but clients are saving on travel and event costs, reducing environmental impact and optimizing attendee time by

having attendees ‘travel once’ rather than scheduling multiple separate events throughout the year.”

“Softer productivity” will also give rise to the return of the “power lunch” (both at home and on the road), something that was popular during the eighties and nineties but fell out of favor when companies became more focused on presenteeism and reduced spending after the 2008 financial crash. The “Power Lunch 2.0” is 60-90 minutes, rather than a whole afternoon, and far less boozy. Nick Goddard, Senior Vice President at Colliers International, wrote on LinkedIn in October 2023:

“There’s something magical about breaking bread together. The power lunch provides the perfect setting to nurture relationships, build trust, and solidify partnerships. It’s more than just a meal; it’s an investment in your professional future.”

It’s also important to consider how Gen Z (which will make up almost a third of the global workforce by 2030), is approaching networking. Although older people still prefer meeting face-to-face, young people under 30 are confident in being able to secure jobs or make professional connections online. (This should hardly be a surprise as these digital natives were practically born experts in personal brand management.)

According to data from early career network and management platform Handshake, 87 per cent of Gen Z job seekers believe that messaging with an employer may lead to a job. However, as those older and wiser know, nothing beats, connecting at the office, having a conversation over coffee or around a campfire (see our Executive Field Trips trend on page 11).

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