

YOUR TRAVEL PAYMENT COMPANY.

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# Data Transparency & Payment:

Unlocking The Power  
Of Your Travel Data

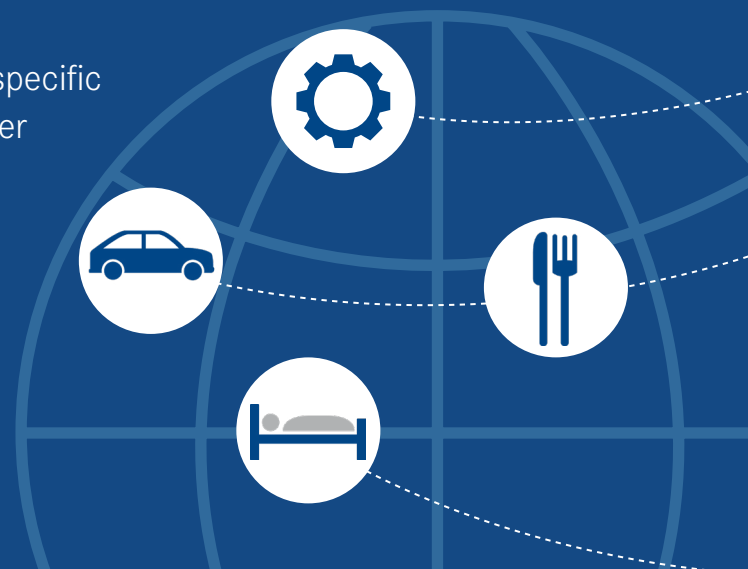
# Travel Data Transparency = Smarter Business Operations

Corporate travel data when examined and used correctly – isn't just tactical; it's strategic for business operations and overall growth. Organizations tracking employees' travel booking behaviors and practices are in a stronger position to better assess and implement policies that not only benefit the employee on the road, but ensure that negotiations with travel vendors are optimized and those in charge of company travel protocols remain within budget.

And it all starts with the data. Monitoring, but more importantly, analyzing business trip expenditures allows travel managers to gauge whether travel policies are within an optimal budget range for the year, re-prioritize items if needed, and adjust travel guidelines when required.

Of note, traveler payment habits and methods can have one of the most significant impacts on the data you receive and its level of usefulness. Shifting between programs not only cost travel managers time, but the reliability and accuracy of the data comes into question when it is not sourced from the same place. We examine the benefits and shortfalls of various payment methods from corporate cards and lodge cards; to purchase cards, direct billing and virtual cards, to give you a snapshot of what needs to transpire in order for you to have the detailed data for full transparency.

Our Ebook also breaks down other types of specific data you should track, the choices to consider implementing to your travel policies and the analysis you should adopt to ensure your program is optimized – both for the traveler and the company.



# What is data transparency and why do you need it?

For business travel, data not only offers insights as to where and what you are spending your money on but also for how to plan your future travel spend. This clarity of your own data benefits you in many ways:



**POWER**  
in travel supplier  
negotiation



**INTEGRATION**  
of transaction data into  
your systems (expense  
and general ledger)



**VISIBILITY**  
of travel spend to understand  
changes and needs of  
your travelers – uncovering  
trends and new opportunities



**COMPLIANCE**  
of travel policies



**AUTOMATION**  
of back office accounting  
reconciliation processes



**REGULATORY**  
meeting specific  
requirements from  
various governing bodies  
that may impact your  
industry

Procurement, Accounting, Finance, IT and Legal all benefit from this level of travel transaction data transparency. And in every one of these instances, your company can make more informed decisions that can positively impact the bottom line while also increasing traveler satisfaction.

# How payment method impacts data transparency

You have multiple options when paying for business travel and how you pay for travel can impact your ability to have the detailed data you need for full transparency. You can optimize your travel program with different methods of payment that provide you efficiencies and full transparency.

	Corporate Card	Lodge Card	Virtual Card	Purchase Card	Direct Bill
Acceptance	100%	25%	50%	25%	25%
Data Detail	50%	100%	100%	25%	25%
Data Quality	25%	25%	100%	25%	25%
Security	25%	25%	100%	50%	100%
Integration	100%	100%	100%	25%	50%
Reconciliation	25%	25%	100%	25%	50%
Risk - External	25%	25%	100%	50%	25%
Risk - Misuse	50%	100%	100%	50%	25%

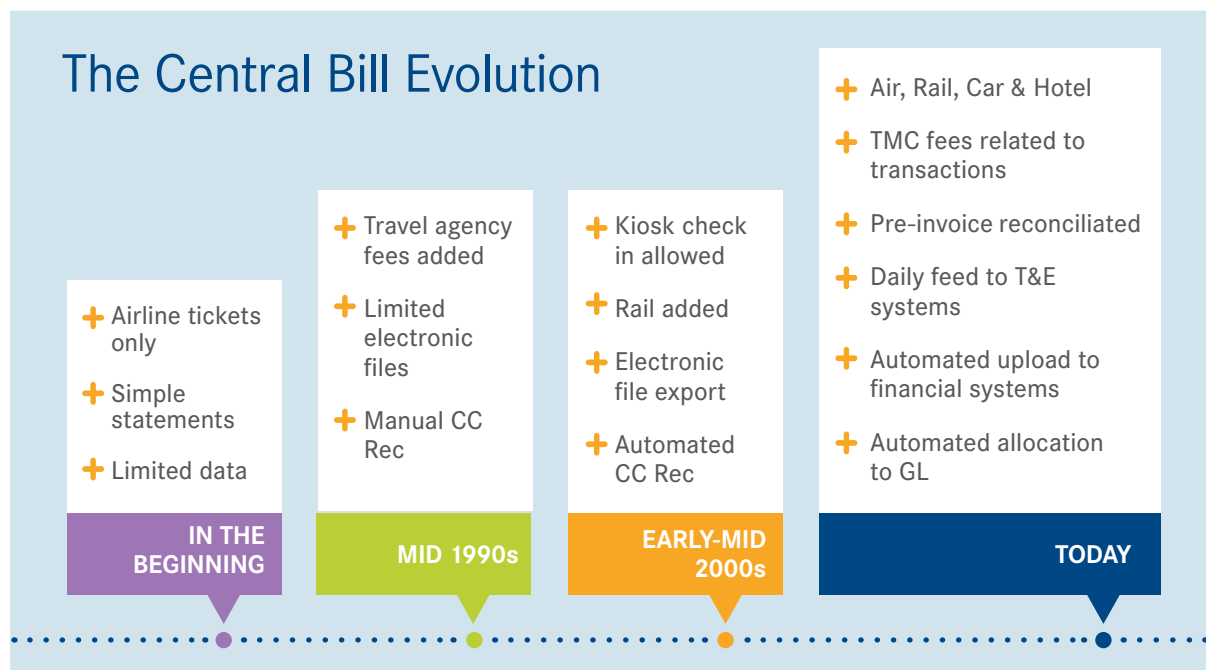


## Corporate Card

- + This most common form of payment has a myriad of benefits, starting with its acceptance by literally all travel suppliers. Corporate cards are easy for travelers to use and provide you with a baseline level of data. Where corporate cards fall short, however, is in their inherent risk for fraud. Cards can get compromised easily, and with the growing frequency of data breaches faced by travel sector, it is safe to assume that fraud cases will only increase. In most cases this creates a larger administrative hassle of re-issuing cards when this happens as most fraudulent transactions are discovered in time and mitigated.

## Lodged Card

- + Not all central bills are created equal. Do you have to most advanced product available? Today's sophisticated central bill products can provide detailed transaction data for airline, rental car, train and TMC fees. And the reconciliation process can be automated directly into your expense management system (Concur, Chrome River, etc.) and your general ledger (SAP, Oracle, etc.) through file feeds.



## Virtual Card

- + The newest option to pay for business travel is gaining traction in the US. In 2019, virtual card usage increased to 20% based on a study from GBTA and AirPlus International. Virtual cards are the most secure form of payment and expire once they have been used. This trait alone mitigates exposure during a data breach. Additionally, virtual cards provide the most comprehensive transaction data available. So the benefits of this payment method are superior in many ways to standard corporate credit cards. The example below compares three payment methods used for a hotel stay, and the data that is provided for each.

## Data Included for Hotel Stays

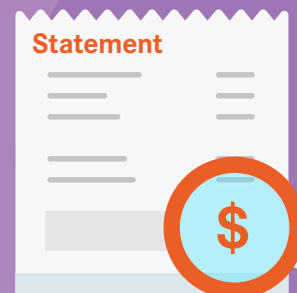
	STANDARD CORPORATE CARD	P-CARD	VIRTUAL CARDS
Traveler name	✓	✗	✓
Purchase date	✓	✓	✓
Total amount	✓	✓	✓
Merchant descriptor	✓	✓	✓
Up to 9 extra data fields ▶ Cost center    ▶ Project code ▶ Employee ID   ▶ Up to 6 more of your choice	✗ ✗ ✗ ✗	✗ ✗ ✗ ✗	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓
Hotel name	✓	✓	✓
Hotel location	✓	?	✓
Check in/out date	?	?	✓
Room nights	✗	✗	✓

### P-card

✦ While purchasing cards are quite ubiquitous in the travel space, they can be a challenge to deal with once a business trip is complete and the card expenses need to be reconciled. With limited data available on a p-card, someone now needs to go through the monthly statement and determine which charge belongs to which traveler and reconcile those expenses back to the appropriate cost center. While this payment method is perfect for office supply purchases and other administrative needs, it is not optimal for travel spend payments.

### Direct Bill

✦ Direct bills are the original payment method. And they can be very convenient with vendors that you are using on a regular basis.



# Leveraging data enhancement to your advantage

Enhancing data with traveler data (e.g. employee ID, project code, cost center) allows for automated integration into your expense and accounting systems. This data enhancement comes from the integration of your data inputs: booking data, payment data and traveler profile.

## Card statement with **typical** standard data:

Pos.	Purch Date	Supplier Service	Currency	Net	Sales Tax Exh. Rate	Gross USD
251	11/30/17	McAnnister/Chris Duane United Airlines Inc.	USD	325.60		325.60
252	11/30/17	McAnnister/Chris Duane 7800815239921 Travel agency service fee	USD	12.00		12.00
253	12/11/17	Corona/Joseph Alig Courtyard by Marriott Austin, USA	USD	125.44		125.44

## Card statement with **detailed, enhanced** transaction data:

Pos.	Pur Date	Name Brand	Cost Center Agency Invoice No.	Employ ID	Supplier Service	Currency	Net	Sales Tax Exh. Rate	Gross USD
251	11/30/17	McAnnister/Chris Duane ACME Lawn/Garden	123-75243 574122	8675309	United Airlines Inc. UA 0068254672481 / Class G on 12/18/17 ETIX CLE SFO CLE	USD	325.60		325.60
252	11/30/17	McAnnister/Chris Duane ACME Lawn/Garden	123-75243 574120	8675309	0068254672481 Travel agency service fee	USD	12.00		12.00
253	12/11/17	Corona/Joseph Alig ACME Bath	672-8802 590134	9045222	Courtyard by Marriott Austin, USA Ref.: 2030118 Roomnights: 1 Arrival: 12/13/17 Departure: 12/14/17 A.I.D.A. No. 514021xxxxxx9897	USD	125.44		125.44

The exhibits above illustrate how comprehensive data can be of great value to departments within your organization, and your company as a whole.

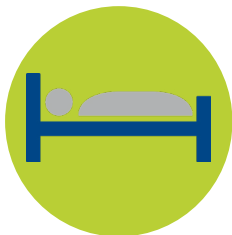
# Optimize payment options with a hybrid approach



## Air

This is the largest percentage of the travel budget spend and can be pretty straight-forward when everything goes according to plan – but that’s not how the real world works. A variety of pain points can occur when booking airline tickets:

- ▶ **Non-employee and guest travel payment reconciliation**  
Ancillary fees (e.g. overweight bag fee, seat upgrade)
- ▶ **Last minute ticket changes**
- ▶ **Managing leisure with regard to price comparisons**
- ▶ **Booking in advance**
- ▶ **Payment data detail**



## Lodging

Sometimes your payment method can actually work against you when it comes time to match and reconcile travel expenses. Having transparency into your spend will allow you to manage some of the more common pain points when it comes to paying for and expensing lodging:

- ▶ **Guest travelers**
- ▶ **Travelers that want to use their own cards**  
(double dipping points)
- ▶ **Lack of personal credit with younger workforce**
- ▶ **Personal incidentals**
- ▶ **Data associated with spend for grant/  
regulatory documentation**
- ▶ **Risk of fraud**





## Rental Car

Are you aware of the full amount of data that you can receive with every rental car? Making sure that you are able to keep your travelers compliant as well as understand the various “extras” that they can add on to their rental is important when it comes time to negotiate your rental car contracts. In some cases, centralized payment can also mitigate some of the car rental pain points:

- ▶ **Employees with low or no credit**
- ▶ **Paying for additional services that are not covered by the travel policy (additional insurance, GPS)**
- ▶ **Payment reporting data detail**
- ▶ **Traveler age (< 25)**



## Meals/Car Sharing

One of the more challenging aspects of T&E are meals and ride share expenses. What does your policy allow and how do you enforce it without detailed transaction data? For example, do you allow those that rent cars to also use ride sharing in the same trip? What about the purchase of alcohol with meals? The more transparent your data is in this area will allow you to make sure that your travel policy and your travelers are in line and consistent when they travel:

- ▶ **Number of people per meal**
- ▶ **Alcohol spend**
- ▶ **Managing food per diems**
- ▶ **Double dipping rental car and ride share**

# Being **Transparent** Can Get You the Buy-in

Analysis of your travel data allows you to obtain greater control of your program. It provides you valuable, ROI insights into the spending habits of your employees, enabling you to structure a program that identifies any gaps in efficiency, spotlights unnecessary expenses and fees, and helps you develop a best-in-class travel program.

Data also can be the strongest weapon in a procurement officer's arsenal when negotiating corporate travel contracts with air, lodging and ground transportation vendors. Understanding your travelers' preferences can give you a leg up when securing long-term travel contracts, as you will know which suppliers are desired over others. Communicating why you are using certain vendors and have certain travel rules and procedures established can further help drive policy compliance among travelers as well.

In the end, travelers want to do the right thing, and they will, as long as they understand the value of your travel program and trust that the travel managers are there looking out after them – and it all starts with data transparency.



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**T: 703.894.2612**

**E: [bizdevusa@airplus.com](mailto:bizdevusa@airplus.com)**

[www.airplus.com](http://www.airplus.com)