

## The Wire...from AirPlus. January 2012: Smart Moves.

**AIRPLUS.** WHAT TRAVEL PAYMENT IS ALL ABOUT.



### Corporate travel managers pick up most of their expertise on the job.

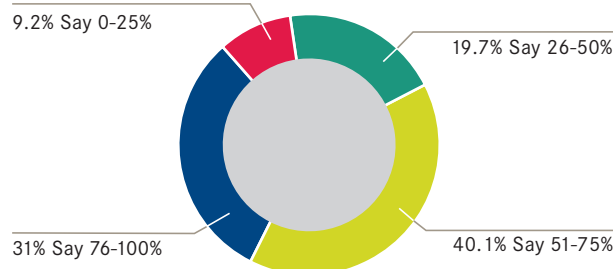
The responsibilities of today's corporate travel manager are in constant flux. The introduction of procurement practices, evolving technology, , ongoing pressure to decrease costs, the growing need to track travelers, a move towards globalization, and a new generation of employees who are accustomed to using their own internet and smartphone sources for travel are among the many changes taking place in the world of managed travel today.

In short, today's corporate travel manager needs to be a jack of all trades, able to analyze data at one moment while effectively communicating with a headstrong Millennial about the importance of policy compliance in the next moment, and understanding the ins and outs of a contract in the next. And that's just in an ordinary morning.

To better understand the skills and challenges of today's corporate travel manager, AirPlus surveyed 143 corporate travel managers in early January.

The results clearly show that most corporate travel managers do not enter the field already armed with the knowledge they need from coursework or previous positions. Instead, they have picked up their knowledge while on the job—close to three-quarters (71 percent) said anywhere between half and 100 percent of their job-related knowledge has come from

What percent of your job related knowledge has come from learning on the job (as opposed to prior knowledge from education or positions other than managing travel)?



learning on the job. Only 9 percent said on-the-job learning accounted for less than 25 percent of their job-related knowledge.

What is it that corporate travel managers need to know to do their jobs well? When asked to choose the skill sets and areas of expertise that are most important to them, along with those that present the biggest challenges, most of the respondents were hard-pressed to select just one, instead selecting several answers for both questions. The top three answers selected as “most important” were general travel knowledge, organizational abilities, and data analysis. Not surprisingly, data analysis was also among the top three responses as travel managers’ biggest challenges, along with managing employees and budgeting.

**If you hold or are pursuing a professional certification, what was the most important reason for pursuing that certification (choose only one)?**

To do my current job better	41.0%
To move up to a more senior position	26.2%
To earn more respect in my company	9.8%
To earn more respect with suppliers	9.8%
Other (please specify)	9.8%
To make more money	3.3%

While some corporate travel managers are able to pick up the skills and expertise they need on the job, others go a step farther and pursue educational opportunities to enhance their knowledge.

Of the corporate travel managers surveyed, 43 percent said they hold or are currently pursuing a travel-management-related certification. Although no one certification stands out as a strong leader among the respondents, the Corporate Travel Expert (CTE) from the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) had the most responses, at 14 percent, closely followed by GBTA’s Certified Corporate Travel Executive (CCTE) at 12 percent.

In late 2011, GBTA announced the formation of the GBTA Academy and a restructuring of its educational programs. The CTE, CCTE and some other certifications will no longer be issued, while others will require ongoing continuing education credits to maintain the designations.

A handful of other certifications held or being pursued by respondents shows the diversity both of travel manager backgrounds and their responsibilities. For example, 7 percent noted the meetings-related Certified Meeting Professional (CMP) from the Convention Industry Council, while 5 percent hold or are pursuing a Certified Purchasing Manager (C.P.M.) in addition to another 4 percent who noted the Certified Professional in Supply Management (CPSM), both from the Institute for Supply Management (ISM).

When asked about their top reason for pursuing a certification, only 3 percent responded that it was to make more money. The most frequent response, at 41 percent, was to do their current job better, while another 26 percent said it was to move up to a more senior position. Ten percent said to earn more respect within their company, while the same number indicated it was to earn more respect with suppliers. Of the 10

**Which of the following skill sets/areas of expertise is most important to you in your position managing travel? Which is the biggest challenge?**

Skill Set/Area of Expertise	Most Important
General travel knowledge	46.1%
Organizational	44.8%
Data analysis	43.4%
Negotiating	37.8%
Multi-tasking	37.8%
Destination knowledge	31.5%
Technological knowledge	31.5%
Budgeting	28.7%
Managing employees	20.3%
Other (please specify)	0.1%

Skill Set/Area of Expertise	Biggest Challenge
Managing employees	26.6%
Data analysis	23.1%
Budgeting	22.4%
Negotiating	18.2%
Multi-tasking	17.5%
Organizational	16.1%
Technological knowledge	16.1%
Destination knowledge	10.5%
Other (please specify)	0.6%
General travel knowledge	0.2%

percent who answered “other,” the most common responses revolved around personal satisfaction.

**Additional Resource**

**Wage Revival: BTN’s 2011 Travel Manager Salary & Attitude Survey**

<http://www.businesstravelnews.com/Business-Travel-Research/Wage-Revival-BTN-s-2011-Travel-Manager-Salary-Attitude-Survey/?a=btn>

Survey Methodology: For this issue of *The Wire*, AirPlus International surveyed 143 corporate travel buyers in North America and Europe from January 12 to January 21, 2012.

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