

# Why use a travel management company?

Convenience becomes one of the most important advantages in Travel



Since the early 2000s in South Africa and early 90s in the United States and Europe, a debate has been raging around the continued relevance of travel agents. The dialogue was sparked by the need of corporate organisations to cut travel spend in order to remain competitive and survive economic downturns.

This debate was accompanied by the development of alternative web based travel solutions. The upshot was a major shake up in the travel industry with major brands struggling to stay afloat and others going under. Within this industry chaos, the need for travel management services remained unabated, albeit in a different form.

Duma Travel was born in the midst of this transformation in 2002. The founders wanted to form a travel management company (TMC) that would be a strategic partner to organisations that found themselves navigating these sometimes treacherous waters. Premised on a strong management consulting background, Duma Travel developed a robust methodology to engage senior management of client companies

on key strategic issues relating to sustainable travel spend.

A Duma Travel intervention commences with a travel audit, which is a structured and almost scientific analysis of the current travel practices within the client organisation. These are then benchmarked against international best practice and a road map is evolved to migrate the company from the current practice to best practice. The outputs of the travel audit are used to craft an actionable travel policy to manage all travel activity within the company. The travel audit also informs other sub interventions such as education, change management and technology options.

TMCs are best for people who are unfamiliar with the destination they are travelling to and need to shop for the best prices, but are too busy to do it themselves. From a corporate organisation's perspective, TMCs provide strategic consulting services, reporting and technologies that help organisations manage large volumes of travel in a structured and optimal way.

#### Advantages of using TMCs:

- Convenience. This is the greatest advantage. Prospective travellers can make one call

to the TCM and tell them where they want to go. The TCM reviews the options with the traveller or calls him back later. This allows the traveller to go about his business without wasting time on hold, making multiple calls, or sorting through a million options that are not suitable on the Internet.

- A well trained agent can offer advice based on personal experience.
- TMCs are good for arranging complex itineraries and booking travel for large groups.
- A good travel agent will learn the travellers' preferences, something a computer cannot do.
- A good travel agent should know some tricks of the trade that can save money or make a trip go more smoothly.
- Travel agents can be an up-to-date source of information e.g. airport closures, what to do at a particular destination etc.
- Booking of air travel with multiple stops or complicated manoeuvres (hidden-city booking and open-jaw-trips) should only be attempted by an experienced travel agent.
- Good TMCs provide organisations with strategic travel consulting services e.g. policy consulting, travel audits, change management, supplier negotiations, actionable reports etc.
- Good TMCs provide 24/7 emergency services to handle unexpected events.

#### Some tips on selecting a TMC:

- A solid travel experience base
- Twenty-four hour availability
- Proven strategic consulting services
- Actionable reports
- Good key relationship management
- Good traveller profile management system
- Cutting edge technology **BBO**

For more information visit:  
[www.dumatravel.co.za](http://www.dumatravel.co.za)