

# Roadmap to Sharing Economy in Managed Travel Programs

Sharing economy suppliers are frequently described as “disruptors” due to the impact intended on conventional ground transportation and hotel suppliers. As sharing economy providers steer into the corporate travel market, it is timely for travel managers to begin discussions with travelers and program stakeholders. The sharing economy involves peer-to-peer products and services and the top suppliers for business travel are Uber and Airbnb. Other providers include Lyft, and BlaBlaCar.

There are five significant concerns to assess, which will aid a company in determining how the sharing economy fits into their program. For all of these problems, there are strengths and weaknesses of incorporating sharing economy suppliers in a managed program. These issues include cost and savings, traveler happiness, duty of care, rules, and travel program incorporation. In our blog, the Benefits and Risks of the Sharing Economy in Managed Travel, we explore these substantial issues. After absorbing the benefits and risks of incorporating sharing economy suppliers into a managed travel program, a company may decide that at this time, an impartial view of sharing economy is best for their program.

To assist corporations even further with the evaluation of shared economy providers, the following guidelines offer the next steps in the process:

## Step 1 – Improve Comprehension of Existing Program.

Make a truthful evaluation of where program currently is by reviewing total spend, spend using preferred providers, amount via approved sources; e.g. travel

management company (TMC) and online tool, and review compliance. Determine if rates are too high and whether travelers are aware of rates, as well as a simpler process to direct travelers to use preferred providers.

## Step 2 – Understand the Need.

Evaluate the number of travelers that are already utilizing sharing economy suppliers or have expressed interest. Review data and converse with travelers via surveys, intranet and other sources to inquire about usage of these services whether business or personal. Ask travelers to describe the occurrences both good and bad and if they want to use these providers on business trips. Assess traveler satisfaction with current traditional providers. Examine any markets that shared economy providers can considerably enhance price, service, access, or resolve a problem wherein conventional suppliers are unable.

## Step 3 – Discuss with Shared Economy Providers.

Comprehensively evaluate the benefits and risks of these suppliers and determine if the services are suitable for your corporate travel program. The providers must specifically collaborate with you on offering data from the beginning to assist in benchmarking and examining services. Data in real-time is preferred to increase duty of care compliance. Suppliers should also provide precautions that are aligned with your safety and security responsibilities to travelers.

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## Step 4 – Collaborate with Vital Company Areas.

To ensure duty of care compliance, thoroughly liaise with internal departments including human resources, IT, and legal to determine if travelers should be prohibited from utilizing sharing economy suppliers, or possible encourage some usage.

## Step 5 – Reexamine Traditional Provider Partnerships.

Communicate data on travelers' usage of shared economy providers with conventional hotel and ground transportation suppliers. Urge your providers to improve assistance, such as new or better services for travelers, such as complimentary meeting areas, reduced room service, etc. Review corporate rates in cities that have the highest usage of shared economy suppliers. Examine if shared economy demand has uncovered holes in your program; e.g. adding more extended stay, suite lodging, or boutique brands options.

## Step 6 – Change your Travel Policy.

Ensure that approved providers are obviously defined as well as specific offerings from suppliers; e.g. travelers can use any Uber service, excluding UberX and Uber-POP. Provide a lodging rate specification that includes amounts travelers are permitted to spend in each city.

## Step 7 – Incorporate into Travel Program.

Investigate the level of integration needed with your TMC, as well as current providers to determine how to gain improved influence on your spend. Concur and TripCase have new tools that can assist with incorporating shared economy providers into managed travel.

## Step 8 – Assess Program Repeatedly.

The sharing economy is varying constantly and companies should work with their TMC to observe; changes to products and services, regulatory problems, conventional provider reactions, views of travelers and other crucial stakeholders such as human resources and legal, and traveler conduct.



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