



# TRAVEL POLICY HEALTH CHECK: ARE YOUR EMPLOYEE S BUYING IN?

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**W**hen it comes to the health and vitality of your travel policy, employee participation is like an academic grade. If your company's getting 100%, then well done...A+! But most companies struggle to get a passing grade due to their travelers going "out of policy" to fulfill their needs.

If travelers are routinely ignoring your company travel policy or booking outside of your shared portal, then there are either problems with your policies or with the online booking experience. Something's wrong and needs to be fixed - stat!

Here are five signs to determine if your employees are not happy with your current travel policy or booking tools, along with strategic remedies you can enact to improve your grade!



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## 1 They're Booking Travel on Their Own

Maybe they think they're being more productive by booking on their own, or that they can get a better deal, or they prefer a boutique hotel over the in-policy hotel partner, or they simply just don't want to bother using your company's travel partner.

**REMEDY:** Educate your employees on why there's a policy in place and how to use it, explaining how their choices affect the company's bottom line. Saving \$100 today might cost you thousands in the long run if you don't meet negotiated supplier minimums.

## 2 They're Bypassing Your Online Booking Tool

Maybe they don't like using the travel management company's booking tool because it's too slow or perhaps they were never trained properly on how to use it.

**REMEDY:** Reward those employees who successfully use the tool. Consider starting a company-wide rewards program, such as a monthly drawing, that only those who use the tool can participate in. And ask your travel management company to provide additional training. A good travel management partner will offer webinars or an in-person demonstration to help increase your compliance numbers.



Your company loses its bargaining power for volume discounts when your employees book hotels, airfare or a rental car outside of the list of preferred suppliers.

### 3 They're Booking at the Last Minute

Many employees procrastinate booking their business trips, but they just don't know how much money it could be costing the company.

**REMEDY:** Again, education is key. Some employees see a travel policy as only a set of arbitrary rules. But when you take the time to sit down with them and explain the benefits of those rules - and how increased company profits will help out everyone in the long run - they should come around to your side.

### 4 They're Booking Expensive Flights and Hotel Rooms

Some employees think that a travel policy is crimping their style by forcing them to make cheaper choices, so they splurge on costlier flights and hotel rooms with out-of-policy suppliers. Why not? It's on the company dime!

**REMEDY:** Have your CEO and VPs publicly follow the rules. Once their example has been set from the top, other employees down the line are more likely to follow their lead.

### 5 They're Booking Out-of-Policy Suppliers

Maybe they're booking other suppliers for personal airline rewards points or they prefer the amenities of a boutique hotel. This is a big no-no. Your company loses its bargaining power for volume discounts when your employees book hotels, airfare or a rental car outside of the list of preferred suppliers. And, there are Duty of Care implications when their favorite hotel is in a dangerous neighborhood or their car rental agency doesn't meet your minimum insurance requirements!

**REMEDY:** Celebrate those employees who stay within policy. Send out a monthly email highlighting those travelers and reward them with special perks.

Your travel management company should have more ideas on how to encourage higher employee participation. If they don't, maybe it's time to consider one that is more invested in your company's long-term success!