

Business Travel Managed Travel & Procurement Solutions

EXECUTIVE

Ask The Experts

What key features should my travel department look for as it selects an automated booking system?

Tom Wilkinson: The most obvious feature is ease of use, although few buyers forget to look for that. A good automated system will also come with good technical support. Too many of these systems now presume that the interface is friendly enough that no support will be needed.

Another important feature is the ability to connect automated reservations systems with your agency's quality control and back office systems, as well as to any automated reimbursement systems. A good automated product will ensure that all reservations are analyzed for compliance with corporate policies.

Ultimately, the aim of every travel manager should be to create an end-to-end solution of all aspects of the travel process.

Allan Brown: A system that isn't user-friendly isn't going to be used. Making it simple will make it useful. Also look for ease of administration; an automated system should simplify, not complicate, the travel manager's job. No one wants the burden of managing a difficult system.

Michael Steiner: It's very important, in terms of reliability, accuracy and accountability of the system, to find out who the original developers are, and to ask if the system will be continually enhanced by travel industry professionals. Also:

- Has the system undergone extensive beta-testing by end-users who are travelers and corporate travel managers?
- Find out how much the system can be customized for your own company needs. For example, does it have data reporting capabilities that will tell what travel choices your travelers actually made? Can you get policy exception reports?