How is the new travel agency, World Travel, doing?

Vanderbilt Travel partnered with the Faculty Senate, University Staff Advisory Council (USAC), and the Medical Center Staff Advisory Council (MCSAC) to survey traveler satisfaction with our new travel agency, World Travel. The survey was designed in partnership with VU faculty to gather feedback on how the new travel agency is performing and to identify potential areas for improvement, if necessary. The results have been shared with World Travel.

A total of 847 Vanderbilt faculty and staff booked travel through either the Concur platform or a World Travel agent between October 30 and December 15, 2015 and were invited to participate in the survey. Of these, 81 individuals responded to the survey (9.6 percent response rate). Given the low response rate, for the next survey, occurring in February, Vanderbilt Travel (VU Travel Team) will offer the chance to win a $250 airfare voucher to be used for business travel to those who participate in the survey.

Results of the first survey and action steps are summarized below:

The booking experience

74% of respondents termed the booking experience as “very” or “somewhat” positive. Of the 17% of respondents who found the booking experience problematic (the remainder recorded their experience as “neutral.”) concerns noted were:

- Insufficient time allowed for connecting flights
- Using traveler rewards programs in the Concur platform

Action steps:

- As the airline industry continues to make the connections closer and closer together, the VU Travel Team will work with World Travel agents and instruct them to ask our travelers if they prefer a longer or closer connection when booking their flights.

- Vanderbilt travelers can enter travel reward programs in their Concur Profile, under Travel Settings. When you travel using the frequent traveler programs designated in your profile, your travel information will be passed to the program to issue reward credit, as appropriate. To update your travel rewards programs in Concur, please use this Concur Quick Guide: Updating Your Profile (developed specifically for VU travelers) to step you through the process.

If you already have frequent traveler program numbers listed in your Concur profile, please verify that the name registered with each frequent traveler program matches exactly with your name as shown in your Concur profile. In those instances where your name is different, please contact the appropriate rewards program to request a name change to match that shown in Concur.

As a travel industry best practice, we also recommend you notify your frequent traveler programs of your Known Traveler Number (KTN) for inclusion in your profile. If you’re eligible and approved for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) expedited security screening TSA Precheck program, you will be given a Known Traveler Number (KTN) to use when making flight reservations. Participating airlines will print an indicator on your boarding pass. When you arrive at the airport, look for signs for the security lanes for TSA Precheck.
Flight cost and length of time to book

80% of respondents felt the flight cost and length of time it took to book their flight were reasonable. Of the 11% who had concerns (9% were “neutral”) the items identified were:

- Inability to locate desired flights
- Difficulty requesting personal miles upgrade

Action steps:

- VU travelers may book international travel in Concur, but it is encouraged that all complex international travel (e.g., more than two legs), be booked by calling a World Travel agent at 877-271-9258, who can check for best trip routing, schedules and airline rates as well as provide options, and ensure you have proper travel documentation. World Travel also offers Passport and Visa services; including, new / renew passport, replacement, name change, amendments and additional visa pages. For information on how to expedite your passport or visa please email or call 800-251-9047.

- Low fare price match guarantee - With respect to domestic U.S. fares, if a Vanderbilt traveler finds an available online airfare lower than the lowest airfare offered by World Travel Service, the agency will match that airfare or pay the difference between that airfare and the lowest airfare offered by World Travel Service. The traveler must provide written and verifiable documentation (email a screenshot to a VU World Travel agent) that a lower online airfare is available for the same routing as the lowest airfare offered by World Travel Service. The airfare must be the same class of service and available at the rate posted. The online airfare and our fare must be quoted on the same day. Consolidator and tickets offered through auction websites (such as priceline.com and hotwire.com) or other agency sites are excluded from the price match guarantee.

- In February, an upcoming instructor-led Concur Travel and Expense Training class provides hands-on training to the online travel and expense modules and an opportunity to discuss specific topics that apply to your department or future travel plans. These courses are open to faculty and staff. We have scheduled the following sessions:
  - University
    - Feb. 17th – 1-3 pm
    - March 22nd – 9-11 am
    - April 11th – 1-3 pm
  - Medical Center
    - Feb. 23rd – 8:30-11:30 am

Enrollment for these courses are available in the Learning Exchange using keyword Concur (select University Central or Medical Center Staff as applicable), and then from the list of available courses, select the Instructor-Led Training class titled Training for Vanderbilt Travel and Expense.

In March, the VU Travel Team will begin hosting monthly Concur Travel training sessions that will focus specifically on the travel search capabilities for airline, hotel and car rental reservation.
The VU Travel Team is also available for onsite departmental training if needed. Please email travel@vanderbilt.edu to set up a training session.

- World Travel and the VU Travel Team are evaluating the personal miles upgrade issues that have been brought to their attention. We will update you when we distribute the results of the second survey.

World Travel agents

Of those respondents working with an agent, 83% found their experience positive. Of the 8 percent who were not satisfied with their interaction the concerns noted were:

- Dissatisfaction with the schedule provided by the agent to the traveler.
- Delay in responding to queries.

Action steps:

- VU Travel Team has provided survey feedback to World Travel to ensure agents are:
  - Asking the traveler to prioritize the importance of the price, flight times, and connections. For example, does the traveler want the cheapest schedule regardless of departure times/connections? Or are flight times and connections more important and price a secondary consideration?
  - Replying to email and phone calls promptly

To increase agent response times, VU Travel Team has suggested adjusting the World Travel agent hours during our peak booking seasons of January through March and August through October; currently only one agent is working past 4:30. World Travel will evaluate the call metrics and adjust agent schedules accordingly.

Additionally, the VU Travel Team is available when needed to advocate on behalf of our travelers to troubleshoot and resolve World Travel customer service issues. We encourage VU travelers to reach out to travel@vanderbilt.edu at any time.

Overall experience with World Travel

75% of respondents labeled their overall experience with World Travel as “very” or “somewhat” positive; of the 13% experiencing problems, concerns identified were:

- Inability to contact WT after-hours.

Action steps:

- World Travel provides Vanderbilt faculty and staff with a 24-hour help desk. For agent assistance after-hours or emergencies, please contact World Travel Service by calling:
  - 865-777-1600 (travelers should refer to code: W-7CD).
  - The after-hours information is available on each World Travel airline and hotel e-itinerary, the Concur Travel homepage and the VU Travel website. If you need assistance in the evening after the VU
dedicated agents have completed their shifts, VU travelers should contact the World Travel after-hours number listed above and the agents on call can access your travel profile.

The next survey will canvas all bookings made between December 15, 2015 and February 15, 2016 to provide an additional snap shot of the travel agency performance.