

## Ready for the Road: How to build employee confidence (Part 1 of 2)

00:03

Coby Price: Good morning. Good afternoon and good evening from wherever in the world you're joining us. My name is Coby Price, and I'm the Vice President for Global customer management in Asia Pacific for CWT. We're thrilled to have you join us today for our 'Ready for the road, building employee confidence' session. We'll be discussing the return to travel from a traveler's perspective. What are they looking for from their organization and their preferred suppliers, when they get back on the road or in the air? Well, we know that there are some travelers out there who cannot wait to start traveling again. There may be others who feel that while your travel restrictions may have lifted, they may be looking for a little bit more information before they're ready to grab their passports and go. Today's session is not about pricing or negotiations. It's all about your most important asset, your traveling employees. So with that, please allow me to thank in advance for their time and introduce you to our panelists and moderator for today's session. From Novartis we have Benji Concepcion, Global Head of travel operations, from Accor, Kerry Healey, Vice President of Sales Asia Pacific, from Singapore Airlines, Angeline Khoo, Vice President Customer Experience, from CWT, Peter Brady, Vice President Global Services, Solutions and Innovation from our Energy, Resources and Marine team. And our moderator from Sony Pictures & Networks India, Chief Human Resources Officer Manu Wadhwa.

01:36

Manu Wadhwa: Thank you so much Coby, for the introduction to the session. It's a pleasure to be a part of this gathering, which has eminent speakers and panelists from all across Asia Pacific. As we talk about really looking at the traveler behavior in our region across the globe, I'm hoping that together we be able to share insights and inspire each one of you who are listening into us to incorporate perspectives in your operating model, which makes it easier for business and for personal pleasure to be taken into due course of time. But before I open up to the lovely set of panelists, let me first share a story of what's happening in the industry that I represent. And what's really been the big game changing perspective that we have seen in media and entertainment. Pre COVID, this industry only knew how to do business in person. Even for a one hour meeting, you would literally have flights being taken from point A to point B. And meetings happen because in person connect was the biggest driver of doing the entertainment. As you can imagine, our production facility was the whole world whether it is a tree in your backyard to a lovely ensemble of Mattel property to sites across the world that is our production facility. So travel is by design something which is core to our operating model. Five months later, from March till now, the world is almost taken a spin for all of us. And I'm sure a panelist will share a perspective of their industry. In media and entertainment, we literally had a knee jerk reaction because we did not know how to do business, except in person conversations, except traveling extensively. And I say that necessity

is the mother of invention. There is a lot of invention that has taken place, innovation that has taken place in the industry. Want to give an example of many of you watch, Who Wants to Be a Millionaire in your local languages across the globe. This is one show which is one of the most coveted across the globe and in India too and to do the auditions every year of almost close to 3 million people, the troops will travel throughout the country in 50/60 odd cities and shortlist participants who will join in on the show. This year, as they say, as I stated necessity, the business has to go on. That entire audition process has actually completely shifted to digital online presence. And first time ever, we actually had a tree explode of applicants, all of whom were auditioned through virtual technology. Some may say that, wow, this is something which is game changing. But at the same time, for a traveler, this literally is a shift from what they were used to in terms of putting their backpacks and our business professionals going across the cities. So this perspective shift on innovation now becoming the bare essential, it has definitely shifted our perspective of whether everything needs to happen by traveling. And that's the perspective which I hope to learn, and also, at the same point of time, share with my fellow panelists, to see what is their essential travel? How can we make businesses a lot more comfortable, secured in their mindset to reopen their perspective towards business travel, because I do not believe the world can get the scent operate from virtual patterns, there has to be a hybrid. And in order to enable that hybrid to happen, many of us will have to take that courageous, I have to create that sense of safety and security. So with that, I hope to learn a lot from you, my dear panelists, and let's share a dialogue. And my first conversation there on goes to Benjamin and Peter. Benjamin, I'm going to call you Benji for the rest. Just share with us the perspective of since the lockdown scenario across the globe in your respective regions, what is happening on bare essential travels, what are you viewing as the trends now, and what do you see will change over the course of time?

06:21

Benjamin Concepcion (Benji): Sure, if I may go first. So for Novartis, first and foremost, we stress that for Novartis to help, the well being, the safety of our associates, our patients, and those who travel on behalf of Novartis is really a fact most important to us. So that really comes first. So we continue to be an employee first company through a series of commitments that we have made to our associates with really their safety and well being apart, from committing that there are no COVID related layoffs, to really providing our associates with, you know, extended learning opportunities online, not only for our associates, but also for their families. Again, really taking care, again, their safety and, and health well being really, first and foremost. Our policy within Novartis is that there's no internal travel, or internal meeting travel, that requires international travel. So if somebody needs to, to conduct something of this sort, they will really require a senior executive to approve this. Domestic travel remains to be under the jurisdiction of the country leadership. But again, this is aligned to local government guidelines. And when I spoke to several of my peers, surprisingly enough, surprisingly enough, we have the same policy. And just the last thing I'd like to share based on our high tech group study, or a survey that was conducted, when business executives were asked about what is, you know, kind of long term for business travel, so they were 82% of them responded that many of the organizations will shift away from business travel, as organization really increased focus on remote working, and mobile technologies to put their support, their work, to support remote working, but when asked about when do you think

travel will resume, 57% of them said that travel will resume within three to six months. So really quite interesting. And then about 32% of them about beyond six months, 12 months, but I really think that this answer is going to change, depending on again, the situation with the vaccine and the COVID situation in various countries. So I'll just hand it over to Peter to share his thoughts.

08:57

Peter Brady: Okay, great. Yeah, thanks, Manu. And thank you, Benji, I think first and foremost, it's important to consider the purpose of business travel as an enabler of activity and growth. At the moment, I think organizations need to take time to consider how the definition of essential travel, and Benji referred to this, may align or not with government policies on what is essential policy. In my energy resource and marine or ERM world there are two types of travel. You know, one is the traditional transient business travel, like many organizations have and the second of course, is the rotational crew or support travel, which is piped primarily to upstream work sites like a mine site or an offshore rig or platform, something like that. And given the world's ongoing energy consumption and the continuation of manufacturing and transport logistics, there are many organizations and jurisdictions have deemed that energy resource and marine specialized skill workers as critical to operations and therefore, essential travelers. The second part of the question was really around, you know, trends. And so given that in energy resources and marine, we really haven't stopped traveling, you know, what are some of the trends that we're seeing? I think, in the beginning, like when most organizations were really working to freeze travel, and what we saw was a huge rush. And there were two parts of that rush. The first one was the repatriation of anyone who was deemed non essential to site. So those non essential skilled workers been taken away from site and repatriated home. And then the second rush was really around a semi permanent relocation of workers, and sometimes their families, to where they needed to be before borders closed. And some other trends that we've seen is obviously a huge shift to shot on charter flights, to replace regular paid, or RPT commercial flights. And now we're actually managing anything between 10 to 20 charter flights per day, um, depending on the day, we've managed a big shift away from standard hotel accommodation, to more appropriate semi permanent block space type accommodation. And we've worked to integrate new health screening procedures. And I'll deal with that again, a little bit later in one of the other questions coming up thanks, Manu. Also, I think what's important here, and everyone might appreciate is we've actually migrated away from any online bookings. And for the most part, all bookings now are offline. And there are two key reasons for that. One is so that we can accommodate and manage temporary manual procedures that the organizations may have for all bookings. And the second reason is, so that we can actually find flights and flight connections, given the amount of availability and the changes to availability. The only last point that I would make here and importantly, is that we've also seen a huge increase. And we've played an active a very active part in that in much closer cooperation and collaboration between key stakeholders and key stakeholder groups. And within company organizations, and for example, you're much closer correct collaboration between travel and HR, and health, safety and environment, operations, suppliers, sometimes unions, and in some cases, governments. So you know, that sort of collaboration and close working environment has paid dividends. Back to you Manu.

12:27

Manu: Thank you. Thanks a lot, Benji and Peter. And you highlighted some very interesting points. One that stuck for me and I experienced it very recently is that we shifted on very essential travels, because production shouldn't have to happen into taking the crews onto charter mode. So instead of doing commercial, we booked a charter and from point A to point B, the entire crew traveled together. Or while it is a little bit of an inconvenience for various individuals personal and professional time matches, but people have come together, they have collaborated. This is the time for my shoot, I'm going to go from distance a to distance b, and the charter helps you do that. So taking some of these measures forward, while creativity is coming into picture, but what are both of you seeing as the biggest concerns and questions coming from employees around travel, around the changes that are being made on travel? And Angeline? Carrie, please feel free to add as well.

13:30

Peter: Okay, we'll switch it up, Benji all at one time. Yeah. So there are two parts of that question. You know, what are the biggest concerns and questions for employees? And the second is, you know, what are the changes that have had to occur because of that, I think in the energy resource and marine world, and the biggest concerns and questions have really been around, you know, what are the revised policies and procedures? And what does that actually mean to my rotational roster? And with that, what then are the impacts? What are the impacts that will be there will be on myself and my family? And I think then secondary to those initial questions, is the well, okay. What then also is the organization able to do to ensure our health and well being and well being is a very new theme, you know, that's really coming through here. And when we talk about well being, we're talking about both mental health as well as physical health, which leads to the second part of the question, which is really around what changes, you know, for us, safety has always been paramount to energy resource and marine organizations. But what we've really seen is that uplift in thinking and practice around employee well being. With temporary relocations, and with 14 day isolation periods, there's also been real consideration given to the appropriate accommodation. I mentioned that shift and accommodation before home and really looking for accommodation that allows for mobility, some fresh air, an open space and the allowance of pets, believe it or not, we've actually had pets be relocated as well. We're also seeing things like gym equipment and barista coffee machines or, or barista coffee services being bought in to, you know, accommodate people because they missed those sorts of things that they would normally have access to, you know, to in life and of course, then and Manu you mentioned charters, I'll go back to charter. Again, there's some real implications there particularly around cost. One of the other elements we had to deal with with regards to the charters is the seating configurations to allow for social distancing. And, of course, those seating configurations principally add to cost. We've also seen health assessments, you know, initial health assessments by organizations, with people boarding those charter flights. And just as a last point, before I quickly hand to Benji, and we've also found that with commercial airports, their procedures, their restrictions, and sometimes closures, we've actually had to work with charter companies to actually find alternate air straps. And in some cases, we've actually, we've actually used Defence Force facilities to enable that. So you know, in addition to that principle change, you know, you've also seen a very

significant knock on impact to ground logistics and services that have to support all of that. Ehm Benji?

16:23

Benji: Peter, I mean, I could actually just photocopy everything you said, this is very valid points. I have two points on why I want to share, these are my experiences recently. I think the number one also, concern here is the complexity of the situation out there in terms of country requirements. Most recently, I dealt with an associate of ours who was in a three month assignment in Basel, and she has an Indian passport and she needed to return to India. And the complexity of getting this organized. She, there were flights available in the UK, we can proud turned to UK because she doesn't have the necessary visa. We ended up driving her, getting a driver to drive her from Switzerland to Germany in order for her to catch a flight. And this flight, which is an Air India flight, it's government controlled. CWT can't book it, as again, the complexity when she gets to the destination, she needs to be quarantined, and then she needs to hop on a domestic flight to get I mean, it's really the hardship of of traveling. The complexity of this, another situation we experienced was the situation in Beijing when there was an outbreak, China was already starting to travel for us. This was about a month ago. And suddenly, there was an outbreak in Beijing. And suddenly, we had to like stop all travel to Beijing account for you know, everybody who's in Beijing and trying to get them out of Beijing. So it's almost like the start of the pandemic all over again. So it's, it's really the uncertainty and how fluid the situation is. Definitely a lot of the concerns is in, are we covered by our, our travel insurance. And we get a COVID test, if that's something that the organization is going to reimburse us for. All of these and everything else that that Peter mentioned. But again, I really think that it's really just right now the complexity and the uncertainty of the situation with various countries and in various degrees of kind of severity in terms of the state of COVID in their countries.

18:53

Peter : And Benji, it's Peter again, that's just a really great validation as to why we've seen all bookings move from an online environment to that offline environment. You know, first of all those things can actually be managed. It's a great point you made, Benji.

19:06

Manu: Thanks a lot and I think all your insights around accommodation patterns shifting to service coming closer to the doorstep of employees. I liked the coffee you know, I would pick it out for for my employees for sure, to travel insurance becoming so so critical.