

# one nucleus insights

FLIGHT CENTRE  
Business Travel  
Cambridge



## Sole trader to major corporate – why use a Travel Management Company (TMC)?

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**With the internet at your fingertips and offering ever more choice to business travellers, is there really a need to use a TMC? You could argue that there is too much choice and who knows if you really are getting the best deal online?**

The key considerations can be summarised as follows:

- Global buying power giving greater savings
- Local knowledge
- Choice
- Management reporting and centralised costs
- Emergency assistance

For a simple point to point flight it may seem logical for most people to hop online, search and buy themselves. It can be deemed quicker, cheaper and the modern way to book travel. In some instances this is true, particularly when it comes to low-cost airlines, which have been increasing their service levels and catering for the business market well (with the odd exceptions). However, what many people do not realise is that when the internet offers one published fare, a TMC can offer a choice of fares on the same flights.

The affiliation that TMC's have with scheduled airlines can result in substantial discounts, thanks to global buying power. The fares available to specific destinations, multi-stop trips and corporate membership schemes can be complex but it's worthwhile to know about them. The internet is clever but there are some itineraries that are beyond its comprehension. This **global buying power** extends to hotels as well. The best TMC's have unique access to savings and room upgrades across large chains and small boutique hotels. This is an obvious and great benefit, everyone enjoys a discount, however what about the booking fee that comes with it – and what does this include exactly?

Booking fees fluctuate between each TMC. Flight Centre Business Travel, a One Nucleus Support Supplier and part of Flight Centre Limited, has low fees and is very transparent with this, detailing it on the E Tickets and invoices. It's also important to note that this fee is per booking (not per sector of a flight for example or per "additional service"), and there are no extra hidden costs. There are no contracts either, so clients are free to pick and choose what they would like to book. A booking fee does not necessarily mean you will pay more than booking on the internet, further, it does mean that you will be receive additional services that go above and beyond the internet.

Whether you need someone to organise a high volume of travel for multiple travellers, or you just don't have the time to search for your own flight or hotel, your Travel Manager can be of great use (even if you didn't think you'd need one!) You will be given choice and a good agent will even think outside of the box and where possible send you alternative options to save you money and make your travel experience a little easier.

It's unsurprising that agents have travelled extensively and between a team of people this **knowledge** is shared. They can advise on the smallest of details – including how long to be at the airport before the flight takes off (this is a question that is commonly asked).

The ability to store traveller information including seat preferences, meal requests and frequent flyers means that it will transfer into every booking and is not forgotten – reassuring for a traveller who is used to being in control of their own reservation.

For the larger organisation it's also of benefit to **centralise costs** and produce **management reports**. This can include following a travel policy to ensure costs are controlled. Reports can focus on individual travellers, destinations and areas of high-costs. The latter can be used to source corporate rates resulting in greater savings.

Whilst the internet can have its place for simple itineraries, it is not the most helpful when an emergency hits and flights are delayed or cancelled, a name needs correcting on a ticket or a hotel is charging an unauthorised amount. The greatest benefit of a TMC has to be **emergency assistance**. Flight Centre Business Travel keeps calls within the company and do not outsource. This means clients are dealt with quickly and efficiently 24 hours a day. For those who have had experience contacting airlines or hotels the waiting time can be lengthy and costly – cost being a significant factor when calling overseas. By contacting your Travel Manager you can ensure your time and money is spent more productively elsewhere. Panic over.

So, is there really a need to use a TMC? Not all TMC's have contracts so the great thing is that there is no harm finding out and comparing the costs. They can cater for those who travel just once a year, or for those who travel on a regular basis. The next time you are booking a trip try giving them a go and see how they can demonstrate service and value.

This is the only way to find out if you really are getting the best deal online.



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