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2020



Flight Plan 2020: Creating Traveler Confidence in the Time of COVID

This CarTrawler-sponsored report offers recovery advice for the travel industry and 10 examples of how airlines are encouraging travelers to return

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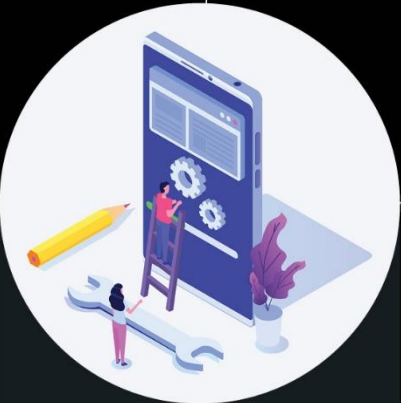
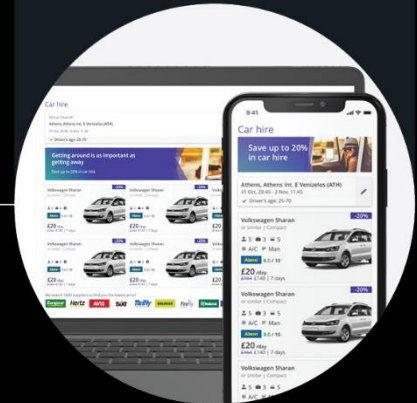
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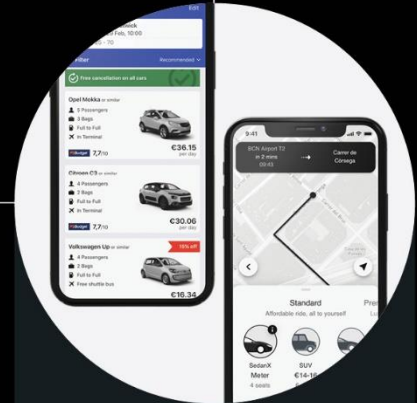
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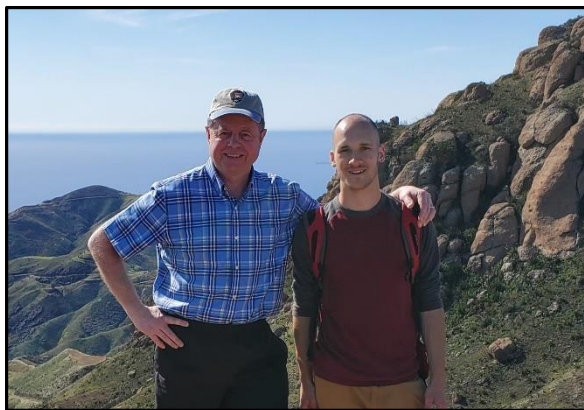
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About Jay Sorensen, Writer of the Report

Jay Sorensen's research and reports have made him a leading authority on frequent flyer programs and the ancillary revenue movement. He is a regular keynote speaker at the annual MEGA Event, spoke at IATA Passenger Services Symposiums in Abu Dhabi and Singapore, and has testified to the US Congress on ancillary revenue issues. His published works are relied upon by airline executives throughout the world and include first-ever



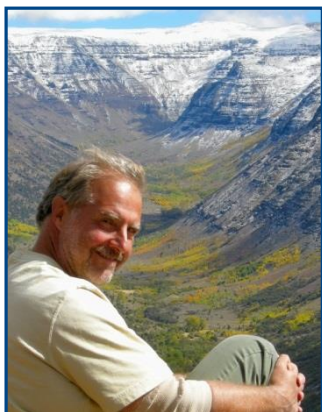
Jay and son Aleksei hiking in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in California.

guides on the topics of ancillary revenue and loyalty marketing. He was acknowledged by his peers when he received the Airline Industry Achievement Award at the MEGA Event in 2011.

Mr. Sorensen is a veteran management professional with 36 years experience in product, partnership, and marketing development. As president of the IdeaWorksCompany consulting firm, he has enhanced the generation of airline revenue, started loyalty programs and co-branded credit cards, developed products in the

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Eric, at his favorite summer retreat, Steens Mountain, Oregon.

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Flight Plan 2020: Creating Traveler Confidence in the Time of COVID

Success might best occur through small plans

The poem “If” by Rudyard Kipling begins with words that define our current struggle, “If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs . . .” This report is written to help those working at airlines and in the travel industry sort through the issue of traveler confidence and provide examples of how it can be restored. This is a confusing time and your internal compass may feel like it’s spinning out of control. I want to help calm that sensation with a report that explains our current environment, describes how to comfort consumers, and provides examples of what might be done to push the industry to recover.

Those who are regular readers of my reports know I often look outside the airline business for encouragement and ideas. Let’s examine the story of Hubert Joly, who joined US-based electronics retailer Best Buy as CEO in 2012.¹ This traditional big box retailer found itself decimated by online competitors offering more selection at better prices and operating without the overhead of a giant network of brick and mortar stores. Readers might recognize his name, as Mr. Joly has a travel industry pedigree with more than 8 years in CEO positions at Carlson Wagonlit Travel and the Carlson Companies.



Hubert Joly is known for being an ever-present leader with front line staff; here he’s pictured at a Best Buy store.

Image: Best Buy

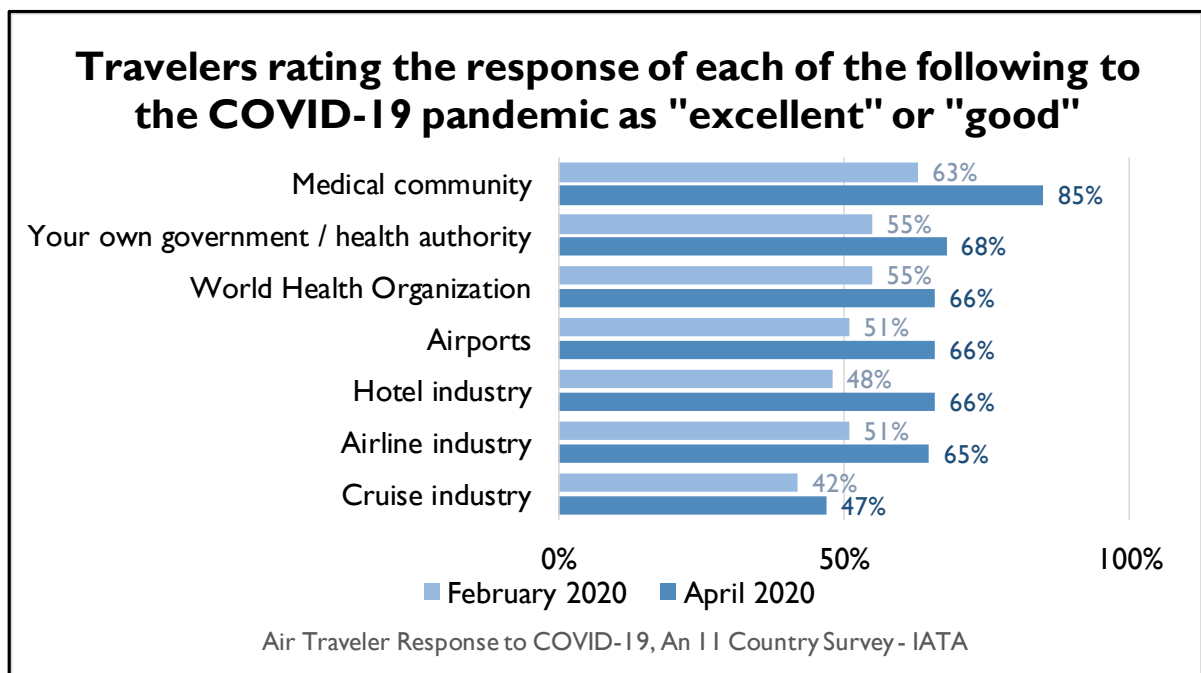
Best Buy presented Mr. Joly with immediate turnaround challenges that needed to be fixed quickly. To prevent management paralysis, he focused on small plans that could be easily changed. “Instead of making some plan for the next six months,” he told an audience in 2018, “we’d get together to plan a week’s worth of work.” Best Buy became an organization that rapidly learned and adapted to its environment on a weekly basis. Success was ensured by preparing employees and customers to expect regular changes. Otherwise, the rapidity of change may suggest leadership has become overwhelmed by circumstance. Applied to our travel industry, this dynamic of continuing change will be accepted if it builds confidence for travelers and employees and improves comfort for travelers.

¹ “Getting the Restart Right: How to Lead When Nobody Has a Map” article dated 27 April 2020 at WSJ.com.

We are responsible for creating confidence-building measures

Individual airlines, hotels, vacation rentals, car hire, airport transfers, and sightseeing companies are already making decisions to ensure the safety of their customers, which will also increase traveler confidence in our industry. The standards set by travel companies will likely be above the requirements mandated by authorities. It's crucial for travel companies to communicate what we are doing for our passengers, guests, and employees.

The government response to the pandemic in the US, as it applies to commercial aviation, has often been confused. In the past, the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) might have led with specific and required initiatives that would've been adopted worldwide. The handling of the Boeing 737 MAX crisis reduced the stature of the FAA as a globally-admired aviation safety agency. There is also plenty of "finger pointing" in our industry. Safety and economic regulators say they are not health regulators. Health agencies say they are not airline specialists. In the US, the FAA should be responsible for the safety of passengers – period. In the absence of action, airline employees have taken their complaints directly to media. Flight attendants are justifiably upset that regulations have been late to address the need for personal protective equipment as a routine requirement. This lack of protection is wrong, and the publicity creates doubts among consumers.



Fortunately, the public continues to have faith in government institutions and the travel industry. IATA conducted a survey of 4,700 recent airline travelers in eleven countries between 06-09 April 2020.² They asked, "From what you know or have read, how would you rate the response of each of the following to the COVID-19 outbreak?" Sixty-five percent of the survey population (travelers who took an airline flight in the prior 9 months) rated the airline industry response as excellent or good. That's up from a pre-pandemic rating of 51 percent. It's crucial for airlines, hotels, and travel companies to work tirelessly to improve this level of consumer confidence.

² "Air Traveler Response to COVID 19: An 11 Country Survey" IATA results dated 14 April 2020.

The industry can expect to be closely scrutinized by the media and public. Airline travel is uniquely positioned as an activity for which there is no escape after the aircraft door is closed. In many ways, it has become the weak link of the travel experience. Checking in to accommodations, hiring a car, and sightseeing outdoors, don't generate the same level of concern and confinement. That's because the traveler has control over these surroundings, whereas an airline passenger is captive during the duration of the flight. This requires extra effort by airlines to meet the higher bar established by consumer expectations. Travelers might rate deep-cleaning of hotels, vacation rentals, and rental cars as representing an adequate effort; making the same promise will fall short for airlines.

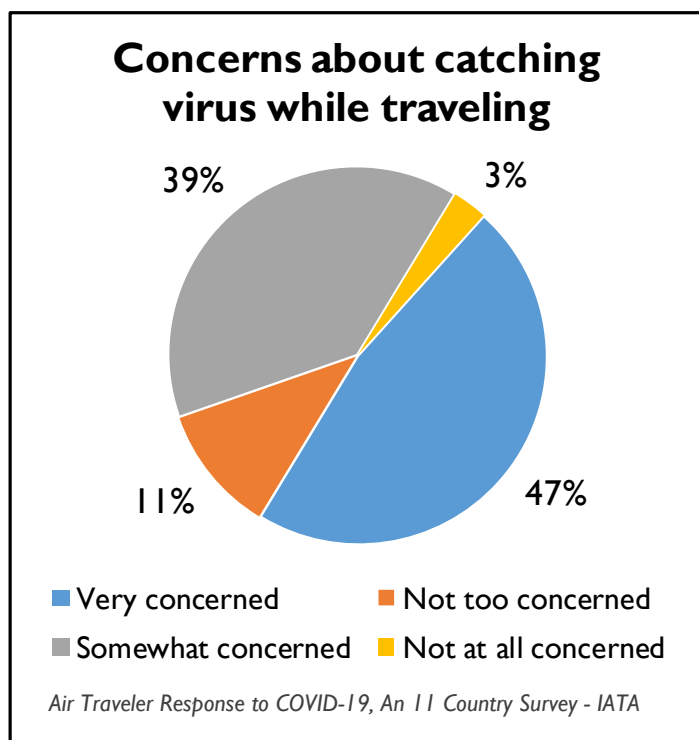
Consumers will return to travel

You should interpret the pie chart on this page as a positive indication of consumer confidence. At this early stage of industry effort, it's surprising the majority of passengers have modest levels of concern. These results are from the same IATA survey of 4,700 recent airline travelers. The travel industry should work to shrink the size of the "very concerned" 47 percent slice of the pie chart.

Meaningful efforts to improve traveler safety began to appear in late March, which was just before the IATA survey. These efforts will improve consumer confidence and reduce the level of concern. News which portrays airline travel as an unsafe activity will have the opposite effect. Recent reports of activity from China – and even the US – are encouraging.

Travel activity disclosed by STR and IATA shows improvement as China moves firmly into the recovery phase. Midscale and economy hotel bookings achieved a 60 percent

occupancy rate in China during mid-April 2020.³ It's interesting to note, STR advises year over year daily rates (ADR) for these properties were down nearly 25 percent from 19 January – 11 April 2019. The passenger load factor increased to 60.2 percent for March from 47.1 percent in February 2020 for domestic flights in China.⁴ The Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) has been a very active advocate for increasing traveler confidence through new guidelines. For example, "Preventing Spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Guideline for Airlines" is a very thorough 24-page 7,000+ word document which details the multitude of procedures required or recommended for China's aviation industry.



³ "COVID-19 and Hotel Performance Update" webinar presentation dated 17 April 2020 at STR.com.

⁴ IATA Air Passenger Market Analysis released 29 April 2020.

Recent data from states in the US which have relaxed restrictions on business closures show significant increases at travel-related locations. Unacast measures human mobility by combining location and map data. For the initial weekend of relaxed restrictions (25-26 April 2020) foot traffic at travel-related locations increased by more than 50 percent in Georgia, Oklahoma, and South Carolina compared to the prior restricted weekend.⁵ The travel category includes hotels, booking agencies, airports, train, and bus terminals. Of course, the increase is attributed to a low base of activity. This early activity is encouraging, but these may be false starts – to be much regretted in the future – if the virus springs back in China or in areas which open for business on an aggressive timetable.

Confidence is built in layers

Overall good health is the result of a combination of factors. Habits such as good diet, adequate sleep, and daily exercise provide layers of protection to ensure good health. Stopping bad habits, such as smoking, provides a great leap to better health. If you don't do any of this, don't be surprised by bad results. Of course, even the fervent practice of clean living might yield the unexpected outcome of disease or an accident. You can't eliminate these risks, but you can reduce them.

The same is true of building consumer confidence for travel. Consumers will form a basic expectation of preventive actions taken by travel companies during the pandemic. These expectations will be created through exposure to news, social media, friends, and respected experts.

The messages developed by travel companies through advertising, website content, and online materials will also have a major influence on creating confidence for travelers. Perhaps the most important factor will be how your employees interact with customers. That's because employees are present at the point of service delivery, and share the same risk by being engaged in the travel process. Employee confidence represents an endorsement for consumers; a lack of employee confidence is the opposite.



This healthy habits advice is courtesy of the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Abundant care must be taken as these messages carry a double burden. Effective communication will help ensure the survival of an airline and will influence the choices made by your customers. But beyond the messaging your company delivers to consumers, your actions will have profound impact on lives. Airlines are among the world's best practitioners of safety on a global basis. It's natural for consumers to extend this expectation to the new mission of disease prevention.

⁵ "Relaxed Restrictions Drew Some to Go Out" 30 April 2020 article in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Global methods currently offer a “basic economy” approach

Airlines quickly adjusted schedules as the pandemic evolved. For some airlines, these changes have grounded entire aircraft fleets, and for others, flying may represent only 10 percent of normal activity. Accompanying this decrease was the almost total loss of passenger traffic for all airlines. An employee at a major airline at Milwaukee’s airport disclosed to me the average was 3 passengers per flight during mid-April. This drop in activity allowed passengers to self-isolate on the nearly empty aircraft. When combined with the rapid exchange of highly filtered air, these flights were likely among the safest public environments available.

This will change as the world begins to recover from its pandemic slumber and traffic increases. Similar to the advice offered in the opening section of this report, airlines are taking a week-by-week approach to rolling out initiatives to increase consumer confidence. From April through May, the following describes the basic measures taken by airlines, either through their own initiatives or as mandated by authorities:

- Relaxation of booking restrictions to allow no-fee changes for a limited period of time.
- Suspension of food and beverage on shorter flights, and a limited selection of packaged items on longer flights.
- Passengers may change seats on flights to provide more social distancing.
- Rigorous cleaning and disinfecting regimen of all passenger touch surfaces between flights, or overnight.
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of passenger touch surfaces in the airport.
- Emphasis on using HEPA filters for cabin air.
- Closure of most premium lounges and reduced food services in open lounges.

These measures represent the initial steps taken by the airline industry. Similar measures have been reported by hotels, vacation rentals, car hire, and transport providers. In effect these measures communicate, “We are making a better attempt to provide a clean environment for you.” As airlines anticipate the recovery period, many are adding new layers to increase traveler confidence to higher levels.

Time for Definitions

- **Cleaning** removes dust, debris and dirt from a surface by scrubbing, washing and rinsing with a soap product.
- **Sanitizing** reduces bacteria on surfaces as identified by the chemical product’s label. This is not sufficient for COVID-19, which is a virus, not bacteria.
- **Disinfecting** destroys or inactivates both bacteria and viruses on hard nonporous surfaces as identified by the chemical product’s label (like influenza and rhinovirus). Effectiveness is affected by cleanliness of the object, degree of contamination, exposure time to germicide, and other factors. The correct combination of chemicals and application can destroy COVID-19.
- **Sterilizing:** Destroys all forms of microbial life and is carried out in health-care facilities by physical or chemical methods. Sterilizing agents include steam under pressure, dry heat, EtO gas, hydrogen peroxide gas plasma, and liquid chemicals.

Source: CDC.gov and Clorox.com reviewed May 2020.

Ten examples of how airlines increase traveler confidence

The methods used by airlines to increase traveler confidence will evolve through the recovery period. While this report was being written, major airlines in the US began to adopt requirements that passengers wear face coverings before being allowed to board aircraft. This is a meaningful confidence-building layer to reduce viral transmission among passengers. Beyond the emergence of a vaccine, there are no perfect solutions to prevent encountering the virus as we move about our homes, communities, and while traveling. As described earlier in this report, confidence will be built through multiple layers. The following are examples of these layers identified through a global review of airline practices:

1. Large carry-on bags not allowed – Emirates

Roll-on baggage and other large pieces add extra time in the aisle for passengers as they load their overhead bin. We all know this leads to unwanted shoulder-to-shoulder moments of public intimacy. Banning these bags will smooth the departure and arrival process. I've flown on Allegiant and Spirit Airlines which charge a fee for these bags. The boarding and arrival process was unlike any I have experienced; it was rapid and with little contact between passengers.



Emirates has banned large carry-on bags, such as roll-on luggage.⁶ Carry-on items allowed in the cabin will be limited to a laptop, handbag, briefcase, or baby items. The airline boosted the checked baggage allowance to accommodate the lost carry-on benefit. Airlines might consider doing the same, with a future option to adopt the methods of Allegiant and Spirit with an a la carte fee for larger carry-ons. Your boarding and arrival process will be forever faster as a result.

2. Protective attire for cabin crew – Emirates

Emirates introduced new personal protective equipment (PPE) as a type of new inflight uniform.⁷ Other airlines introducing similar attire include AirAsia and Malaysian Airlines. The Emirates employee PPE includes gloves, face mask, eye protection and a nearly full body gown. Similar PPE is also worn by airport staff.

The airline also reduced the complexity of meal service to minimize passenger contact, and removed printed materials from seat backs to prevent viral transmission via surfaces.



⁶ "Emirates steps up safety measures" press release dated 21 April 2020 at Emirates.com.

⁷ "Emirates steps up safety measures" press release dated 21 April 2020 at Emirates.com.

3. Electrostatic disinfectant spraying - United

United has integrated electrostatic spraying into its cleaning procedures on all inbound long-haul international flights, and on mainline overnight aircraft at its U.S. hubs.⁸ The airline promises to deploy electrostatic spray on every departure by June, in addition to disinfecting customer touch points and surfaces before every flight. Using an electrostatic sprayer to disperse disinfectant is a very effective method to coat every surface such as overhead bins, seating, air nozzles and light controls, and tray tables.



This not a fogging method and the sprayer effectively wraps disinfectant around every surface in the cabin. The sprayer head provides a mild positive electrical charge to the disinfectant; the small particles are then attracted to cabin surfaces as these have a natural neutral or negative charge.

4. Hand sanitizing stations – Cathay Pacific

Cathay Pacific passengers will easily find hand sanitizer throughout Hong Kong International Airport, including at check-in counters, immigration and security check-points, departure areas, boarding gates, and arrivals areas.⁹ The carrier’s lounges in Hong Kong, Shanghai Pudong, and Beijing have sanitizer at reception desks.



It’s important to note the results of research on the topic of hand cleaning among airport travelers. One study found 30 percent of travelers don’t wash hands after using a toilet.¹⁰ Another study on the topic, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) determined, “If just 60 percent of travelers passing through the world’s airports kept their hands clean, the risk of a potential infectious disease pandemic would decrease by almost 70 percent.”

Fully automated handwashing systems, such as CleanTech, are an alternative for airlines and airports to consider for the future. Meritech, the manufacturer, claims the process is clinically proven to remove more than 99.9 percent of harmful pathogens from hands in 12 seconds.¹¹ The known benefits of hand washing begs the question, why don’t airlines require passengers to accept a squirt of hand sanitizer before boarding the newly disinfected environment of the aircraft cabin?

⁸ COVID-19 page at hub.United.com reviewed May 2020.

⁹ COVID-19 Information Centre at CathayPacific.com reviewed May 2020.

¹⁰ “Hand hygiene at airports can play key role in slowing spread of disease, study suggests” article dated 13 February 2020 at MinnPost.com.

¹¹ Meritech.com website reviewed May 2020.

5. Touchless vital signs detector by Elenium – Etihad

Etihad Airways is partnering with Australian company Elenium Automation to trial new self-service passenger screening kiosks at the carrier's Abu Dhabi hub airport.¹² The new technology will help identify travelers with medical conditions which potentially includes early phases of COVID-19 infection. The kiosk is configured to use infrared and thermal imaging to record vital signs such as heart rate, body temperature, and respiration rate.



The on-screen dialogue asks questions to determine if there is a need to connect with an agent via video conference for additional assessment. The check-in process is suspended until health issues are resolved. The company claims responses can be given by voice or head movement which removes the need to touch a screen. The method will undergo testing this spring using volunteers and eventually outbound passengers. In the product's demonstration video, the message "It is unlikely you have COVID-19" provides a positive indicator for boarding to be permitted. This innovation will likely pose health privacy concerns and testing will determine whether customers will find the process too invasive. This touchless process has very real limitations and can't provide a conclusive determination of infection. But this kiosk is most certainly a compelling glimpse of a future method to build traveler confidence in a visible and effective manner.

6. Blood test screening before departure – Emirates

Emirates, in coordination with Dubai Health Authority (DHA), tested the capability of performing COVID-19 blood tests on passengers for a flight from Dubai to Tunisia on 15 April 2020.¹³ The tests were designed to provide a result within 10 minutes. The airline disclosed testing went smoothly and said it hopes to scale up the process to test larger numbers of passengers. The process would allow the airline to provide COVID-19 test certificates in real time. This suggests the airline does not see a future need to test all passengers, but rather limit medical screening to individual passengers requiring certification based upon the country of destination.

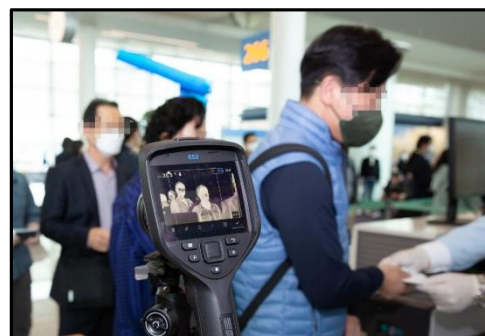


¹² "Etihad Airways to test airport technology to help identify medically at-risk travelers" press release dated 06 April 2020 at Etihad.com.

¹³ "Emirates becomes first airline to conduct on-site rapid COVID-19 tests for passengers" press release dated 15 April 2020 at Emirates.com.

7. Passenger temperature checks – Korean Air

Korean Air implemented temperature checks for all passengers boarding aircraft at Seoul Incheon Airport.¹⁴ China has screened inbound arriving passengers for many years using non-invasive methods. Fevers are detected using thermal imaging cameras and hand-held touchless thermometers. The airline advises a result over 37.5 degrees Celsius or 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit will prevent a passenger from boarding. A study associated with the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine found temperature screening could miss a good portion of infected travelers due to factors which include a lack of symptoms for some persons infected by COVID-19.¹⁵



Frontier Airlines announced on 07 May 2020 it plans to implement temperature screening of all passengers and team members prior to boarding effective 01 June 2020. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher will be denied boarding.¹⁶ Screening will be done at the gate with a touchless thermometer. Passengers will be allowed a second screening after a short rest, if permitted by departure time.

8. Safe flight, one person, multiple seats service – China Express

China Express, a low cost airline in Chongqing, has developed an a la carte service providing a “safe, comfortable, and fast” experience.¹⁷ Each traveler upgrading to the service receives: 1) Four seats in CRJ aircraft or six seats in A-320 aircraft (passenger occupies one of the seats, the remaining are blocked), 2) fast track screening, 3) protection package with mask, gloves, and wipes, 4) 20 kg checked baggage allowance, and COVID-19 insurance coverage. The package can be booked with any fare on the carrier’s website and through online travel agents. China Express admits low load factors, with some routes at 30 percent, prompted the introduction of the service.



Frontier Airlines recently discontinued its initiative called “More Room” which charged a fee to leave the middle seat empty; lawmakers accused the airline of profiting from the pandemic.

¹⁴ COVID-19 Update Center web site page at KoreanAir.com reviewed May 2020.

¹⁵ “Effectiveness of airport screening at detecting travellers infected with novel coronavirus” study dated 06 February 2020 published in *Euro Surveill*.

¹⁶ “Frontier Airlines to Implement Airport Temperature Screenings Effective June 1” press release dated 07 May 2020 at FlyFrontier.com.

¹⁷ “Response to Personalized Demands, New Upgrade of China Express Safe Flight Service” March 2020 press release at ChinaExpressAir.com.

9. Inflight separation zone for ill passengers – Xiamen

The Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) recommends airlines establish an inflight “quarantine area” in the last three rows of the economy cabin. Xiamen Airlines adopted this policy and will re-seat passengers in this section who show symptoms such as fever, fatigue, or coughing during the flight.¹⁸ The policy will apply as defined by the CAAC point scoring system for high-risk flights. The scoring system delivers more points for longer flights, high load factors, and departures from an origin city having a high prevalence of COVID-19 infection.



10. Masks required for all passengers – Multiple airlines

Very quickly at the beginning of May, many US airlines adopted policies requiring cabin crew and passengers to wear face coverings. Delta requires face coverings in check-in and boarding areas, jet bridges, and onboard aircraft. Coverings may be removed when consuming food and beverages.¹⁹ People unable to keep a face covering in place, and children, are exempt from the policy. The airline will provide a mask to travelers who don't have one.



Face Coverings and Masks Definitions

- **Face coverings** (often homemade) are made from breathable material, loosely fit over the nose and mouth, reduce spread of the virus, but are not a barrier against the virus.
- **Face masks** (some are called surgical masks) are a disposable device and when worn properly help block large-particle droplets, splashes, or splatter that may contain germs (viruses and bacteria) reaching the mouth and nose. Masks do not filter or block very small particles in the air from coughs and sneezes.
- **N95 respirator masks** block at least 95 percent of very small particles such as bacteria and viruses. When professionally fitted and handled, N95 respirators exceed the filtration capabilities of face masks. However, even a properly fitted N95 respirator does not completely eliminate the risk of illness or death.

Source: *N95 Respirators and Surgical Masks (Face Masks)* page at [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) reviewed May 2020.

¹⁸ Important Notice on Taking Xiamen Airlines Flights at [Xiamenair.com](https://www.xiamenair.com) web site reviewed May 2020.

¹⁹ “Delta expands safety commitment by requiring all customers to wear face coverings across travel” Delta News Hub item dated 30 April 2020.

Facial coverings and masks will likely become a component of the airline travel experience through 2020 and beyond. The supplies of N95 respirator masks are generally limited to high-risk professions, such as those caring for COVID-19 patients. There are protocols for fitting, handling, and cleaning N95 masks for which the general public is untrained. One type of N95 respirator probably is not the best choice for the aircraft environment. Those equipped with round plastic valves make it easier to breathe out, but the exhalation is not filtered and could spread the virus.

Hotels, vacation rentals, and car hire companies are also active

Hilton has introduced an exceptional branding and operations platform to boost guest confidence in hotel accommodations.²⁰ The company announced, “Hilton will collaborate with RB, maker of Lysol and Dettol disinfecting products, and consult with Mayo Clinic to develop elevated processes and Team Member training to help Hilton guests enjoy an even cleaner and safer stay from check-in to check-out.” The initiative is branded Hilton CleanStay and will be eventually introduced to the company’s 18 brands and 6,100+ properties.



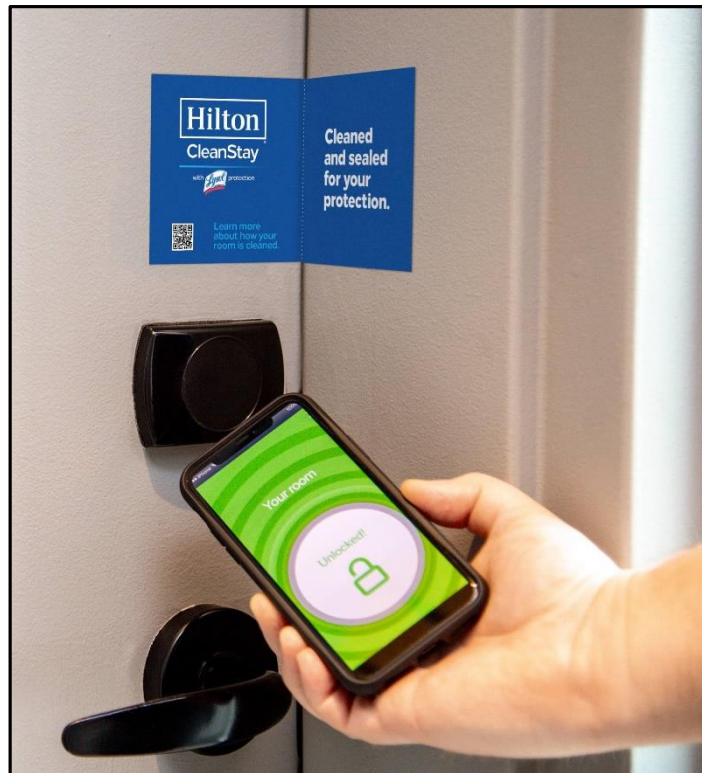
Hilton CleanStay identifies ten specific “high touch deep clean” areas in the guest room. Graphic: Hilton.

Ten areas in guest rooms, such as clock buttons and TV remote controls, will receive extra disinfecting attention. Amenities such as pens, notepads, and room service directories are removed, but available upon request. Disinfecting wipes will be provided in public areas, such as by elevators to allow guests to wipe down buttons.

²⁰ “Hilton Defining a New Standard of Hotel Cleanliness” press release dated 27 April 2020 at Hilton.com.

Travelers of a certain age will recall seeing “Sanitized for your Protection” paper ribbons on toilet seats to provide guest assurance of cleanliness. I was reminded of this historic artifact during a hotel stay in Chisinau, Moldova last year.

Hilton has thoughtfully updated this practice by having housekeepers place a Hilton CleanStay seal on the door; the seal is broken when the room is entered for the first time after cleaning. All of this represents Hilton’s early steps with more enhancements hinted such as electrostatic disinfecting. This development will establish a trend in the hospitality industry to create well-defined programs for locations to be adopted voluntarily or required by franchise agreement.



Open the door to break the CleanStay seal on your room.

Image: Hilton

Car hire companies are following a script similar to airlines. Restrictions related to rebooking and cancellation have been eased to provide flexibility during the pandemic. Plus, car hire brands promise to intensively clean car interiors to guard against infection. National and Enterprise identify 12 specific surfaces which are disinfected. Other companies in the industry describe very similar COVID-19 protocols. The following methods to build consumer confidence are not offered by all car hire companies:

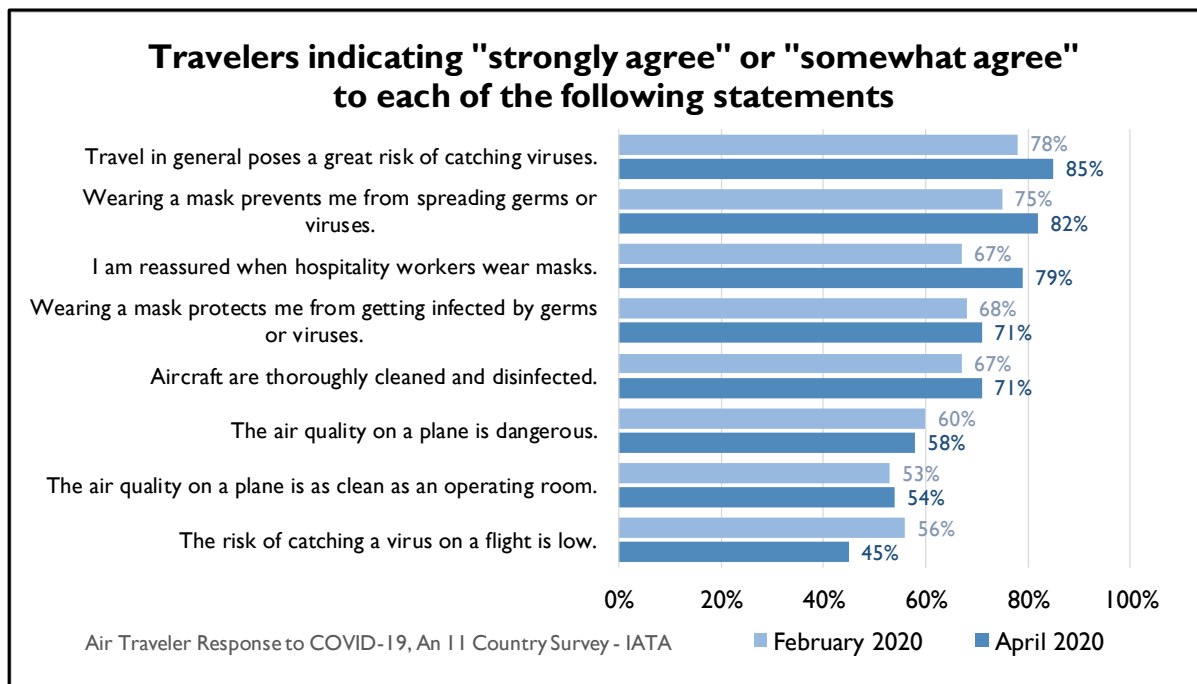
- Zero contact policy which seals the vehicle key in an envelope with a promise of no interior contact by employees after the vehicle is disinfected.
- All employees are required to wear face covering.
- Customers are asked if they had contact with COVID-19 infected persons. These vehicles are removed from the rental pool for thorough disinfection by a professional cleaning company.
- Evidence of sanitizing and disinfection is communicated to the consumer with a hanging card or steering wheel cover to note “This vehicle has been sanitized.”

Similar to the airline industry, developments to boost traveler confidence by hotels, vacation rentals, car hire, airport transfers, and sightseeing companies will be subject to continual change and enhancement. This reflects the evolutionary process of an industry that is learning to adapt to something that’s completely new; a global pandemic in a well-connected world.

Please do more than is required

The travel industry desperately needs undaunted leaders now. We already have everyday heroes staffing the front lines at our customer counters, aircraft, hotels, operations areas, and driving taxis, airport shuttles, and rideshare vehicles. These employees are amazing and deserve our very best levels of protection. Travelers won't be confident if employees are not confident.

This report is a call to action for company leadership and regulators to improve existing initiatives and launch innovations that increase traveler confidence to ensure an industry recovery. There is a lot of work to do, as demonstrated in the response to the IATA survey question, "Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with each of the following statements?" The table below lists the percentage of respondents indicating "Strongly" or "Somewhat Agree" to each question.²¹ That "travel in general poses a great risk" scores 85 percent is a worrisome statistic. But take some comfort, that the number was 78 percent before the pandemic; perhaps this is something we should've addressed long ago.



In a prior report I wrote, *Travel is an essential element of being human. We work in a business that is a very meaningful part of modern life. People love to travel and business people need to travel. Travel will return again.* These words remain true. It will require an industry-wide effort to build traveler confidence past that tipping point when a consumer presses the "enter" button to confirm a travel booking. Discounted prices will be a major component to encourage consumers to book leisure or business trips. But low fares alone won't make the sale. Implementing robust layers of electrostatic disinfecting, surface cleaning, passenger health screening, hand sanitizing, a face mask requirement, and existing HEPA air filtration, will create one of the cleanest and most controlled public environments. The travel industry needs to go beyond what is "legally required," to what will create "high consumer confidence."

²¹ "Air Traveler Response to COVID 19: An 11 Country Survey" IATA results dated 14 April 2020.

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