



## Leveraging the Most Useful Business Travel Apps By Greg Abbott, SVP, DataArt, Travel and Hospitality Practice

As an increasing number of business travel apps become available, given your organization allows you a choice, finding the most effective solutions can be a real chore. In an effort to help, we are sharing information about our opinion of the most useful and innovative apps that exist in today's app market across several categories:

### Travel Booking Management

Businesses of all sizes can benefit from using travel booking management apps to improve accuracy, reduce duplication, and increase efficiency.

**Concur's** mobile app is a valuable choice for a broad range of businesses, providing an efficient means to reduce the effort and time spent on managing travel details. In addition to offering the basic tools that all expense-tracking services provide, including custom reports and expense categories, this solution features photo receipts. Users can capture a receipt, invoice or business card using their device's camera and attach it to their expense record to store the information securely. The app also allows users to book their travel needs directly, including rental cars and hotel rooms. Concur's solution can be linked to other apps, such as financial and GPS tracking applications, providing a convenient method for storing all travel information in one location.

**KDS Neo** is a popular app (and recently acquired by American Express), which uses a timeline approach for booking travel and submitting expenses. The innovative solution is designed to provide a fully priced itinerary based on three simple questions: Where does my journey start? Where does it end? What time do I need to be there? KDS Neo automatically creates an expenses report, while analyzing the preferences and previous behavior of each individual traveler to offer personalized itineraries.

### Trip Tracking

There are many trip tracking apps available, but some stand out from the others as exceptionally useful for the majority of business travelers.

**Triplt** (owned by Concur) is described by many users as creating the feeling of having a highly efficient personal travel assistant by their side. The app allows users to forward all travel details to a Triplt email address, including flights, hotel reservations, car rentals, restaurant bookings, and more. These travel plans are subsequently converted to a succinct itinerary that is accessible on a mobile device, even when it's offline. The "Pro" upgrade provides a great deal of additional functionality, including real-time flight alerts, a place to store points from different rewards programs, and some special perks, such as access to the Hertz Gold counters and the ability to jump to the front of some security lines.

**TripCase** is another very strong trip tracking app. The straightforward interface, and my personal preference, allows users to store all travel details, including flights, rentals, hotel reservations, and more, as well as sending alerts for flight information. The app also provides the ability to add all other plans associated with a trip to create a single, complete itinerary.

**App in the Air** features a streamlined interface and all of the functionality that you expect to find in a robust trip tracking app. This solution stands apart from others due to its social component, allowing you to provide feedback on the flight experience, report delays, engage in airport specific chat with other users, and share your trips with friends via social networks.

**KAYAK** offers a trip tracking component to its already popular travel search app, which allows users to search for, book, and view trip itineraries. For users who book travel arrangements on several different websites, this solution offers the added convenience of compiling the information into a single itinerary.

### Expenses Processing

Processing travel expenses is typically a time-consuming task, which can be significantly alleviated by utilizing one of the top apps that are currently available.

**Chrome River** has created a fantastic solution, providing streamlined functionality that takes a lot of the work out of the process. The app allows users to capture and approve expenses while traveling,

as well as to view and approve third-party invoices. It provides the ability to edit and modify the features and reports in the tool, and will seamlessly audit all of the uploaded expenses to create a concise final report.

**Expensify** is another excellent option for accurately recording and extracting expenses details. The app also provides the ability to use the GPS functionality in a mobile device to automatically track the miles traveled during a business trip, in addition to including a convenient currency converter and rate-exchange calculator to process international expenses efficiently.

### **Concierge Booking**

As an option to some of the services of a traditional travel agent, several companies have created concierge-focused booking solutions, which employ “bot technology” mixed with traditional services to handle traveler requests.

**Pana** is a useful concierge app that helps make travel booking easier by shopping for flights, making hotel reservations, and arranging transportation. The solution utilizes a combination of live travel experts and artificial intelligence “bot” technology to create a robust service that may be especially appealing to frequent travelers.

**Mani** provides what the company calls “full-service travel concierge bots” to handle all aspects of customers’ travel requests, including booking, rescheduling, and cancellation. The service also utilizes artificial intelligence technology to learn about its users’ preferences to deliver personalized recommendations, taking details such as rewards points and hotel amenities into account.

App development in the travel marches on, with new bot augmented solutions arriving at a fair pace. While there is always room for improvement, the apps described in this article are likely to reduce the tasks associated with light managed or unmanaged travel, allowing both businesses and individuals to leverage technology for a streamlined experience.

What did we miss? What are your favorite practical biz travel apps? Let me know by reaching out to me on Twitter [@jgabbottor](#) [LinkedIn](#).



### **About Greg Abbott**

Greg Abbott is a Partner at DataArt, leading the Travel & Hospitality Practice, which he formed in 2010. Greg has deep experience in executive sales & travel system operations, with 20+ years in domestic and international online travel industry sector, including entrepreneurship, management, product development, and consulting. His career in travel began in the early '90's while attending the University of California at

Berkeley and working at the corporate campus travel agency that was later acquired by STA Travel.

Over his decade with STA Travel, Greg rose to the Director position and later departed to join NEXGEN Travel in Munich, Germany's leading online travel startup, assuming the role of Product Director for nearly four years. While at NEXGEN, his team tackled some of the most unique system and technology challenges in the hospitality & tour operator distribution landscape. On his return to the U.S., Greg joined DataArt as SVP of Travel & Hospitality to lead the charge in building out DataArt's service to leading travel technology companies around the globe. He is a frequent speaker and a thought leader, with a loyal following in the press and social media alike. @jgabbott

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