

CASE STUDY

Fox World Travel and FlightGlobal partner to deliver proactive technology for business travel

Fox World Travel is one of the top travel companies in the country focused on designing and managing custom business travel programs, meetings or incentive trips and personal vacations. For more than 50 years, Fox World Travel has helped travelers access industry-leading tools and technology created to guide them to their desired destinations. Fox believes in a deep commitment to the needs of the customer and traveler, with a traveler-centric culture and a focus on the end-to-end traveler experience.

The Challenge

During times of significant disruptions, airlines issue waivers to offer exceptions to change fees and cancellation penalties. Not only are flight disruptions a major traveler pain point, the traditional process of identifying trips that qualify for these waivers and managing them is manual and labor-intensive for TMCs. As a result, customer frustration grows when the TMC can't efficiently apply waivers when re-accommodating travelers during a disruption event.

Through its own voice of customer NPS® surveys and through industry sources, Fox understood that travel disruption support is of top importance to travelers. Fox World Travel needed a solution to protect and re-accommodate their customers quickly and consistently during large-scale adverse events.

“In this day and age, a big part of what we do for our clients is protecting them and re-accommodating them when things go wrong during travel,” said Marino. “Waiver information is fantastic, but if our agents and travelers don’t know it’s an option, then we miss an opportunity to assist the traveler during their time of need.”



“We had technology in place that allowed us to upload waivers to an intranet landing page,” said Beth Marino, Chief Experience Officer at Fox World Travel. “If an agent received a call from a traveler, they had to visit that landing page to get all the details of the waiver, which was time-consuming.”

The Solution

As a FlightGlobal strategic partner, Fox World Travel was an early adopter of FlightGlobal Travel Waiver Services, which was integrated into their FoxWaivers 3i in July 2017. Fox Waivers 3i seamlessly alerts travelers and agents of waiver opportunities.

Fox utilizes FlightGlobal Travel Waiver Services API as the foundation for its solution. Proprietary technology was created by Fox, to take waiver data, write the information directly into the reservation in the agent booking system, and integrate with point of sale technology that alerts the agent a waiver is available for use. In addition, it normalizes and then delivers all the details of the waiver in a consistent format which is easy to quickly review and understand.



“As a traveler or an agent, you never know when a situation may arise. Having a system like this in place, that allows for free route changes or refunds takes a lot of anxiety out of the re-accommodation process. You can almost hear the relief in our callers’ voices! When one client had a large group traveling to the Bahamas during Hurricane Florence, I was able to assist many, to avoid the storm completely by either diverting them through an alternate connecting airport or re-booking their flight for the day prior.” – Michele Reed, International Business Travel Specialist, Fox World Travel.

The screenshot shows the FlightGlobal Trip Center interface. At the top, it displays the trip details: TRIP - RURVKH, Passenger: Maynard Tracey, Group: State Rock & Gravel Co. The main content area shows two legs of the trip: Leg 1 - Detroit, MI to Middletown, PA and Leg 2 - Middletown, PA to Detroit, MI. Below this, the 'Applicable Waiver' section lists 'Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Winter Weather - Bulletin 2' and 'Affected Airports' (ASR, ALB, APN, ATW, BTY, BUF, CWA, DTW, ESC, FNT, FSD, GRB, GRR, INT, LAN, LSE, MBS, MSP, PLN, RAP, RHI, ROC, RST, SYR, TVC, YYZ). The 'MATCHING CRITERIA' section includes 'Travel Dates' (13-Apr-2018 - 14-Apr-2018) and 'Affected Travel Dates' (13-Apr-2018 - 14-Apr-2018). The right sidebar contains sections for 'APPLICABLE WAIVERS' (listing 'Upper Midwest and Great Lakes Winter Weather - Bulletin 2' with DL as the issuer), 'TRIP ASSIST ISSUES' (No issues), 'CONTACT INFORMATION' (8339g@example.com), 'SENT MESSAGES' (No messages), and 'ITINERARY' (listing flight details for Delta Air Lines 4634 and 4744). At the bottom, there is a message from FlightGlobal about their 100-year history and a signature from a Sales Engineer in Singapore.

Fox World Travel has continued to innovate its FoxWaivers 3i solution. To add further personalization for the traveler, Fox created custom e-mail messages and push notifications via the MyFoxWorld mobile app. Additionally, Fox implemented an intelligent alternative options feature, which allows travelers affected by a disruption in a connection city to choose an alternate option. **Since launching the feature, 60-70 percent of travelers accept and rebook the recommended flight.**



“The information is completely automated. If a waiver is applicable, the details are sent directly to the traveler and it appears next to the travel reservation in our system,” said Mike Dove, Vice President Business Travel Operations at Fox World Travel. ***“The agent actually gets a pop-up message when a waiver is available.”***

Results

The harsh 2017-2018 North American winter season put FoxWaivers 3i and FlightGlobal Travel Waiver Services to the test. During Winter Storm Mateo, agents proactively offered re-accommodation to 2410 customers with the same information simultaneously delivered to both travelers and agents.

For the agent, having the right information at the right time gives them the opportunity to best serve the traveler.

“Travel Waiver Services changes the whole dynamic of the conversation,” said Dove. ***“Instead of putting someone on hold, agents are able to service their needs right away. It allows them to deliver on our promise to customers.”***

“Disruption happens. We need to be operationally nimble in our response,” said Marino. ***“The biggest impact for us is being able to appropriately staff our after-hours service. The moment waivers are issued, we can see how many reservations qualify and staff appropriately.”***

Integrating FlightGlobal Travel Waiver Services into FoxWaivers 3i has allowed Fox World Travel to:

- **Exceed customer expectations.** Instead of waiting for a traveler to call in, they are pushing waiver information to the traveler, so they can accept an alternative option or contact an agent to get re-accommodated as soon as possible.
- **Scale operations effectively.** If the operations team knows how many waiver eligible travelers to expect, they can plan how many agents they will need to handle incoming calls, which improves hold times.
- **Increase agent efficiency.** Knowing about a waiver sooner allows agents to explore greater flight availability for re-accommodation, which makes them faster when handling each customer call as it comes in.
- **Reduce agent frustration.** Agents were no longer bogged down by all the steps they had to take to find and process a waiver. Instead, they could focus on the traveler.
- **Show their customer commitment.** Fox World Travel innovated and improved their technology based on customer insights, making sure their technology development aligned with customer need.

Fox World Travel has been able to quantify the value they are bringing to their customers by calculating the cost savings created by applying waivers and preventing change fees. Fox World Travel tracked 3,000 waiver notices over a two-week period, which resulted in a 4.6 percent acceptance rate and saved customers an estimated \$25,000. These metrics will be delivered to customers in a monthly savings score card so they can see their return on investment. Additionally, for customers calling specifically for a waiver, minutes are now shaved off that call time with waiver information being readily available to an agent via a pop-up.

5%
reduction in
number of
outbound calls

9 second
reduction in overall
Average Talk Time

30%
reduction in
After Call Work

3,000
waiver notices over
a two-week period

4.6%
acceptance rate

\$25,000
in customer savings

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FlightGlobal Travel Waiver Services has helped Fox World Travel get ahead of a disruption and proactively re-accommodate travelers. Fox accomplished their goal of making travel easier by offering an effective travel-disruption support tool for customers and agents alike. As a result, Fox saw a significant increase in customer satisfaction, along with a decrease in total agent time spent on disruption support.

And Fox World Travel is being recognized for its innovation. In September, Fox World Travel announced that it is a recipient of the 2018 Travel Weekly Magellan Award for Innovation. This Gold Award specifically recognizes Fox's focus on the traveler experience through the development of its groundbreaking Fox Waivers 3i technology.

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