

THE NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION (NASA)

Industry:

Government Agency

Geographies:

Global

Travel Management Company:

CI Travel – issuing over 58,500 tickets per year for more than 20,000 NASA travelers

Situation:

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) needed comprehensive travel solutions with one clear set of rules for each of their ten centers to facilitate savings and improve the traveler's experience.

Challenges:

- Decentralized travel program with multiple sets of rules
- Complicated feedback process

Objectives:

- Improve responsiveness and customer service
- Prepare agency to handle emergency situations such as shuttle delays and cancellations or accidents
- Increase feedback by making the comment process convenient
- Decrease reservation error rate

Solution:

As a global corporate travel provider CI Travel's goals are to deliver savings, customer service and control of travel to our business partners. CI Travel measures progress through the eyes of our clients. To streamline the travel processes at NASA, CI Travel implemented a Central Reservation Center in Norfolk, VA and kept only one or two on-site representatives at each center to issue tickets. CI Travel also worked directly with VIP's and the NASA finance department, ensuring that all reservations adhered to uniform contract requirements.

Results:

- Established the NASA Select Hotel Program in 2005/2006, which accrued cash savings of more than \$100,000 per year (apart from the additional traveler amenities)
- Successfully managed emergency travel situations, such as 9/11 and the Columbia shuttle mishap
- Received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Columbia Accident Investigation Board
- Received the 2008 Contractor's Excellence Award from NASA in appreciation of outstanding service
- Two employees received the Space Flight Awareness Award from NASA and four employees at KSC received the Silver Dollar Award for service above and beyond

- Error rate allowed by NASA was 1 error for every 100 tickets issued. CI Travel's error rate was .07% or 7 errors for every 10,000 tickets issued. In 2008, CI Travel issued more than 58,000 tickets.

Strategic Simplification

With more than 20,000 travelers, organizing travel for The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is a complicated process. Prior to CI Travel's contract implementation in 2000, each of ten NASA centers booked their own travel – which while it made sense by location, was not the most efficient method of ensuring government savings or traveler satisfaction.

Tasked with centralizing travel planning, a Central Reservation Center (CRC) in Norfolk, VA was introduced. Only one or two representatives remained onsite in order to issue tickets at each NASA center, and CI Travel began working directly with VIP's and the NASA finance department, which ensured all reservations would adhere to one standard contract.

CI Travel streamlined the booking process by removing every PNR requirement from the booking agent that could either be automated or performed by a Quality Assurance Agent, resulting in a saving of 5-10 minutes per call. CI Travel also provided dedicated agents and multiple avenues in which NASA could contact the CRC in order to improve responsiveness and customer service, including:

- Onsite assistance
- Dedicated Web site and online request form with a response time of less than 4 hours
- Voicemail option to have their reservation emailed or faxed, response time under 1 hour
- Online booking service, Trip Manager

Ensuring Readiness in a Crisis

To improve crisis response, CI Travel formulated a Critical Response Plan dealing with a single aircraft accident, a single redirected aircraft and a system wide redirection of aircraft, and held mock training sessions two to four times per year in order to maintain readiness of all involved staff. An Emergency Phone Tree was developed internally at CI Travel in order to facilitate quick response to any kind of NASA emergency. During the Columbia shuttle accident, the phone tree was activated even prior to the official notification from NASA, and the CRC was operational in less than one hour. CI Travel received a Certificate of Appreciation from the Columbia Accident Investigation Board for the work performed.

Improving Customer Satisfaction

After a trip, CI Travel worked to ensure traveler satisfaction. Comment cards were sent to 100% of travelers from NASA headquarters and a sampling (20%) to all others. This was performed on a weekly rotating basis with each center. Comment card input forms were also available on our NASA website, and physical comment cards were available at each onsite location and could be left there for forwarding, or mailed individually. Customer Service Managers were also available via phone. Each call was summarized in a monthly report to be used in quarterly reviews with NASA.

The efficiencies implemented by CI Travel to meet the demand of processing more than 50 thousand NASA reservations per year of the nine year relationship were well-received. CI Travel established the NASA Select Hotel Program in 2005/2006, which accrued cash savings of more than \$100,000 per year (apart from the additional traveler amenities). CI Travel was tasked with calls from the International Space Center, ensuring each NASA

870 North Military Highway
Suite 202
Norfolk, VA 23502
(888) 461.0022

www.citravel.com

traveler was accounted for and returned safely home in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, and with ensuring each and every NASA traveler was satisfied with their experience.

To that end, CI Travel received the 2008 Contractor's Excellence Award from NASA in appreciation of outstanding service, two CI Travel employees received the Space Flight Awareness Award, and four employees at Kennedy Space Center received the Silver Dollar Award for service above and beyond.

About The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) mission is to pioneer the future in space exploration, scientific discovery and aeronautics research. To do that, thousands of people have been working around the world -- and off of it -- for 50 years, trying to answer some basic questions. What's out there in space? How do we get there? What will we find? What can we learn there, or learn just by trying to get there, that will make life better here on Earth?

About CI Travel

CI Travel is an employee-owned \$170 million travel service company with over thirty-seven years of experience providing high quality travel service to government agencies, corporations, and leisure travelers. CI Travel, headquartered in Norfolk, VA, is by far the area's number one agency for tours, cruises and custom travel packaging and has been recognized by both Travel Weekly and Business Travel News as one of the leading travel management companies in the United States.