



Everything you need to know about managed travel



Business travel plays a key role for small businesses

New Zealand's small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) are feeling the pinch with rising costs, high taxes, and tight cash flow. Efficient cost management is now more critical than ever.

Despite economic pressures, business travel remains essential. A study found that 37% of businesses in Australia and New Zealand send staff on the road weekly, with 44% doing so monthly. This resurgence is driven by decentralisation, regional migration, and infrastructure developments, such as improved regional airports and transport links.

SMEs are also turning to technology to stay competitive. AI-driven automation and data analytics are helping businesses boost efficiency, cut costs, and drive smarter decision-making. By balancing cost control with innovation, Kiwi businesses can set themselves up for long-term success. To get the best value out of travel spending, many SMEs are seeking solutions that balance cost, efficiency, and traveller experience.



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What's the difference between **managed** and **unmanaged** travel?

Tired of juggling bookings and managing travel costs on your own? It might be time for a different approach to business travel, like partnering with a travel management company (TMC). But first, what does managed vs. unmanaged mean?



Unmanaged travel (DIY)



Unmanaged travel (or the DIY approach) means businesses handle bookings in-house, often through an assistant or via employees booking directly online. There's no central system, and tracking costs, managing changes, and ensuring policy compliance can be tricky. It's usually all on one person, and they may not have any specific training in travel management.

Managed travel



Managed travel is when a business partners with a TMC for bookings, reporting, and support. Travel is arranged through a dedicated travel consultant or an online booking tool (OBT), ensuring visibility, efficiency, and better cost control.

Travel management company (TMC)



A TMC takes the stress out of business travel by providing expert guidance, exclusive rates, and 24/7 emergency support. From smarter bookings to cost-saving insights, a TMC helps businesses travel better, with fewer headaches and hassles along the way.



The hidden costs of unmanaged travel

With rising costs, endless admin, and last-minute changes, unmanaged or DIY travel is draining time, budgets, and energy for many businesses.



These are some of the common challenges of unmanaged travel:



Business travel disruptions:

Flight delays, last-minute reschedules, severe weather, or system outages, you name it, it happens. Without external support, business owners and managers are stuck handling travel chaos on their own (often after hours), adding stress and risk for travellers.



Stressful and time-consuming bookings:

With self-booking, hours can be spent hunting for deals, comparing prices, chasing approvals, and managing last-minute changes. Without a consistent and reliable process, booking business travel becomes a full-time job.



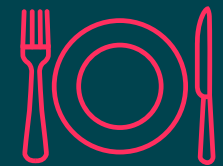
Unmanaged travel expenses:

Unused credits, costly changes, and missed opportunities to secure better rates are common occurrences with unmanaged travel. Without the right policy guardrails and expert guidance, businesses are leaving money on the table.



Budget blowouts:

A lack of real-time visibility and cost control leads to unchecked spending and dollars slipping through the cracks. Scattered receipts, messy credit card statements, and travellers left out of pocket make reconciling expenses a nightmare.



Travellers missing out on extras:

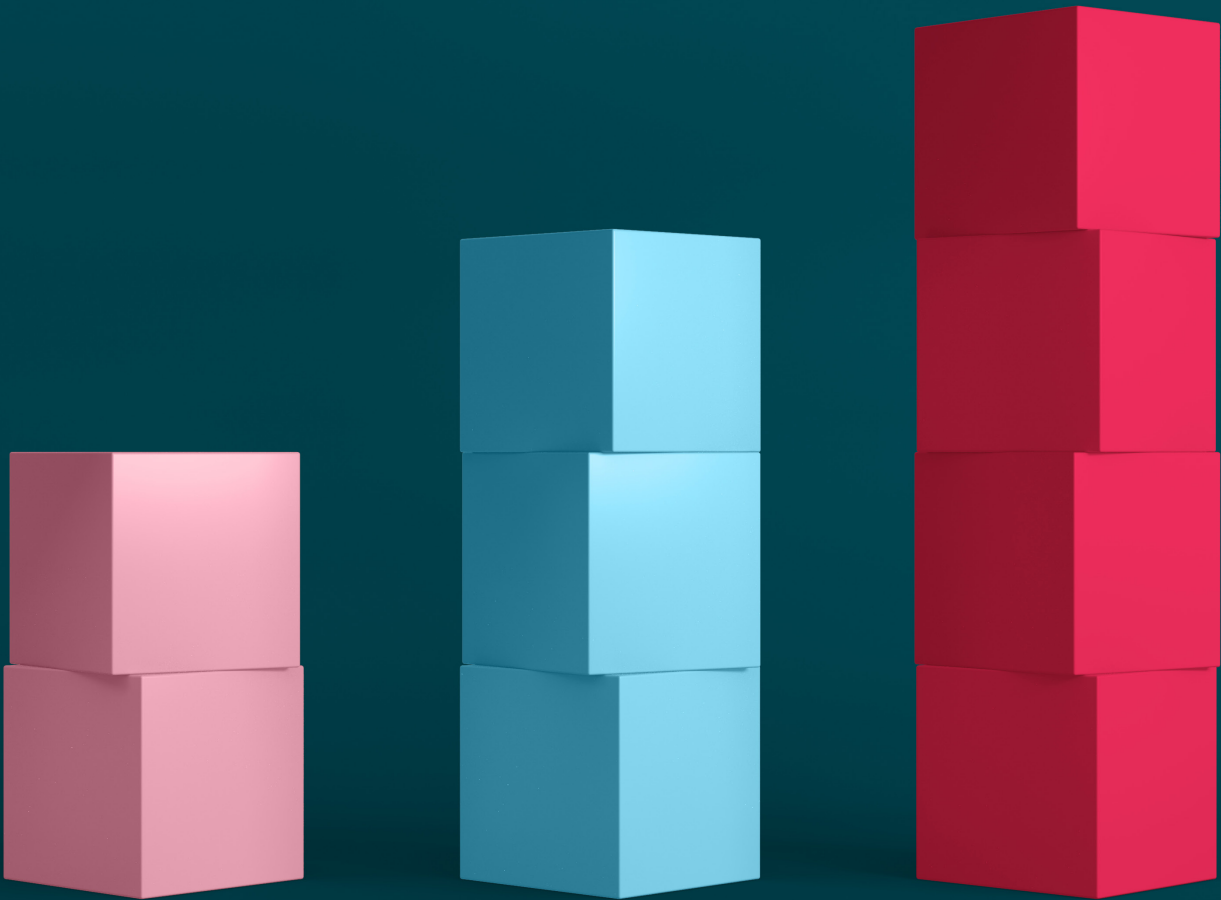
Instead of giving their travellers the VIP treatment, businesses are settling for the basics. Without the right preparation to make every trip smoother, travellers miss out on perks like free breakfast, discounted upgrades, flexible checkouts, and bonus loyalty points.



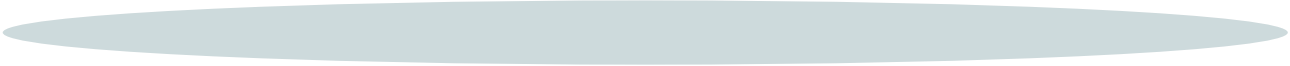
These challenges are all too common. But they don't have to be. It's time for SMEs to take a step back, ask what's important, and find a travel solution that works for them.

How does managed travel stack up against unmanaged?

With an understanding of the differences between managed and unmanaged travel, let's compare how they stack up when it comes to bookings, savings, and traveller support.



		Managed travel	Unmanaged travel (DIY)
Booking Your Trip	Research flights, hotels, cars online	✓	✓
	Verified suppliers	✓	✗
	Online bookings	✓	✓
	Personalised travel choices	✓	✓
	Automated trip approval process	✓	✗
	Travel policy compliance	✓	✗
Cost Savings	Discounted rates	✓	✓
	Best global corporate rates	✓	✗
	Booking within travel policy	✓	✗
	Loyalty programs	✓	✓
	Bespoke cost reporting	✓	✗
	Expense tracking	✓	✗
	Refund processing	✓	✗
Traveller Support	Travel change support	✓	✗
	Emergency support 24/7	✓	✗
	Travel alerts	✓	✗



Myth busting: The top misconceptions about managed travel

Myth #1

I don't travel enough to need a TMC.

Think again. Even if your business has just five frequent travellers per month, a TMC can bring significant value. Managing multiple itineraries, dealing with erratic bookings, last-minute changes, and poorly managed expenses can quickly become costly, time-consuming, and stressful.

SMEs often spend more per traveller than larger companies because they miss out on bulk-buying power and negotiated rates. A TMC can tailor its services to your business size and needs. They will scale with you as you grow, ensuring your travel program remains cost-effective while saving you time and reducing stress.

Myth #2

Why pay for a TMC when I can book travel myself?

Time. Money. Stress. Booking a flight online is easy, but managing the entire travel experience is another story. Working with a TMC means relying on experienced experts to quickly find the best itineraries, drawing on their deep knowledge of airfare, hotels, and car hires. Advanced booking tools can consolidate all options in one view, which is in line with your policy.

The right TMC also works for your business to optimise your entire travel program. They utilise comprehensive reporting and strategic insights to track spending and behaviour, making recommendations for savings and efficiency. They negotiate better rates, secure perks like upgrades and lounge access, and streamline booking and expensing processes.

Want to check the numbers yourself? Try out a **travel savings calculator** to estimate how much time and money you could save by using a travel management partner. In FY25, Corporate Traveller helped Kiwi businesses save a total of NZD\$3.1M on business travel.

Thinking about managed travel but unsure if it's right for your business? We get it. It can be a big decision. These common misconceptions show how managed travel can benefit your business, making it more efficient and effective.

Myth #3

It will be quicker to book my own trip.

Searching for flights, accommodation, and transport takes longer than you think, especially when juggling last-minute changes. Good luck navigating call centre wait times if plans change.

With the right setup, businesses can choose what works best, selecting expert support, smart tech, or a mix of both. For example, an online booking tool (OBT) can bring all options into one view, streamline approvals, and ensure bookings stay within policy, making the process faster for everyone.

Myth #4

Changing my travel process is too much hassle, and my team won't be on board.

We hear you, but here's the thing: while change can feel like a struggle, the right TMC makes it easy with everything you need to ensure a smooth transition. For Corporate Traveller's new customers, we provide a dedicated onboarding team to get you set up for success, plus training and resources designed for change management. When travel is easier, clearer, and better managed, your team will be the first to see the benefits. Less stress, fewer headaches, and a more seamless traveller experience? That's a change for the better.

9 steps for finding the right travel partner

There's potential in your travel program, and it's time to make things a whole lot easier (and more cost-effective). Many SMEs wait until they hit a breaking point before bringing in the experts, but proactively choosing a travel partner can transform your travel game.

Here are 9 steps to finding that magic match and ensuring your travel program reaches its full potential.

Use your network



Word of mouth is a fantastic way to identify potential TMCs, especially if they understand your industry and have worked successfully with other small businesses. Don't be shy when it comes to researching prospective candidates, including reading reviews!

Lean on trusted connections



You don't trust just anyone with your business, and it can be tough to find suppliers with the right credentials and reputation. Look for a company that is in sync with your outlook, goals, and vision. Ask about their policies on data security, confidentiality, sustainability, and DEI.

Look for a proactive partner



It takes time to source the perfect partners and brief them on the history, challenges, goals and vision of the business. A good travel partner will help drive this process, set targets, and demonstrate how they will be achieved and measured.

Meet often



It takes a while to build rapport and trust. Invest the time, and you'll reap the rewards!



9 steps for finding the right travel partner...

Set up strong communication methods



Be transparent from the start. Make sure your shortlisted candidates have all the information they need in order to make a meaningful pitch. Put a strong service level agreement (SLA) in place and commit to transparency and open, honest communication.

Ask about expected results



Yes, outsourcing costs money. It can also save plenty down the line in money, time, and stress! A strong contender will be able to easily articulate the value of working with them. Establish clear objectives and expectations in your SLA, leaving no room for disappointment later on.

Don't default to the lowest bidder



Remember the old saying, you get what you pay for? Conduct your due diligence and go with the best travel partner to suit your business.



Ask for a transition plan



Many teams are averse to change and might want to do things the way they've always been done. A skilled outsourcing partner can create a transition plan to carefully manage employees through the changes.

Keep control of your costs



Once you've got into a groove with your new routine, scope creep can happen quickly. Ask for regular reviews of your travel management costs.

Experience stress-free business travel

For over 30 years, we've been helping SMEs travel smarter, backed by the strength and partnerships of the Flight Centre Travel Group.

Think effortless bookings, expert guidance, and game-changing tech. It's all designed to make your business travel feel easy. From uncovering savings to handling last-minute changes, we take the balancing act off your plate so you can focus on key business tasks.

Here's how Corporate Traveller helps you unlock the maximum potential of your travel program:

Business travel delays? Travel disruptions shouldn't turn into business disruptions.

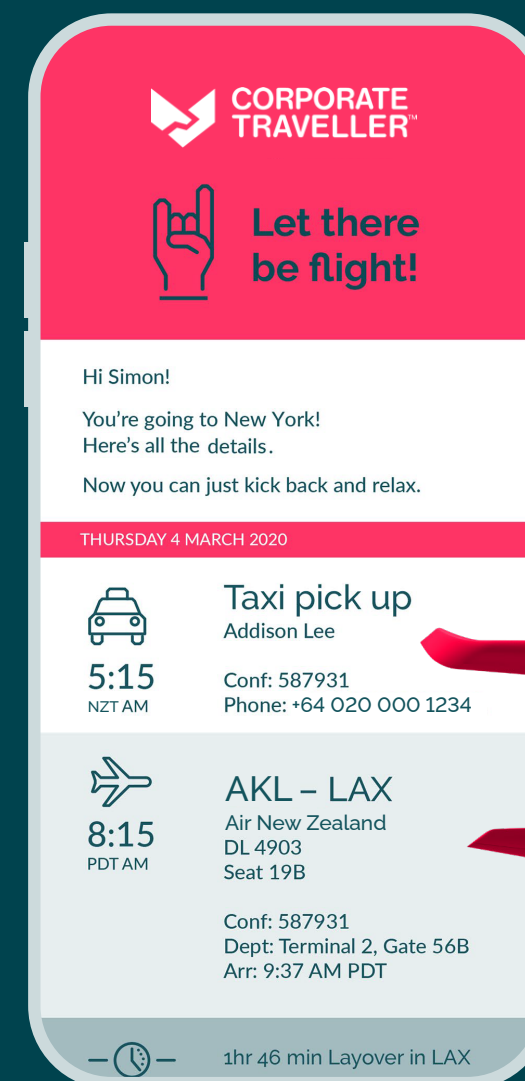
Our 24/7 emergency support team is here to make sure your travellers stay on track without wasted time or unnecessary costs.

Stressed booking business travel? Our experts and tech are your passport to the best options.

Corporate Traveller brings everything together in one tool with all the information you need at your fingertips.

Struggling with business travel expenses? Our payment solution smooths the process.

Corporate Traveller Credit Accounts help businesses stay in control of travel spending while reducing admin time and improving visibility.



Blowouts in the travel budget?

Get single-view tracking of your travel program. Corporate Traveller's analytics dashboard takes the complexity out of budget tracking for expense management without extra admin.



Missing out on business travel extras?

Unlock extra benefits for your travellers with Corporate Traveller's global supplier network to get more exclusive perks, better deals, and waivers on air, hotel, and car hire. The **Breakfast Plus** program adds extra value at no cost.



Don't want a complex contract? We offer easy setup with no lock-in contracts.

Corporate Traveller's exclusive onboarding framework gets your team up and running with no complicated spells or contracts required! With the perfect balance of service and tech, you'll stay because you want to, not because you have to.



By introducing just a few tools or systems backed by our incredible people, we can make your business travel more efficient, cost-effective, and stress-free.

**Let's talk about how we can
tailor the perfect solution for you.**



LET'S CHAT