

How will the 'new world' of travel impact the employee experience?

00:05

Julian Walker: Good morning. Good afternoon. Good evening. And wherever you are, you're most welcome to join us today. And we hope that you and yours are in good health. I'm Julian Walker, and this is business travel on the fly. Today in our virtual broadcast studios or homes as I like to call them. I'm delighted to welcome two colleagues from our longtime partner International SOS, which for those of you who may need reminding, is the world's largest medical and travel security services firm. And for those of you who like stats to go with their information, International SOS counts nearly two thirds of the Fortune Global 500 companies as clients, and takes around 5 million assistance calls every year. With us today we have Jeremy Prout, a former US Marine Corps captain, who has completed multiple security and risk management projects for corporations in civilian life, and who is now regional security manager with International SOS. And we also have Dr. William Hauptman, MD, who specializes in gastroenterology and internal medicine in Pennsylvania, and is also an on call doctor with International SOS's medical director Assistance Program. So a warm welcome to you both. And thanks for joining and giving up your time so generously today. And also to you our audience, as you join us for the next 20 minutes or so of conversation, where we discuss how the new travel world will impact the employee experience. And as we discussed that, we'll learn a little about how International SOS works. And we'll explore the new emerging world of travel, as routes and borders begin the slow progress of opening up again. So let's get straight into it. If I may, Bill, I'll start with Jeremy first. So Jeremy, what should travel managers be thinking about as organizations begin to slowly return to operations?

01:48

Jeremy Prout: But thanks for the question, Julian. And thanks, everyone for joining us today. And you made a great point, which is this is going to be a very slow process going forward. So first off, you know, we're at this stage now where we're seeing this returned operations, return to office, and that's really our first stage here, which is getting people back into the office having that slow and deliberate reopening process begin. And then from there, we're going to start seeing that domestic travel reopened. And we've already seen that, I think right now what we're seeing is a lot more ground transportation. But again, as things open up, as we start seeing those travel restrictions lifted from different regions, different states, different cities, will see that grow. And then finally, we'll start also finally seeing that international travel begin, and to start to grow as those travel restrictions loosen up, and we're already seeing that already coming up, especially for summer tourist season in Europe. But again, this is going to be a very slow and deliberate process. And when we look at the question, you know, what should string value be thinking about this really, it comes down to, you know, having a process that looks at this from a risk assessment, travel assessment process, understanding, you know, what are the restrictions out there? What are the public health concerns that are out there? You know, what am I going to be able to do, or my travelers going to be able to do in that destination that they're going to. Is this a place where we're going to expect to see, you know, a lot of restrictions, what I call societal restrictions. So at

that city level, at that country level, where, you know, public transportation is, is less than that, we have caps on hotel accommodations. So those are a number of the considerations that we need to be thinking about, again, just as you put it, this is going to be a slow process. But, you know, we're taking the time now International SOS is and obviously we're preaching to the choir of an audience that is looking at this process and doing a lot forward thinking.

03:47

Julian Walker: And so Bill, with with all of these changes, how do you think travel managers can prepare their travelers so that they know what to expect? And also, how can they take measures to protect travelers while they're traveling?

03:59

Bill Hauptman: Yes, so first of all, hello to everyone. And it's an absolute pleasure to be involved in today's very important webinar, we all have the goal to get back to work and travel soon, but of course, as safely as possible. And this, of course, means understanding where we are and how we got there, and what the new normal is going to look like. This is a new virus, so at the very beginning, we knew nothing about it medically. We've learned so much over the past few months. And that information can really inform the way that travel managers can help protect and reassure their travelers from a medical perspective. Health was always a concern for travel managers and travelers. But now this has really become the primary focus. Everybody who travels, all the calls that were getting into International SOS, their primary concern is am I going to get sick? How can I protect myself? So will travel managers really now have an enhanced duty of care to understand the global situation, and the measures that can be taken, we can use everything that we've learned to help protect the traveler. This may entail research, education, communication, and of course, there's a wealth of resources available in a myriad websites, the CDC that you can check out the European CDC, the World Health Organization, every hotel, it seems, and every airline, every train service, has a website, where they're outlining exactly what measures they're taking, I personally am getting emails every day from the airlines that I use, and from Amtrak train service, telling me what they're doing to reassure me, so as travel managers, you know, what International SOS is hearing from our clients is, how can I possibly choose the right sources, understand and assimilate all of the information that's coming my way, and then distill that into steps that I can take, concrete steps that I can take, to inspire confidence in my travelers, and to protect them to the extent possible. The one thing that I always, you know, tell people when they speak to me at International SOS, is that what we need to accept is that there is always going to be some element of health risk with travel, but educating yourselves and your travelers so you can choose wisely, and maximizing the measures that you have control over to afford some protection can reduce risk away to concerns and inspire confidence. So specifically, you need to think about preparing your travelers before they leave, while they're in their destination, and after they get home. You need to understand the most effective means of reducing the chance of infection. And what we've really learned is that social distancing is key. There are other measures that we understand, hand washing, we talk about cleaning surfaces, frequently, but medical science and experience and epidemiological studies have really shown us that social distancing is the key factor to protecting yourself from getting the virus and you can incorporate this into steps that your travelers can take. Clearly walking through an airport and being on an airplane can make it difficult, but to the extent possible, they should understand that that is the key factor. Secondly education about hand

washing, not touching your face. wearing masks, of course, is always a big discussion right now, it's advocated not so much to protect yourself from getting the virus, although it does help a little bit. But certainly, to protect those around you. You need to confirm the steps taken by all of the vendors that you use, before you send their travelers, your travelers on their way at the airport, certainly, and particularly with the airline. Travelers need to be apprised beforehand, that it's a whole new world out there. And from a medical perspective, there's a whole new pre boarding screening process that's going to take place. And that can take place even before they leave their home, where they may be asked to fill out a health declaration. And while they're at the airport, they can fully expect their temperature to be taken and to fill out another questionnaire. And the important thing for your travelers to recognize is that this is going to happen at the point of departure, as well as at the point of arrival. So the key educational point is to let everybody know that they must not travel, if they're the least bit sick. People, you know, try to get on the plane, they want to get home. But if you end up in a destination and have a fever, you're going to be quarantined someplace against your will. Additionally, travelers should be educated about the need for testing prior to arriving at various destinations. And we're finding that International SOS that this is becoming more and more frequently mandatory in more destinations, where different countries are requiring a test, a certificate that I'm COVID Negative before I arrive. So we can have a whole discussion about the different types of tests, the PCR that looks at the genomic material, the rapid tests, the Serology tests, but it's very important that your your travelers understand that a test may be required and what the implications of the test is. Finally, you can educate your travelers about the use of bringing along a travel kit. This was always good advice. Good sound advice previously, where you should travel with certainly all your routine medications. And now of course rather than bringing enough medications for the time that they're going planning on being abroad, they should bring two three or four months extra because their travel home may be delayed by border closures or being quarantined or isolated. In addition to the usual over the counter remedies for diarrheal illnesses, caused allergies, your travelers now should be educated that they need to pack masks in their kit. Not just to wear during travel, but to be ready to have them available at at your destination where it may be mandatory, not just in the workplace, but on the street. They should pack some gloves, which may be useful and hand sanitizer if they don't have soap and water available and wipes to clean down surfaces. Finally, again, they should be apprised that quarantine may be required at their destination, when they get there, they may be planning on a business trip, where they may be forcibly quarantined for up to two weeks before they can even leave their hotel room. And this may happen again, once they come home. And the final element is of course, psychological support. We're seeing at International SOS a tremendous increase in the number of calls that we're getting from employees and members about psychological distress. Even if they're not traveling, while they're still at home, self isolating or quarantining in place, sheltering in place at their homes. But also when they're traveling, they've lost whatever social support they had. So it's important as a travel manager to recognize that and maybe to have some systems in place to treat that and to address that if your travelers do come up with some anxiety or depression issues while they're traveling. Thank you.

11:42

Julian Walker: Good points, Bill. Thank you for that. And, certainly, apart from every time someone tells me not to touch my face, I immediately have to scratch it off. So apologies for everyone watching, I am safe. I have washed my hands. But I couldn't help doing that. And the other, I

suppose one of the stressful things must be as well, it's different in every country, there isn't a consistent approach to this. So maybe Jeremy, what do you think the door to door trip experience will be like for the traveler going forwards?

12:08

Jeremy Prout: Yeah, great question, Julian and great point on the variety is going to change by country to country and I think even by city to city. So you know, starting off with, you know, really the key here and Dr. Hauptman, nailed it right on the head, is that we need to be doing this research beforehand, we need to be preparing well in advance. And that includes up to you know, that day before travel. You know, one thing that I say as well is to really pack heavy for this, because, you know, we're dealing with a situation like that, or having said where, you know, individuals could get stranded in a location, whether they get sick, or there's a re imposition of those travel restrictions. Let's just start off with that airport experience, because I think that is that first one, as a doctor is having said, you know, expect to have some kind of a screening, you know, both prior to getting to the airport, because we you know, airports want to avoid having a lot of individuals in there and potentially having individuals that are having symptoms. And you know, we're going to see this vary from airport to airport, country to country, where you're going to have those screens beforehand. Then getting on the plane, we've seen many, many providers talk about providing, you know, kits to travelers still, that's a critical thing that everyone's to bring, because that's going to vary from from carrier to carrier. One thing I would say is I don't expect to see a lot of empty rows and empty seats. We've heard talk about this from airlines, but the reality is, they they're not going to be in a situation where they're putting two individuals in for every nine seats. I just don't see it happening, we haven't seen that practice come up much. So you know, expect for that to come up, expect to see individuals not wearing masks. So you know, they're certainly going to be stressed that's going to revolve with with that part. Once we get to that airport, we get to that location, you know, there's going to be additional screenings that come up, that's going to again, vary from location to location. And then getting into ground transportation. This gets into I think the critical part about doing that research prior to.

One of the things I recommend is that individuals contract, you know, use a car service that they've contacted prior too, because otherwise we don't know what that you know, that local cab or the public transit is going to be like, versus you know, having the availability of, you know, a provider that's going to be clear and upfront about what their hygiene is.

Then finally, looking at that combination experience, mostly hotels, we can expect that we're seeing capacity typically kept around 30 or 40%. So we should see that come up as well as we're seeing a lot of these guidelines out there and health and sanitation guidelines from major chains, talk about the provision of kits and how they're going to do those things. So you really want to understand, what that specific experience is gonna be like for you at that hotel. Those standards are out there, I suggest that you review them prior to and even prior to booking. And also feel free and I'd encourage you to have a conversation with your provider, you know, prior staying there, so you can understand what to expect. And then of course, there's that journey home, which really is just a repeat of that process that we had before. And I'll talk about this in our next section. But it really, we need to do that research all over again, we need to understand, you know, what that return flight home is going to be? When I get to my home city, my home country, you know, what can I expect from customs or that airport experience, because that's going to be different, again.

15:45

Julian Walker: All good points. And I have to say the key thing about that stood out for me there as well is a pre prepared or pre ordered ground transportation, I've had to travel to many kidnap areas in the past, and that's always been drilled into me, you know, don't just have the car outside the area at the airport or whatever. So that's an increasingly important part, but now from the health risks, rather than just perhaps the more dramatic side of life. So okay, so that's what we could expect this sort of thing to look like, really, but what processes or framework do you think travel managers can implement to best prepare their employees for this new world of travel? Jeremy? Bill, feel free to chip in.

16:24

Jeremy Prout: Yeah. So framework is absolutely critical. I mean, when we look at this return to travel process, this is going to be incredibly difficult. Obviously, there's a lot of complexities when we looked at, you know, ceasing travel. But that really was driven by government restrictions, I think, some common sense planning, we look to start this process up again. As we said, the beginning it's going to slow and it'll be complex. We have, obviously, those travel restrictions out there that not only need to be reviewed from whether I can travel to location or not. But you know, what were the considerations I need to have. So really, organizations need to have a process in here, even if it's just something that is a forward planning checklist to have for travelers or for matters or ideally, both. But we need to have our processes in the air, and it has to be flexible, because we're going to see really change going at all points of this. This is going to be consistently, you know, something that we're seeing changes in countries, we're going to see changes on, you know, what the impacts and COVID-19 has been as well as those restrictions. And also, you know, what is the medical response to this? Are we having, you know, therapeutics, you know, where are we at with vaccines. So this needs to be a flexible process. But I wanted to run through what we put together as really a best practice framework on a return to travel, you know, strategy for organizations. And that starts off with a destination assessment. So traditionally, when we do as International SOS, we looked at, you know, medical and security risk ratings, and what that risk environment is going to be like, for that travelers that are going there. But obviously, at this point, that's not enough, we need to take a much deeper dive on on just traditionally what's going on the medical and security risk rating, because COVID-19 has such a significant impact. And we just look at, you know, the public health impact, obviously, you know, the first thing I want to know and destination is, am I going to be able to travel there? Is this even an option right now? And if so, you know, what are the travel restrictions going to be? Is this a situation where I'm going to be able to fly to London, but I'm going to be quarantined for two weeks? It's a situation where, congratulations to New Zealand that they just announced they have no positive cases, and New Zealand has no interest in me traveling anytime soon, no matter how much I want to get out of New Jersey.

So, you know, are those travel restrictions in there that are going to prevent that? Then we go into the COVID-19 impact, is this an area that has been significantly or is significantly impacted by the virus? And looking from there also is, you know, what's the public health infrastructure right now? This could be a location that traditionally has had good public health infrastructure, but maybe now, the availability of ICU space is significantly taxed due to COVID-19. And that's something that we need to take into consideration for individuals with pre existing conditions, whether they be

susceptible to more, you know, stronger symptoms of COVID-19 or not. But you know, people still get into car accidents, people still have heart issues, people still have, you know, travelers flu. So, you know, what is that infrastructure, then thinking about, you know, what else is are the impacts, especially with COVID-19. So, obviously, financial impacts are a major issue that are out there. We also have to think about, are we seeing increases in civil unrest around who's gonna be around the government's handling it and the political instability questions. And then finally, I like to just generally get back to the basics. What is that destination like otherwise, is this a high risk destination? And what do we need to do? So really that creates our baseline for where can we go? Or if we do go to places, how many, where's the approval process where the free chip actions to drop the, to mitigate the risks that are out there. So let's talk about that pre trip approval, because it's a big one as well. And some travelers aren't going to be comfortable traveling for a very long time, but other ones are ready to go now. They're looking to recover business, they're looking to get started again, you know, they have business critical travel, and we want to, you know, to look at that process. So with that free trip approval, first off, that's our output or our destination assessment and understanding, you know, where can we go? Where can we can't and where is a higher risk location where someplace that really, we need to do those mitigations. So figuring out from there, you know, what is essential travel? And what's not that is, is that is something that organizations need to do. Many of them still haven't done it, or they have, you know, essential employee versus not, but really essential travel is something that we need to define from organization level. As I said earlier, we need to be flexible with that definition. Because as things open up more, that definition will change, and we need to be expecting to move that. So you know, looking at that approval process, you know, from an organization perspective, do we have mitigations, like you mentioned, Julian, with high risk kidnap areas, you know, that's something that I always want to see is that ground transportation piece is probably my biggest concern. And I want to see that the same things, when we look at COVID-19, travel is do we have those mitigations in place, and we want to understand that before that trip goes. Then the pre trip actions, and I said before, pack heavy. One thing that I also say is, is you know, family care planning. If you go on a five day trip, my guidance is to pack and plan for 20. And family care planning is a big one, if I got a flight right now and got stranded someplace for three weeks, my wife is going to be, you know, very cross with me about, you know, spending three weeks with my two and a half year old by herself. So let's have that family care planning. Let's also think about medical screening, as I mentioned earlier, and as Dr. Hauptman mentioned earlier, it's not just COVID-19 that we have to worry about, it's also our general health and the other risks that are out there. And that's really a critical thing that we need to be thinking about here, you know, going forward. And then education and training is really another part that is critical to doing that preparation and to understanding, you know, what we're what we need to be doing out there. And you know, that really is the best way to prepare at that point, is to do that training and preparation.

22:51

Now getting to during travel, monitoring is going to be a critical part about this. And I talked about this mostly because, you know, we want to be alerted to the medical incidents and COVID-19 impacts as well as new security incidents that occur. We're dealing with a lot of locations, let's say I'm trying to think of any ones that exist out there that are not taxed from an emergency management first responder capability, during COVID-19, which means that all risks are going to

be heightened during a pandemic, because the infrastructure of supporting travelers and supporting people in those countries, cities is going to be degraded, because there's so much infrastructure, you know, focusing on COVID-19, you know, from the airport level, all the way down to, you know, enforcing curfews and, you know, letting individuals know that they need to wear a mask.

So we really need to have that alerting capability for those risks that come out there. And then getting into the escalations in second wave. So I think we've heard about second waves a good deal by now. And that certainly gets into, you know, we've seen this come up in China, we've seen it come up in Singapore, in South Korea, where we've seen those mitigations, those restrictions come down. And then we've seen a spike in cases and they've come back up again. One thing that we also want to think about, though, is you know, we have a traveling obligation, we don't want them to get stranded, we want to consider you know, when do we repatriate, when do we evacuate that individual?

So we think back to the original shutdown of Wuhan. Many of the travel restrictions that go on post before 24/78 hours, that we have that out there, that's not going to happen this time. We're going to see those impositions of travel restrictions happen quickly. And we're also going to not see, I don't expect to see the availability of planes the way that we did especially from an international perspective. So less life and less lead time mean that individuals really need to be prepared to depart quickly. So, you know, having a protocol for that, on what to do if there is a spike. When do we leave having alerting that supports that? When do we stand fast? And how do we do that. And again, that gets back to really having that deliberate planning protocol. Packing heavy, having extra medication, having family care planning, having work planning into place, because you could be in a location for a few weeks unplanned, especially at the tail end of that journey.

And then I'd also say, finally, you know, that escalation, we also need to consider, you know, what is the protocol for one of your travelers, if they do get sick? And this is going to vary from place to place, I had someone asked me the day well, isn't there a standard protocol in mind because there were my client is. Yes, it's nice to call International SOS because this is going to vary from not only country to country, but city to city on how we deal with that situation.

Then there's our last step and that is that return trip. So that Return, return back home, return to work. At this point, you know, we need to as a traveler, we need to start that process again of that return. So reviewing, you know, what are, what's the travel experience going to be like getting back on that plane? What are the considerations I need to do for, you know, that airport experience getting back home, Are there restrictions, checking my flight information, and then getting back into the office, you know, 14 days really is still that best practice that's out there, taking that deliberate 14 days before you're doing that interaction again, and, you know, monitoring your health throughout this entire journey. That's really, you know, from a best practice framework, you know, what we're recommending to our clients, thank you.

26:40

Julian Walker: Lots of stuff there. And both of you have stressed the importance of the pre planning preparation. So if I could just let everyone know who's listening today, you will be receiving a forward planning checklist, which will be very helpful for you. And if I could ask those



of you watching live today, we just want to do a quick piece of research. If you look at the box on the right hand side of your screen, if you'd like to hear more on the subjects we've talked through, please click yes or no. And for those of you listening to this as a podcast, because we have recorded this and it will be issued as a podcast on all major podcast platforms, on the CWT's business travel on the fly, logo and monitor, please email your interest yes or no to core PR at mycwt.com. So brilliant. Bill, Jeremy, we had some great insights, tips and lessons there. So thank you a huge thank you for your time. Thank you both really tremendous. And thanks to all of you for joining us. So until next time, it's goodbye from Bill and from Jeremy and from me and everyone on the fly. Goodbye.