

## **TMC, Booking, Payment Vendors Align With Expense, Meeting Tech**

By Mary Ann McNulty  
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Expense and meeting technology integrations appeared to dominate the tradeshow at the National Business Travel Association's annual convention here last week with dozens of announcements and some working demos of the aligned products.

Rearden Commerce announced plans to integrate with StarCite. "Directly from the Rearden Personal Assistant, customers will be able to access StarCite to plan, source and book with its small meetings solution," according to a Rearden statement.

Travelocity Business said it added Worktopia's Universal Meeting Solution to its toolbox of meetings management options for clients. The meeting tool allows users to source and book sleeping and meeting rooms, as well as audiovisual and catering for small meetings. Travelocity Business will add its negotiated inventory of sleeping or meeting rooms, and corporations may add their own inventory to supplement Worktopia's base of about 10,000 hotel rooms and several thousand meeting rooms, according to Worktopia CEO John Arenas.

Travelocity Business vice president product development Blake Goodwin said data from meeting space searches and quotes automatically would be added to reporting to provide the necessary audit trail for corporate clients.

"Worktopia tool is just another tool in our toolbox. It was more about a speed-of-market decision for us, but this doesn't mean this is the only tool for us," Goodwin said. With additional relationships with American Express Business Travel, Diners Club International, Sabre, Travelport and others, Worktopia's Arenas said, "We're covering the distribution side, whether a tool for a travel agency or corporate booking tool."

Meeting automation provider Certain Software integrated with TRX's Resx corporate online booking solution, "allowing meeting planners greater visibility into travel arrivals, departures and itineraries for their event attendees."

SignUp4 announced a new partnership with Amadeus e-Travel Management to provide "meeting planners and corporate travel managers a complete overview of meeting registrations and travel bookings." The companies also announced a joint referral program. SignUp4 also has relationships with Sabre and GetThere, TRX's Resx, Worldspan by Travelport and meeting booking tool Worktopia.

Separately, SignUp4 announced plans to integrate its event and travel management modules into BCD Meetings & Incentives' technology portfolio.

MasterCard announced alliances with two meeting technology vendors, etouches and Worktopia, and expense vendor CyberShift to help corporations "enhance travel and card spend compliance," MasterCard stated in a prepared release. Negotiated pricing and additional expense controls are among the benefits of the new agreements, according to a MasterCard spokeswoman. As part of the deal with Worktopia, the MasterCard Purchase Control application is to become the exclusive purchase control feature on this tool. This will allow eligible MasterCard corporate customers to control employee use of card accounts to pay for meeting room reservations and services booked through Worktopia, the companies said. Besides spending, customers would have the ability to issue one-time use cards.

### **Expense For End To End**

A year after launching its BMO Spend & Payment Solutions and partnering with Ariba Technology, BMO Financial Group said it added CyberShift and Tri-Pen Travelmaster as the latest travel alliance firm. A MasterCard issuer, BMO said the CyberShift relationship was forged outside of the deal it signed separately with MasterCard.

"The industry in the past two years has undergone a fundamental change. Two years ago, clients were saying, 'We need more data, better data, faster.' What we need now is something that helps us make sense of all this, give us some actionable information, help us distill the good from the bad," said Kevin Tait, BMO business development general manager.

BMO Spend & Payment Solutions managing director Terry Wellesley said client signings of its integrated payment solutions were "slower than we thought. Our pipeline is very robust. We have our own bank using the product right now. We have two or three customers we're looking at closing within the next three to six months. We're optimistic we're going down the road very fast."

"CyberShift and Travelmaster all tie into my overall strategy of being a very holistic payment product with all the points covered. We've got the p-card, fleet card, T&E, spend management business and we're building a hub internally so we can connect everything through that hub for our customers. We're very optimistic that in 2010 we'll see some dramatic results in the U.S. market where we've not been a big player. We dominate Canada now as the number-one player in p-card over American Express," said Wellesley. "Right now the U.S. is about 15 percent to 20 percent of my (p-card)

business in North America, but the ideal is to grow it to" 80 percent from the United States and 20 percent from Canada, he added.

BMO said it looked at all expense vendors, but found CyberShift to provide the best options, including data consistency.

On its new relationship with MasterCard, CyberShift CEO Robert Farina said, "We already have our first client signed, but we can't announce it quite yet. There's a tremendous amount of demand for what we're doing as an alternative to the Amex-Concur approach. For us, it's a great distribution model as now we'll be able to access clients that we didn't have access to before. For MasterCard, it provides more reasons to use the card."

As part of its travel analysis, CyberShift product marketing manager Craig Fearon said the company plans to provide booked versus actual reporting. Fearon added that the company takes feeds from travel agency back-office systems and is to match it to payment feeds. "We're purposely leaving it off the end user," as reconciling booked versus paid simply adds more work to the traveler, he noted.

Databasics' integration with the TRX Resx booking and reporting tools secured its first customers with new contracts from the state governments of Alaska and West Virginia. ExpenseWatch said it too is partnering with TRX, as well as with Egencia and Travelocity Business to provide small and midsize businesses with an end-to-end solution "encompassing pretrip approvals through to expense report reimbursement," according to ExpenseWatch president and CEO Bill Vergantino.

Studying how best to integrate with booking providers, Vergantino said, his company designed interfaces to automatically link itinerary and payment data feeds for the current and prospective client base of corporations with "less than \$500 million in revenue and fewer than 2,500 employees." The Travelocity Business integration was showcased on the exhibit floor and promised to customers in the fourth quarter, officials said.

IBM talked about its integration with booking system vendors Travelport Traversa for its own internal use and GetThere as part of a relationship announced earlier this year. "We built our system so that regardless of where that booking was made, it's a uniform data capture," said an IBM spokesman. "At IBM, we build open system environments that provide us the flexibility to integrate seamlessly with multiple providers," added Ray Curatolo, IBM Global Expense Report Solutions director.