

# Business Travel in France...

Amélie Nicolas, in charge of Communications and Marketing at GlobalStar France - VoyagExpert has kindly provided an overview of 'Business Travel in France'.

## A little bit about France...

France is the largest country in the EU known as 'the hexagon'. France is one of the world's oldest countries, and its reach extends around the globe through science, politics, economics and perhaps above all, culture. It was one of the first nations to champion the rights of the individual.

The French economy is one of the world's largest and is a mixture of private enterprise and government involvement. Tourism is a major contributor to the economy. Directly and indirectly this activity employs about 10% of the workforce and contributes approximately 9% of GDP. France generally tops lists of most visited countries, 83.7 million visitors arrived in France, according to the World Tourism Organisation report published in 2014.

### 1. What makes the French business travel market different to other markets? Who is buying travel and how?

- The French business travel industry is mainly operated through an Online process. Indeed, there is a technological predominance with 90% of online booking.
- Worth nearly 30 billion euros, business travel represents an important part of French GDP, and the market is still growing, 4.3% growth in 2019.
- Also, the business travel market aims to reduce internal flights by 30%....
- The market is more concentrated on large international accounts.
- The public sector is very important, forming a large chunk of the business.
- Out of France's 35€ billion Euros (growth 3.9%) total business travel spending, 50% of companies book through a travel agency, among them 24% through a local agency.
- Most business travel is bought through an online process via different tools (SBT) like Concur, KDS, Cytric, Egencia. 90% of the business is conducted online.

### 2. What differentiates a French business traveller from other business travellers?

- Rail preferences, "flight shaming". With the evolution of rail, French travellers reconsider their travel.
- According to INSEE; 40% of internal travels are for business purposes.
- Desire to reduce the Carbon footprint (influenced by the Northern countries, flight shaming). In fact, we have seen a 30% drop of internal flights between 2012 and 2017.
- Rail seduces more and more thanks to the reduction of time spent on the train on principal lines. E.g. Paris-Bordeaux 2 hours & 11 minutes. Thus, business travel by rail sales has increased by 9.5% between 2016 and 2018.

### 3. What can other non-French travel buyers learn from their French counterparts?

- Favours Business travel agencies and tools that associate booking easiness and expense management.
- Though travellers want the easiest tools for booking, that is like the rest of the world, French companies are seeking expenditure control and process compliance.
- More than 50% book online on a mobile device (source: Phocuswright 2017)

### 4. What challenges do French travel buyers / corporate or travellers face that are specific to this market?

- Price politics is very aggressive. Zero online fees are quite usual.

### 5. When considering a regional or global consolidation for a corporate client, what are your experiences of how France fits into the picture and what challenges should corporate travel managers or procurement teams be aware of?

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## Did you know...?

- Paris is *ville lumière*, or "city of light"
- The iron lady is 130 years old! Inaugurated at the 1889 World Fair, the Eiffel Tower gets 7 million visitors annually
- The French eat around 30,000 tonnes of snails a year
- It is against the law to carry live snails on a high-speed train in France without their own tickets - any domesticated animal under 5kg must be a paying passenger in France
- The world's greatest cycle race, the Tour de France, has been around for more than 100 years
- France was the first country in the world to ban supermarkets from throwing away or destroying unsold food
- French gastronomy was awarded UNESCO World Heritage Status in 2010
- France produces nearly a billion tons of cheese a year in around 1,200 different varieties - A French proverb claims '*un fromage par jour de l'année*' - there is a different cheese for every day of the year
- Louis XIX was the king of France for just 20 minutes, the shortest ever reign
- The French Army was the first to use camouflage in 1915 (World War I)
- In France you can marry a dead person - Under French law, in exceptional cases you can marry posthumously, as long as you can also prove that the deceased had the intention of marrying while alive and you receive permission from the French president
- *Liberté, égalité, fraternité* meaning 'liberty, equality and fraternity' (or brotherhood) is the national motto of France written in the constitution and seen on coins, postage stamps and government logos often alongside 'Marianne' who symbolises the 'triumph of the Republic'

