Cruising Altitude Q&A

Q1. Can the platform embed passive and active approvals, support NDC, and control booking channels?

A: Yes. The bookings actually happen on the supplier websites. Because we are connected to the supplier through a software development kit (SDK), we provide identity management, loyalty status, travel policy, corporate discounts, negotiated hotel and rental car rates, both passive and active approvals, form of payment, and HR system integration, all upfront and throughout the process.

On NDC, since the traveler is booking directly in the supplier's own channel, they have access to the supplier's full direct content. NDC also comes into play after the booking. If the company's travel agency of record is NDC enabled and the airline authorizes it, the agency can service a supplier direct booking just as it would any other.

As for controlling booking channels, the company's travel program is delivered directly to the supplier, so when a traveler books on the supplier's website, that booking is in compliance with the company's policy. Altimeter sits side by side with the indirect channels, giving the company governance and visibility over supplier direct bookings that it doesn't have today.

Q2. How is the platform different from other modern online booking tools?

A: The travelers log in directly on the supplier website, meaning the airline, hotel, or rental car website. If it's a supplier on our platform, there is a switch that the travelers see upon login, and it asks them if they are booking for personal travel or business travel.

If they select personal travel, they book like they always do on the supplier website. If they select business travel, the software development kit is enabled behind the scenes, and the company's travel program is passed to the supplier through APIs. We apply the company's travel program, including identity management, loyalty status, travel policy, corporate discounts, negotiated hotel and rental car rates, both passive and active approvals, form of payment, and HR system integration.

That is what makes us different from other online booking tools. Traditional booking tools pull the traveler away from the supplier and into a separate tool, while Altimeter brings the company's travel program to the supplier website, where travel continues to move.

Q3. Where does the traveler log in? If travelers must use a separate tool, how do you prevent them from booking directly on supplier websites instead?

A: The travelers do not use a separate tool. They log in directly on the supplier websites, and because our technology is embedded into the supplier, your travel program follows the travelers on the supplier websites, so they book within your program and stay connected to it.

There is nothing to prevent. Booking directly on the supplier website can be allowed because our technology sits side by side with your TMC and OBT, so you can now give your travelers who want to book on supplier websites a choice. When they select business travel, your travel policy, corporate discounts, negotiated rates, approvals, and form of payment are already applied, which means a supplier direct booking is a compliant booking.

Q4. How is this different from Traxo and Concur TripLink?

A: Traxo and TripLink are both reactive, while Altimeter is proactive. Both solutions capture bookings after they have already been made, so the company gains visibility into the trip, but only after the fact. Travel policy is reviewed once the booking is complete rather than applied while the traveler is booking.

With Traxo, the corporate rate is not applied at the time of booking, so the company loses its discount. TripLink depends on participating suppliers, and it has been losing suppliers, which limits the coverage a company can count on.

Altimeter applies the company's travel program at the point of booking, directly on the supplier website. That includes identity management, loyalty status, travel policy, corporate discounts, negotiated hotel and car rental rates, both passive and active approvals, form of payment, and HR system integration. The booking is in compliance from the start, rather than being identified and reported on afterward.

We also provide a pass-through layer for duty of care and expense, so the trip information flows to the company's existing duty of care provider and expense platform without replacing either one.

Q5. How are you capturing the booking data?

A: Because we are connected directly to the supplier through the software development kit and APIs, the booking data comes straight from the supplier at the time of booking. There is

no email parsing or after-the-fact matching for bookings made through suppliers on our platform.

For suppliers not yet on our platform, Transponder captures those bookings as part of Altimeter. Every booking lands in what we call a Super PNR, a trip management service that holds every component of the trip, whether it's a full trip or a single supplier booking.

The itinerary follows the traveler, and any change, cancellation, or addition made with the supplier updates the record and notifies all of the connected integration partners as it happens, including ticket lift. That data then passes through to your existing duty of care provider and expense platform, and it gives the travel manager full visibility and reporting on supplier direct bookings that they simply don't have today.

Q6. If travelers already book outside the preferred system, what would motivate them to use this tool rather than continue booking directly?

A: Altimeter is not a separate tool. Our technology enables direct booking on the supplier's own website and mobile app, so travelers keep booking the way they already like to.

When they log in to a connected supplier and select business travel, your travel program—travel policy, corporate discounts, corporate payment, approvals, duty of care and expense—is applied behind the scenes, so the traveler's loyalty status is recognized, they enjoy the booking experience they prefer, and the company gets a booking that is in compliance.

Right in the booking path, travelers also get faster upgrades, free ancillaries based on their status, and the ability to purchase ancillaries like seats and bags, which they can't do through the indirect channel until after ticketing.

Q7. Can travelers book through an airline app and still have the reservation captured, or must they book through your platform?

A: Yes, travelers can book through the airline app, and the reservation is captured. In fact, there is no separate platform for them to book through.

Altimeter works behind the scenes, embedded in the supplier's own website and mobile app, so the traveler books directly on the airline, hotel, or rental car website or mobile app just as they do today. When they log in to a connected supplier and select business travel, your travel program is applied, and the reservation is captured directly from the supplier and placed into the traveler's itinerary. From there it passes through to your duty of care provider and expense platform.

For suppliers not yet connected, Transponder, which is part of Altimeter, captures those bookings from the travelers' confirmation emails, so the company still has the full picture.

Q8. How can travelers apply unused tickets?

A: Since the reservation stays with the supplier, travelers apply unused tickets the same way they do today, directly on the airline's own website or mobile app.

What Altimeter adds is visibility on both sides. When the traveler logs in to a connected airline and is identified, they are notified that they have an unused ticket and it is surfaced to them right in the booking path, so it gets applied rather than forgotten.

At the same time, we track unused tickets for the travel manager, so the company has full visibility into the credits it is holding and can make sure they are used before they expire.

Q9. How many airlines are participating in the pilot?

A: We have a minimum of five and up to seven airlines that will participate. The carriers are in the US, Europe, Australia and the Middle East.

Q10. How do you address traveler data-privacy concerns, including the possible capture of personal travel?

A: We do not capture personal travel, and the traveler is always in control. When they log in to a connected supplier, they choose personal or business travel. If they select personal, nothing is captured or shared with their company.

Only when they select business travel is the company's travel program enabled and the booking captured, and because we are connected to the company's HR system, only current employees are recognized.

That business data is shared only with the company and the partners it already uses, such as its duty of care provider and expense platform, and we never sell traveler data. Altimeter, including Transponder, is SOC 2 and ISO 27001 certified, GDPR compliant, and encrypts data both in transit and at rest.

Q11. Does price assurance compare the selected itinerary with alternative airlines and hotels, or only with other prices from the same supplier?

A: It compares the selected itinerary with alternative airlines and hotels, not just other prices from the same supplier.

Once a supplier direct booking is made, CrossCheck, our price assurance tool and part of Altimeter, cross-shops it in the background through the GDS and other shopping tools against comparable options from other suppliers, and it is also compared against the company's travel policy and dollar value limits.

Today this is used for audit purposes, giving the travel manager visibility into whether the traveler booked the best value available. In the future, if a lower option is found, the booking can be rebooked with an alternative supplier.

Q12. How can a company recover airline credits from direct bookings when a flight is canceled, or if an employee leaves the organization?

A: In the direct channels, unused tickets are tied to the traveler's loyalty account, and because Altimeter is connected to that account when the traveler logs in and is identified, we can track those credits for the travel manager.

That means credits from canceled flights booked through a connected airline are visible to the company rather than sitting in the traveler's account where they are often forgotten, and the traveler is notified of the unused ticket at login, so it gets applied to their next business trip.

The same access applies when an employee leaves the organization. Our HR system integration updates the airline's records, and because the company has visibility into that employee's open credits through their loyalty account, the travel manager can work with the airline to recover or reassign them according to that airline's policies.

Q13. Because leakage often begins with Google, can negotiated rates appear in Google results before a traveler reaches the supplier's website?

A: That's a great point, and you're right that many supplier direct bookings start with a search on Google. Negotiated rates, however, are private to each company, so they are not displayed in public search results like Google. That's by design, because it protects the company's negotiated rates from being seen by anyone outside the organization.

Where Altimeter comes in is the moment the traveler reaches the supplier's website or mobile app and logs in. Once they select business travel and are identified, their company's negotiated rates and corporate discounts are applied right there in the booking path, so wherever their search started, the booking ends up within the company's travel program.