NEWS RELEASE

WEX Global Survey Finds that 74% of Travel Intermediaries Expect Growth This Year, Despite Geopolitical Uncertainty

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New benchmark research highlights how travel industry leaders are looking to proactive financial innovation and AI-driven operations to help secure long-term enterprise growth, amidst growing pressure on traditional operational infrastructures

PORTLAND, Maine--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- A new international survey of 300 travel industry executives conducted by FT Longitude, a division of the Financial Times, in partnership with WEX (NYSE: WEX), a global leader in intelligent payment solutions, highlights a landscape vulnerable to geopolitical volatility amidst compressing performance forecasts. However, the study also reveals strong resilience, showing that many travel intermediaries are adopting modernized payment strategies to overcome these external pressures and achieve their 2026 growth expectations.

The study, “Avoiding Payment Jet Lag,” offers comprehensive insights into how travel intermediaries are optimizing their back-office financial operations. While 74% of travel intermediaries still forecast growth this year despite conflict in the Middle East lowering initial expectations, the research highlights a widespread push to modernize legacy payment systems. Industry leaders recognize that updating these tools is critical, noting that system limitations during market disruptions can impact customer loyalty (79%) and limit an organization’s ability to provide crucial 24/7 payment support (57%) to travelers.

Despite these backend pressures, travel leaders can see a path forward. Transitioning away from passive, legacy financial systems is recognized as a business mandate, with 59% of executives predicting that long-term enterprise growth will come directly from proactively innovating their corporate payment strategies.

“Operational resilience in 2026 depends as much on an organization's digital payment architecture as it does on traditional infrastructure and frontline logistics,” said Jason Hancock, managing director of Global Travel at WEX. “The report highlights how travel intermediaries are no longer just playing defense against escalating market volatility or supplier insolvencies. Instead, they are transforming their own modern payment architecture into proactive tools for risk protection, cash flow flexibility, and sustainable growth."

Additional findings from the global survey include:

- Premium travel services can help stabilize margins: Despite adverse events, consumer spending remains fairly resilient, with 61% reporting steady demand. Crucially, luxury travel can offer a reliable path to near-term growth, as 86% of executives state that premium packages stabilize their margins during times of crisis.
- The chargeback security imperative: Currently, 84% of executives say the risk of financial loss from supplier insolvency feels higher than it did just 12 months ago. 82% of leaders state that better frameworks for chargebacks could save their organization money by improving supplier payment recovery rates.
- The dawn of agentic automation: Travel intermediaries are leaning into automation to boost day-to-day efficiency. The survey found that 59% of travel organizations plan to scale AI-driven tools for customer assistance, while 54% intend to deploy agentic AI for discovery efforts, all while maintaining centralized human control over booking decisions.

With decades of expertise managing complex B2B data and financial flows, WEX helps travel organizations implement flexible, API-driven payment platforms, integrated automated data networks, and secure virtual card infrastructure. Transitioning to these modern frameworks helps insulate travel leaders from their three top-cited mid-term risks – supplier insolvency, volatile currency exchange rates, and sophisticated payment fraud – while building the structural flexibility required to confidently unlock new revenue streams.

To read the full research report and discover actionable insights for short-, medium-, and long-term travel payment strategies, view “Avoiding Payment Jet Lag” **here**.

About the study

The findings in the research report are based on an international survey of 300 senior travel industry executives, conducted by WEX in partnership with FT Longitude. Respondents span the C-suite (30%) and C-1 and C-2 levels (70%) across Australia, Germany, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The survey sampled leaders from a cross-section of enterprise revenue bands ranging from $50 million to $50 billion. By company type, the study includes insights from online travel agencies (OTAs) (60%), travel management companies (TMCs) (25%), and other travel intermediaries or third-party suppliers, such as wholesalers, aggregators, bed banks, and global distribution system (GDS) providers (15%).

About WEX

WEX (NYSE: WEX) is the global commerce platform that simplifies the business of running a business. WEX has created a powerful ecosystem that offers seamlessly embedded, personalized solutions for its customers around the world. Through its rich data and specialized expertise in simplifying benefits, reimagining mobility and paying and getting paid, WEX aims to make it easy for companies to overcome complexity and reach their full potential. For more information, please visit **www.wexinc.com**.

About FT Longitude

FT Longitude combines intelligence and influence to leave a lasting impression on the world of business. With a focus on pioneering thought leadership strategies and creative storytelling techniques, it creates high-impact campaigns that engage key decision-makers and imprints brands with unforgettable messages. Part of the Financial Times Group, FT Longitude helps brands to connect with the world's most influential people through the FT's 21 million monthly global readers. For more information, please visit **longitude.ft.com**.

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