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The Long View: 3 things that everyone in the business travel industry should be monitoring over the next few years

Between industry leaders lobbying for easing of travel restrictions in time for summer holidays, and eyes and ears firmly on vaccination rollouts and the Delta variant, so much seems to be riding on the next few months.

In March, we polled our customers who said the most important enablers to see them return to business travel were widespread vaccine distribution (weighting the importance of this 4.5 out of 5) and case count reduction

(weighted 3.2 out of 5). The US and UK, which are amongst the [biggest business travel markets](#) in the world, are making constant progress with their [vaccination campaigns](#), and that's encouraging.

According to data from the New York Times [vaccination tracker](#), more than 3.51 billion vaccine doses have been administered worldwide, equal to 46 doses for every 100 people. But vaccine inequality remains stark.

While vaccines will certainly play an important role in making people feel confident in traveling again, a number of factors could impact the timeframe over which travel resumes. For example, much will depend on how quickly countries are able to inoculate their populations, how effective the vaccine proves to be in limiting the transmission and spread of the disease – particularly against new mutant strains of the virus, and also how long immunity lasts after vaccination.

Here are three factors to consider in understanding the outlook for global travel.

1. **Health issues** – Travel is a potent force in the emergence, and spread of disease in geographic areas and populations. 75% of newly emerging diseases are zoonotic (transmitted between humans and animals), according to the Eco Health Alliance. Like Covid, they spread fast. Follow sources like WHO and International SOS for insight into global health concerns as they unfold.
2. **Political shifts** – Travel restrictions and border closures directly affect and disrupt trade, freight, business travel and the supply of services that rely on the presence of individuals abroad.
3. **The mental health and wellbeing of your traveling employees** – Stress levels can be intensified during travel (more so after a travel hiatus triggered by a global crisis) due to a lack of familiar support systems, disrupted daily routines, language barriers, culture shock and unexpected situations.

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