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Diversity Corner

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Honoring AANHPI Heritage Month Through Smarter, More Inclusive Business Travel

Every May, organizations across the country recognize **Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month** — a time to celebrate the cultures, histories, innovations, and leadership of communities that continue to shape business, technology, hospitality, and global commerce.

For travel managers, this month is also an opportunity to reflect on how corporate travel programs can better support inclusion, cultural awareness, and employee belonging while strengthening the traveler experience.

Business travel is more than flights and hotel bookings. It represents how organizations care for employees, engage globally, and demonstrate values in action.

Why AANHPI Heritage Month Matters in Travel Management

The travel industry has long been influenced by AANHPI communities — from aviation and hospitality leadership to culinary tourism, global trade, technology innovation, and customer service excellence.

As organizations continue building diverse and globally connected workforces, travel managers are uniquely positioned to create programs that:

- Support traveler safety and comfort
- Encourage cultural awareness
- Promote equitable travel experiences
- Strengthen supplier diversity initiatives
- Foster inclusive business relationships worldwide

A thoughtful travel program can help employees feel respected and supported no matter where they travel.

Creating More Inclusive Travel Experiences

Inclusive travel management starts with understanding that travelers have different experiences, expectations, and concerns when traveling for work.

Travel managers can use AANHPI Heritage Month as a catalyst to evaluate:

- Traveler support resources
- Safety and escalation procedures
- Supplier diversity partnerships
- Cultural awareness training
- Accessibility and dietary accommodations
- Communication practices during international travel

Even small improvements can have a meaningful impact on traveler confidence and employee engagement.

Supplier Diversity in the Travel Industry

Many organizations are expanding supplier diversity programs to include hotels, restaurants, transportation providers, and travel technology companies owned or led by underrepresented groups.

Supporting diverse suppliers can:

- Encourage innovation
- Strengthen local economies
- Expand authentic travel experiences
- Reinforce company DEI commitments
- Build stronger global partnerships

Travel managers can work with procurement teams and travel management companies to identify opportunities within existing programs.

The Importance of Cultural Intelligence

Business travel often places employees in unfamiliar environments where cultural awareness matters.

AANHPI Heritage Month provides an excellent opportunity to educate teams on:

- Respectful business etiquette across Asia-Pacific regions
- Communication styles in global meetings
- Cultural holidays and observances
- Inclusive dining and hospitality practices
- Avoiding stereotypes and unconscious bias while traveling

Cultural intelligence improves not only traveler experience but also client relationships and business outcomes.

Wellness and Belonging for Business Travelers

Frequent travel can create stress, fatigue, and feelings of isolation. Employees who feel underrepresented may experience additional pressures while traveling internationally or attending large corporate events.

Travel managers can support employee wellness by:

- Providing clear traveler support channels
- Offering flexible travel options when possible
- Encouraging healthy work-life balance during trips
- Partnering with hotels and suppliers known for inclusive service

- Creating psychologically safe environments for feedback

Travel programs that prioritize belonging often see stronger traveler satisfaction and policy compliance.

Moving From Recognition to Action

AANHPI Heritage Month should be more than a calendar acknowledgment. It can serve as a reminder that inclusion is built through everyday operational decisions — including travel.

Travel managers have an important role in shaping experiences that are respectful, safe, and welcoming for all employees.

By combining thoughtful policy design, cultural awareness, supplier diversity, and traveler care, organizations can create travel programs that reflect the values of a modern global workforce.

As business travel continues evolving, inclusion will remain a critical part of what defines successful travel management.