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Diversity Corner

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September: Connecting DEI, Business Travel & Inclusive Connections

September marks a transition into a busy season for business travel. As organizations return from summer schedules and conferences, meetings, and corporate events increase, it is also an opportunity for travel professionals to consider how **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)** can shape more thoughtful and inclusive travel experiences.

From Hispanic Heritage Month to global observances recognizing peace, accessibility, and cultural diversity, September offers business travelers and travel managers many opportunities to learn, connect, and celebrate.

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage

One of the most significant September observances is **Hispanic Heritage Month**, which begins September 15 and runs through October 15 in the United States. It recognizes the histories, cultures, and contributions of Hispanic and Latino communities.

For business travel, this can be an opportunity to incorporate culturally inclusive experiences into meetings and events. Travel managers can recommend locally owned Hispanic- and Latino-owned restaurants, businesses, cultural attractions, and meeting partners. Companies can also highlight the cultural diversity of destinations when planning incentive trips, conferences, and employee gatherings.

Traveling with Inclusion in Mind

September is also a good time to revisit accessibility in business travel. An inclusive travel program considers more than airfare and hotel rates. Travelers may have different mobility, dietary, cultural, religious, or communication needs.

Travel managers can help create a more equitable experience by ensuring that travelers have access to:

- Accessible hotel rooms and transportation
- Dietary options that accommodate different needs
- Clear information about accessibility and destination logistics
- Flexible travel policies when reasonable accommodations are required
- Safe and welcoming environments for all travelers

Small details can make a significant difference in whether a traveler feels comfortable, respected, and included.

World Tourism Day: Travel as a Bridge

As September comes to a close, **World Tourism Day on September 27** provides another opportunity to recognize the positive role travel can play in connecting people and cultures.

Business travel is about more than getting from one destination to another. Meetings, conferences, trade shows, and corporate travel create opportunities to build relationships with people from different backgrounds and perspectives.

Travel managers can encourage travelers to engage with the communities they visit—supporting local businesses, learning about local customs, and choosing experiences that contribute positively to the destination.

DEI and Business Travel: A Shared Responsibility

The business travel industry has an important role in creating more inclusive experiences. Hotels, airlines, transportation providers, restaurants, meeting venues, and destination partners all contribute to the traveler's experience.

For travel managers, September is an ideal time to ask:

Are our travel policies designed for the diverse needs of today's workforce?

Are our preferred suppliers reflective of the communities we serve?

Are we giving travelers the information they need to feel safe, welcomed, and included?

Are our meetings and events accessible to everyone?

These questions can lead to meaningful improvements in a company's travel program.

Looking Ahead

As the final months of the year approach, September provides a valuable reminder that **inclusive business travel is not simply about where we go—it is about how we travel, who we support, and how we connect with others along the way.**

By incorporating DEI into travel planning and supplier partnerships, companies can create experiences that are not only more inclusive but also more meaningful and reflective of today's increasingly diverse workforce.

This September, let's travel with curiosity, respect, and inclusion—and make every business journey an opportunity to connect.