

# **Traveller behaviour: threats & opportunities**

How global events are driving change  
in business travel



## **INITIAL FINDINGS**



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## Introduction

For the past two decades, the business traveller has been identified as “the road warrior,” battling every conceivable disadvantage from weather delays to erupting volcanoes, from bad internet connections to exotic diseases, and from short service to long lines. There are always circumstances beyond her or his control. Now the business traveller is at the forefront of social and political discord, facing the very real threat of personal injury or worse. Some destinations have been considered dangerous for years. But now the threat has spilled into cities and countries that have always been regarded as safe, stable, and even romantic.

The business traveller is always depicted as resilient, resolute, and virtually undeterred in meeting corporate objectives because they are. “Incidents” are analysed... Sometimes changes are made... Travel resumes because it must. Yet there is a price to pay for that resilience. Resolution occasionally comes with a hidden cost. Meeting the corporate objective can mean overriding individual fears and personal conflict. A joint effort between the Association of Corporate Travel Executives and Business Traveller Magazine — in association with American Express Global Business Travel, this study measures these costs and identifies who pays.

The study is unique in its approach that measures both business traveller and corporate travel executives’ (business travel managers) perception.

Business travellers are not really warriors. They are people with families, mortgages, college tuitions, and car payments. They are people whose offices happen to be the world. While the perception of the invincible traveller is true to an extent, this study reveals a far more personal side to the business traveller: less fearful than anxious; more concerned with professional standing than danger; and more likely to gauge the impact of a threat to the waiting family back home as opposed to canceling a trip.

While this study strives to answer many questions, it will spawn others. Hopefully, the comparison of business travellers’ interpretation of terror and the corporate travel executives’ perspective of that interpretation will lead to a new high ground. ACTE and Business Traveller Magazine would like to acknowledge the 605 business travellers and the 270 corporate travel executives who candidly responded to this study.

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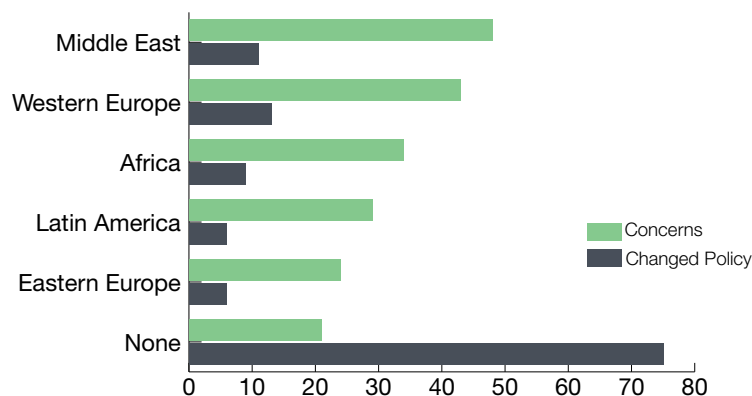
## Destinations – concerns about terrorism and effect on travel policy

Overall the level of concern about any particular destination is similar for both Corporate Travel Executives (79%) and travellers (75%). However, only 25% of the Corporate Travel Executives (CTE's) organisations have changed destination policy as a result of a terrorist act or threat, while 56% of travellers have changed their attitude about visiting one or more destinations.

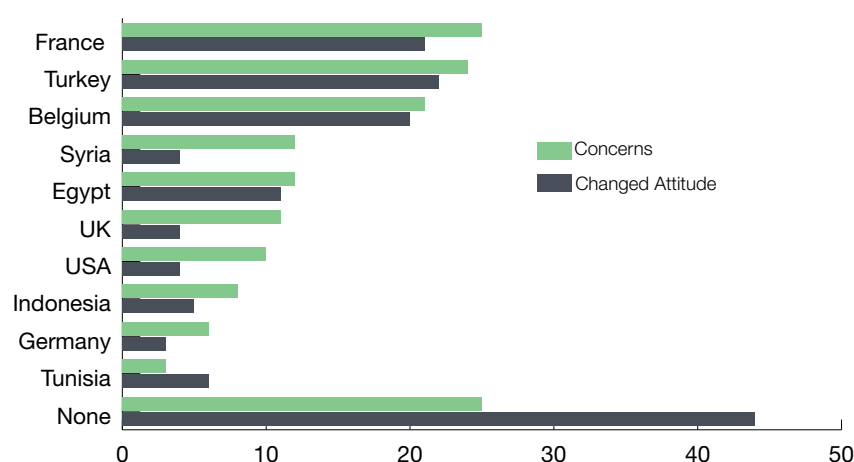
It is therefore evident that this change in traveller attitude is not being reflected by changes in their company's policy on travel to those areas.

In terms of specific destinations, France, Turkey and Belgium clearly stand out as the destinations of most concern and this is reflected in a change in current attitude towards visiting them. The UK and USA are both close to Syria and Egypt in terms of the scale of current concern about traveller safety, although this has not manifested itself in a change of attitude to the same degree as for Egypt in particular.

### Destinations-CTE concerns



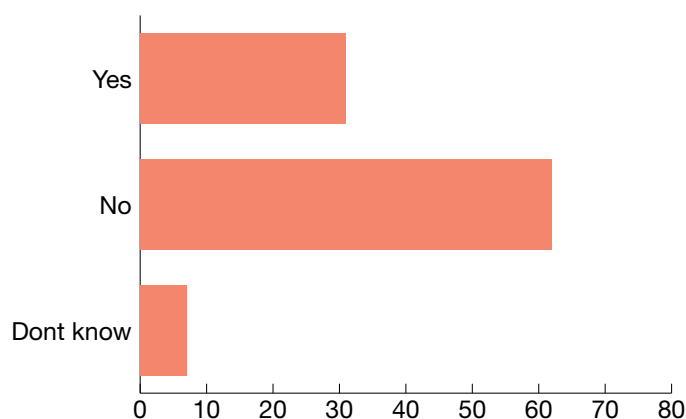
### Destinations-Traveller concerns



## Communicating travel concerns

31% of travellers feel that a reluctance to travel to destinations that their companies want them to could hurt their careers.

### Do you worry that a reluctance to travel could hurt your career?



50% of travellers would feel comfortable discussing safety concerns with their management and 24% claim to have no concerns.

Only 5% have already discussed any concerns they have with their company but there 9% who would not feel comfortable having that conversation or who have concerns and not conveyed them yet.

### Would you discuss your concerns with management?



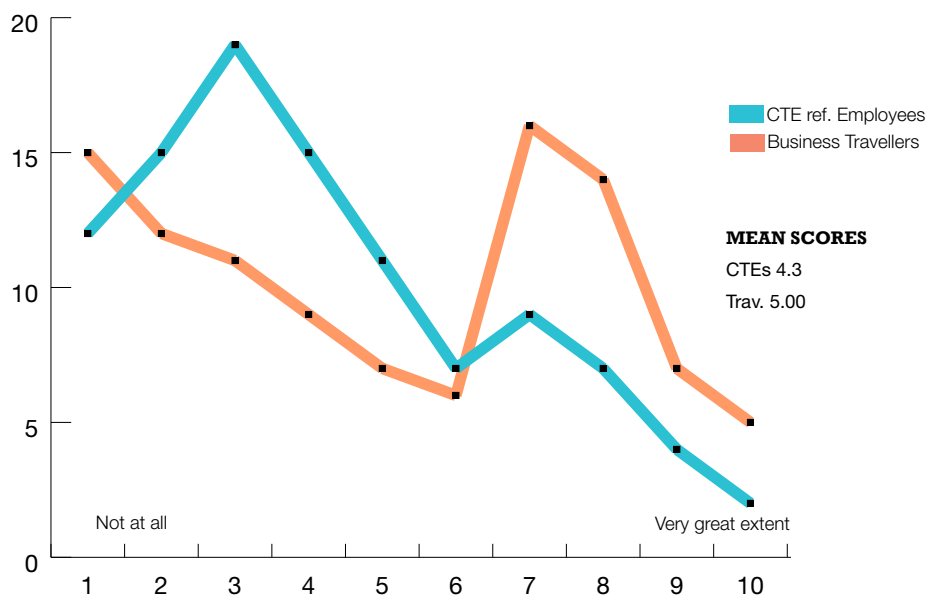
# The extent of terrorism's effect on propensity to travel

Corporate travel executives (CTEs) are under-estimating the changes in traveller preference or willingness to travel to destinations as a result of acts of terrorism or violent unrest. The difference between the mean scores of 4.3 for CTEs and 5 for travellers is statistically significant.

The overall perception among the CTE sample is that they are not aware of the extent of their travellers changing their preferences or willingness to travel to certain destinations.

It is difficult to draw conclusions as to the cause of the differences between the CTE perception and the traveller position. It may be that the change in view of travellers has not been actively communicated to their companies for reasons such as job security. We know from other findings of the survey that 31% of travellers worry that a reluctance to travel could hurt their career and that 6% would not feel comfortable expressing their concerns to their organisation should they have any.

## Extent travel destination preference has changed



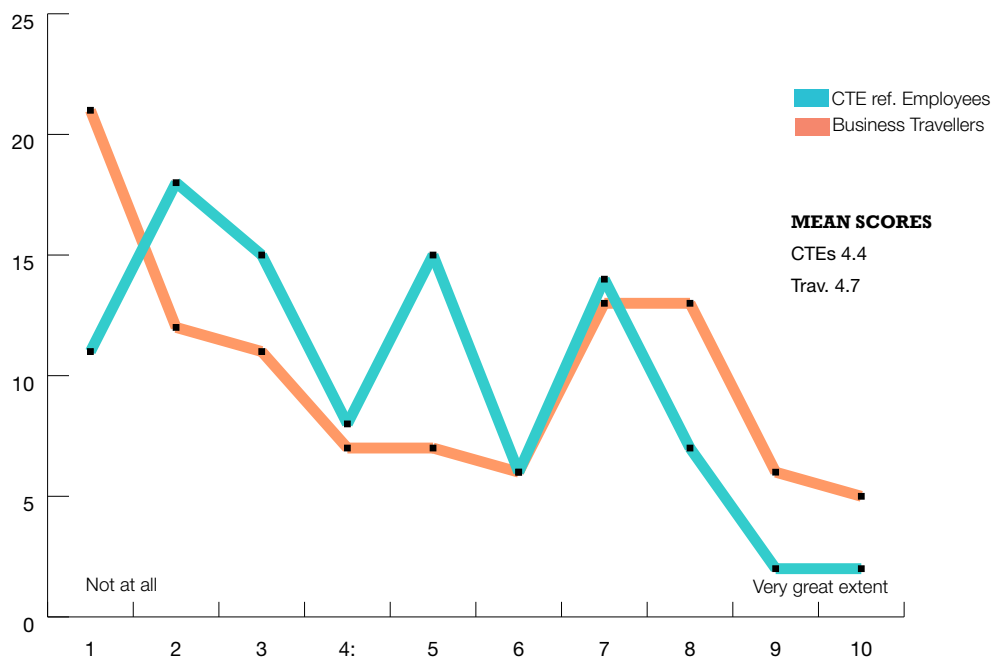
## The influence of recent attacks in destinations previously considered low-risk

The perception of the CTEs is much closer to the travellers' views in terms of the extent to which recent attacks in previously considered low-risk areas have influenced traveller decisions to visit them.

The relatively low mean scores demonstrate that in the main, decisions to actually travel to previously considered low-risk countries are not being influenced to a great extent.

This supports the comparably low number of companies actually changing their policies or travellers changing willingness/preference to visit places like France (21%) and Belgium (22%).

### Extent recent attacks in 'low-risk' areas have influenced preferences or decisions to visit

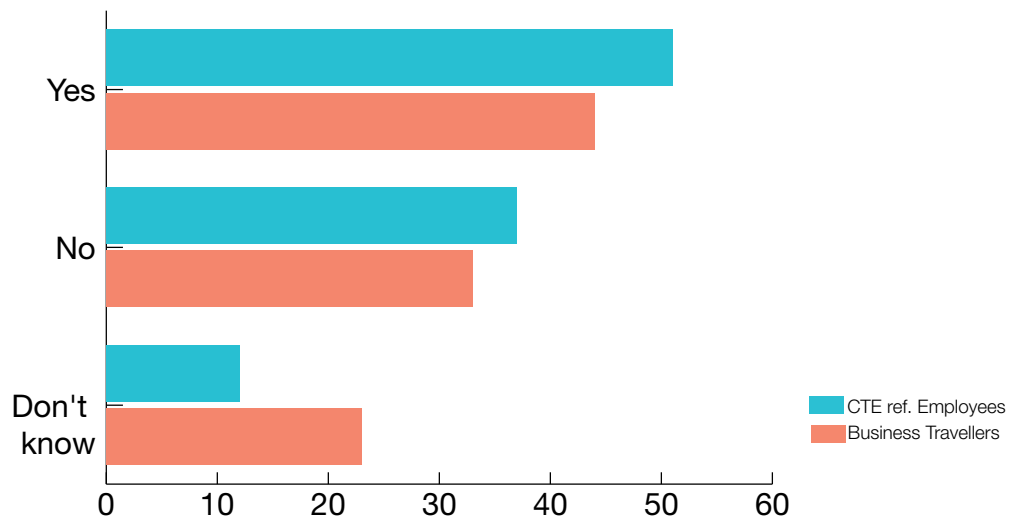


## Duty of care and risk assessment

Terrorism and unrest is leading to some changes in duty-of-care concerns, but 37% of CTEs and 33% of travellers say no change is taking place in their organisation.

Among the companies represented by the CTEs, 51% had changed their duty-of-care concerns. This drops to 44% of the travellers' businesses, but there was a higher level of people unsure about changes in this group (23%). This may highlight a need for better communication and engagement.

### Is terrorism and unrest leading to changing duty of care concerns in the organisation.



When asked to explain how they are changing, there were a wide range of measures mentioned including:

- changes in tracking (the most-often mentioned change)
- centralisation of booking procedures
- emergency response and crisis management initiatives
- destination screening, destination bans and tightened policy
- more senior management buy-in and engagement
- use of external security specialists and 3rd party solutions
- greater use of teleconferencing
- intelligence gathering, general tightening up of security and vigilance.

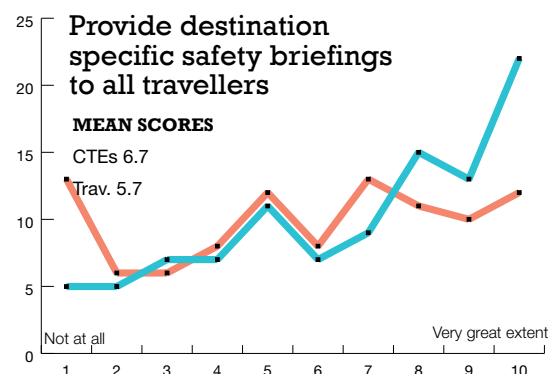
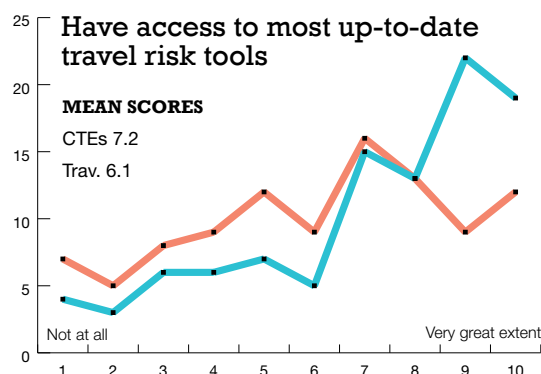
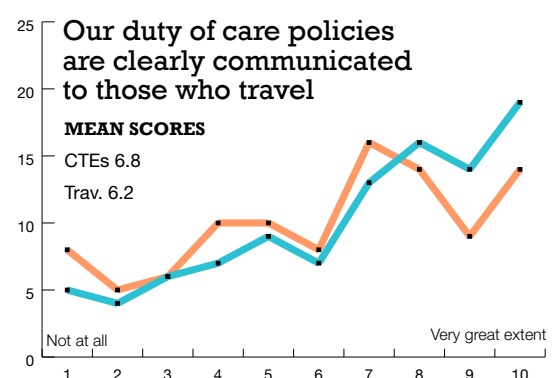
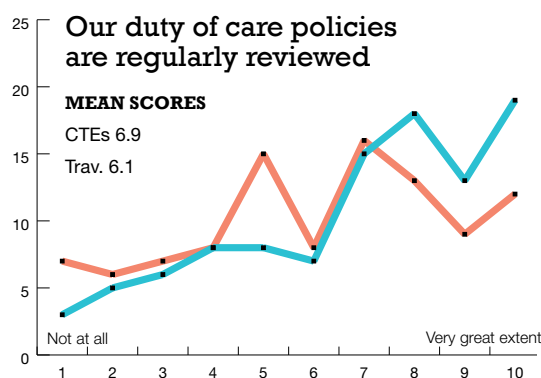
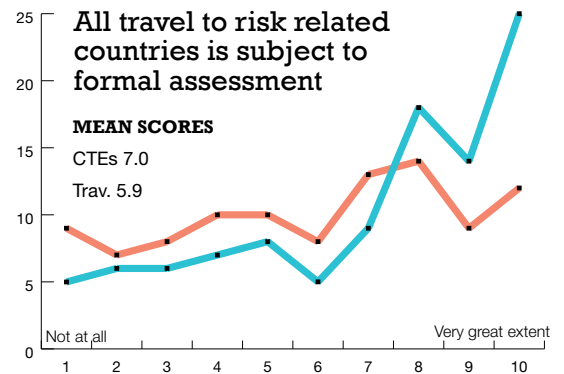


# Attitudinal statements relating to company travel risk policy and duty of care

On a series of statements relating to how their company is addressing risk and traveller safety, the perception of the CTEs is consistently and statistically significantly higher than that perceived by the travellers. On every criterion, the traveller is more sceptical and less likely to agree. This is reflected in both the mean scores and the frequency distribution of responses.

This might be the expected response from the CTEs because to some degree we are asking them to rate the parts of the process and policies that they are potentially responsible for – so they may effectively be rating themselves. It may also highlight again the need for better communication and engagement between the company and the traveller.

CTE ref.  
Employees  
Business  
Travellers



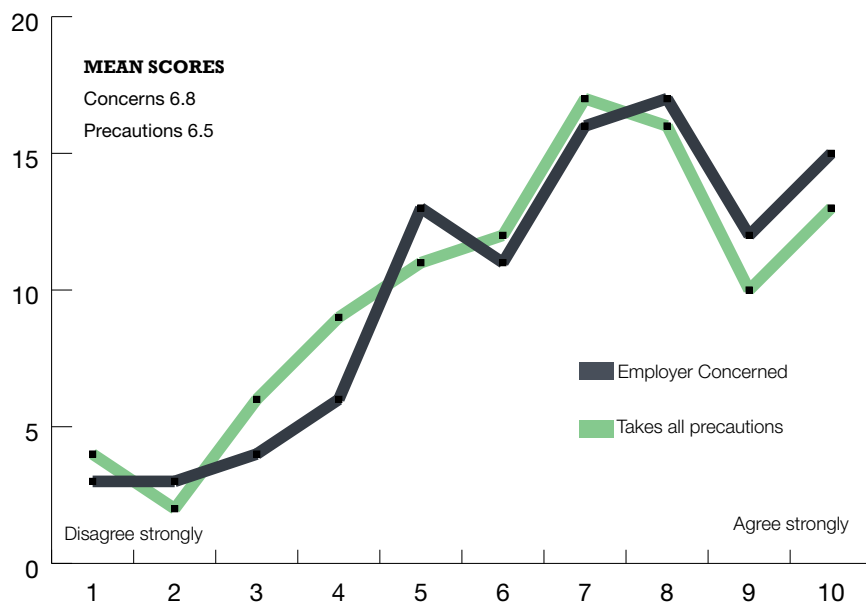
# Employer concern about traveller safety

The majority of travellers believe that their employer is very concerned for their safety when travelling with 59% agreeing to some degree (score 7+) and a mean score of 6.8. This does however leave 10% who do not agree with the statement (score 3 or less).

In terms of whether the employer takes all possible precautions for traveller safety, the mean score drops to 6.5 and the proportion agreeing (score 7+) is 56%. The minority who do not agree that this is the case is 12% (score 3 or less).

Any amount of travellers believing that their company is either unconcerned about their safety or failing to take the appropriate precautions is something that needs to be addressed – whether it is a communication issue or the traveller truly believes the employer just does not care.

## Traveller view on concern of employer and precautions taken for safety



## Traveller tracking & communication

66% of CTEs and 60% of travellers do not believe that their company's traveller tracking and communication requirements have changed as a result of recent safety concerns. 30% of CTEs did think they had changed, but the equivalent figure for travellers was lower at 18%.

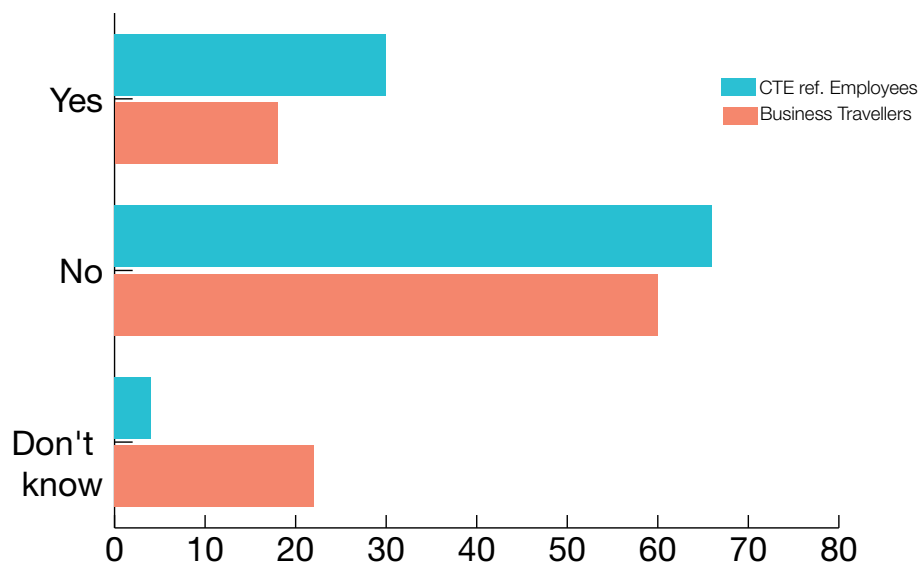
22% of travellers did not know the answer to the question, so it raises the issue of whether travellers are being fully informed about what measures, if any, are being taken by their company.

The majority of companies have not changed requirements. Those that have, mentioned changes to tracking procedures and greater compliance with bookings controlled by the company or TMC rather than the traveller. This is in conjunction with a general overhaul of procedures and processes for greater control.

Implementation of mobile tracking apps and other software as well as utilising external risk management services received many mentions.

The question of why requirements have not changed is not addressed. It may be that companies feel that they already operate what they consider best practice so have no need for further change. Conversely, it could be down to inertia or business issues such as cost to implement.

### Is tracking & communications changing?



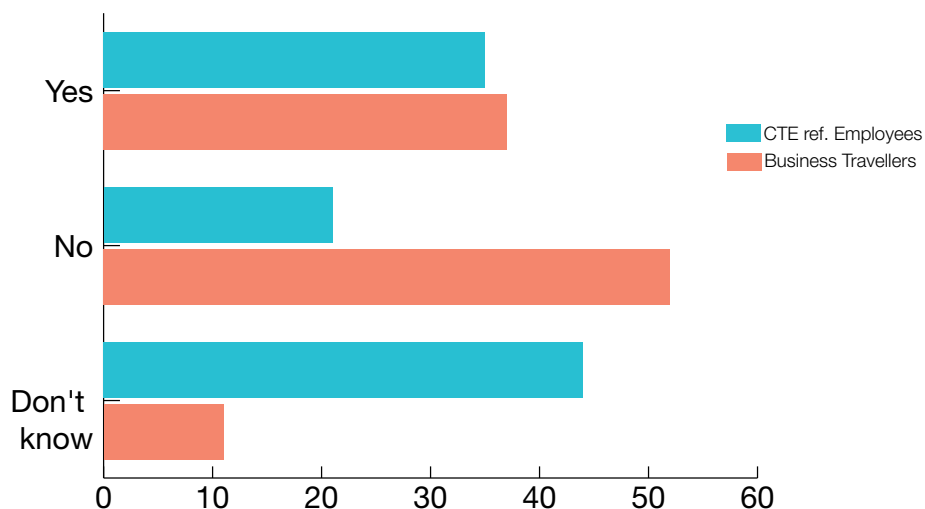
## Traveller privacy

35% of CTEs believe that travellers are becoming less sensitive about privacy as terrorism threats increase. This perception is matched by the travellers own assessment, with 33% saying they were less sensitive.

While 21% of CTEs did not think travellers were becoming less sensitive about privacy, 44% did not actually know, which is a large minority. This again highlights a communication gap or disconnect between the traveller and company.

52% of travellers said they are not less sensitive about privacy than they were, this will be explored further later to see if there are any regional/cultural differences. It also highlights that companies must do a better job of explaining why traveller tracking and similar initiatives are important.

### Travellers less sensitive about privacy



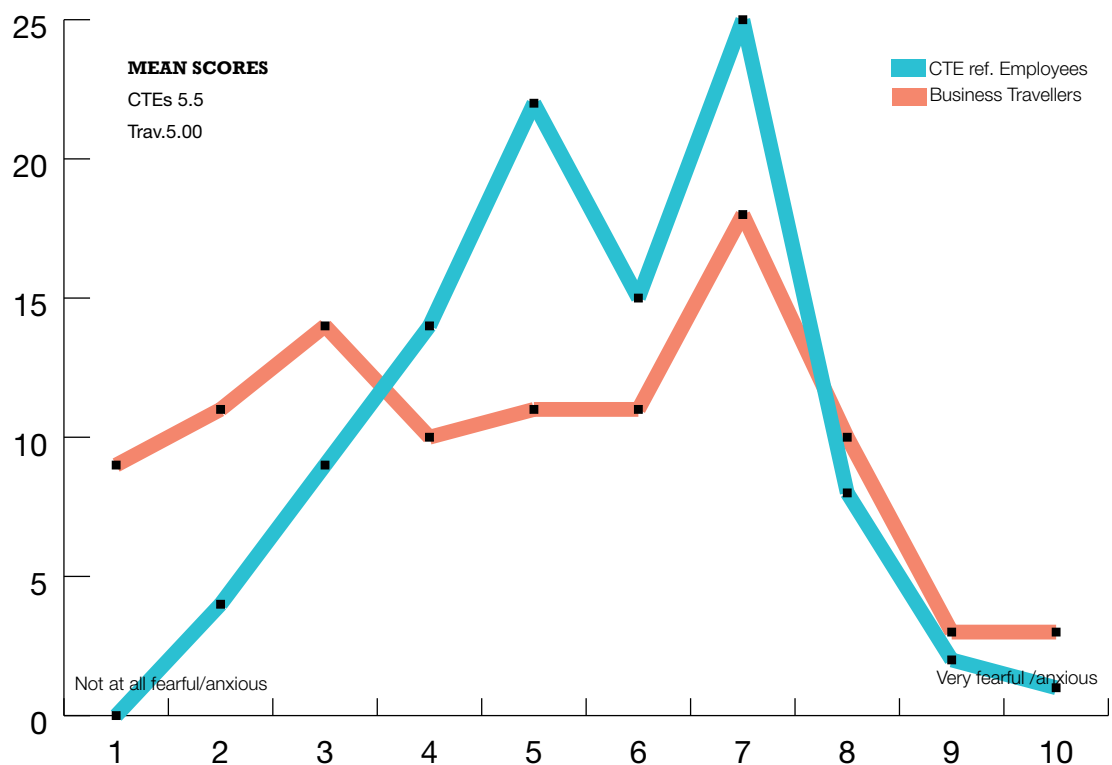
## Traveller fear and anxiety levels overall

Travellers are generally less fearful or anxious about the overall threat of terrorism during business travel than CTEs believe, however the difference based on mean scores is not statistically significant. Neither of these mean scores is above the mid-point of the scale.

Further analysis of the scale scores does highlight some difference in the pattern of response between the sub-samples. Almost 10% of travellers have absolutely no fear or anxieties, while a further 25% have very little. However, none of the CTEs rated traveller fear at the extreme low end of the scale and only a further 12% rated them as having 2-3 on the fear scale.

The majority of CTEs perceived their own travellers' fears to be towards the middle of the scale, the travellers themselves tended to down-play it more, except for a very small percentage that are much more fearful or anxious than perceived to be.

### Terrorism threat: fear and anxiety of travellers



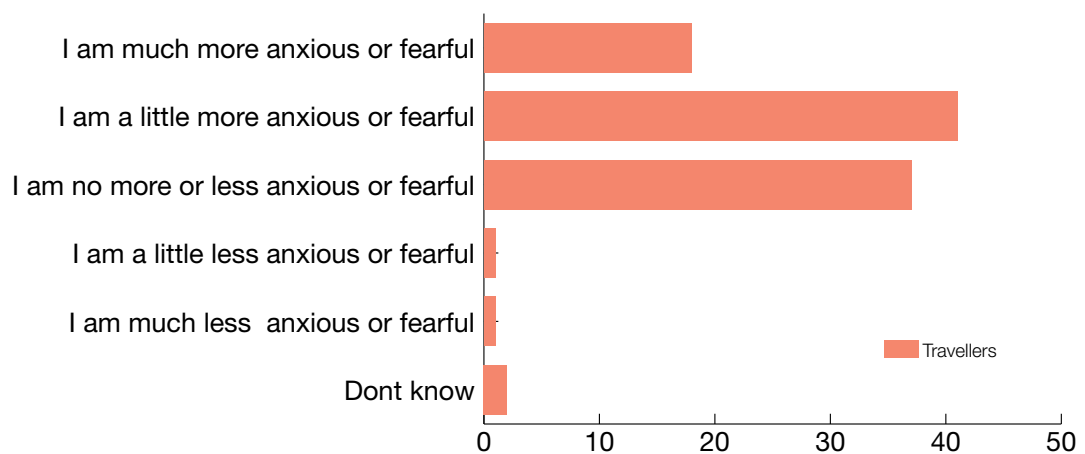
## Traveller fear and anxiety now vs 12 months ago

The majority of travellers are more anxious or fearful now than they were about terrorism 12 months ago. However, when we look at this in the context of where they now are on the fear/anxiety scale we have to assume that the overall level 12 months ago was even lower than it is now (based on the mean score of 5 for travellers)

18% were much more anxious than 12 months ago, while a further 42% were a little more anxious. 37% recorded no change in anxiety and only 2% said they were less anxious to some degree.

It should be noted that fieldwork for this report was conducted between 16 March- 12 April and that the Brussels bombing took place on 22 March.

### Traveller – current anxiety/fear levels compared to 12 months ago



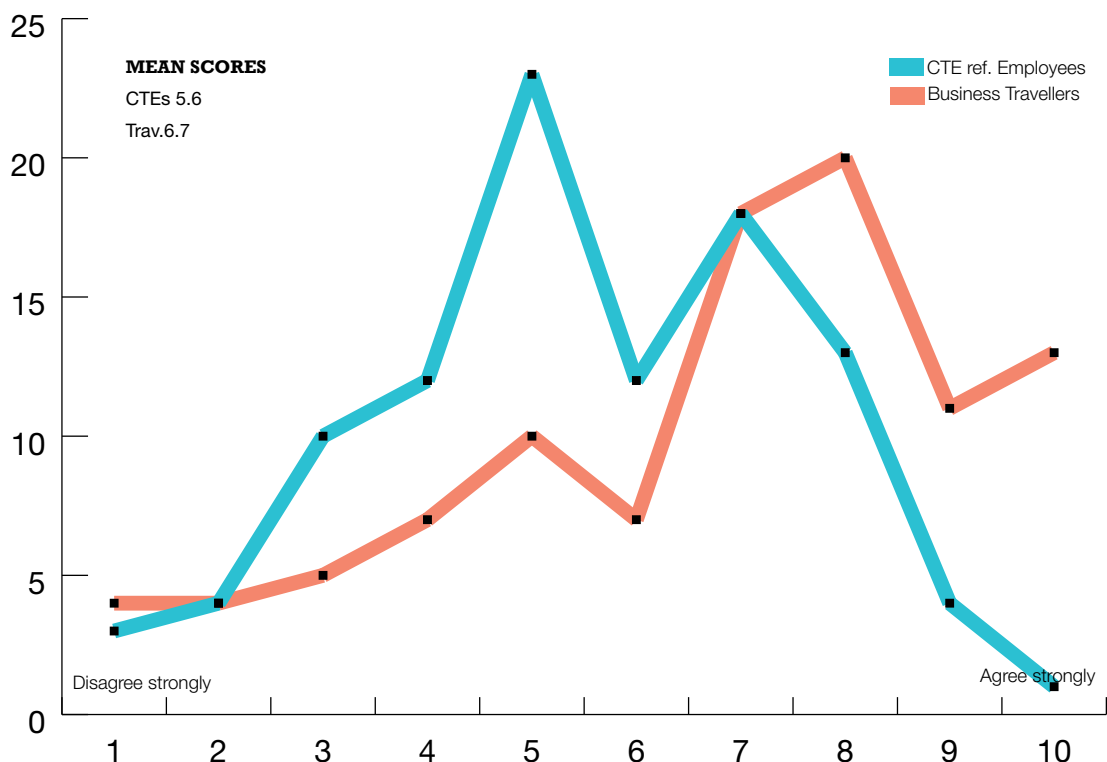
## More common traveller safety risks vs terrorism

The majority of travellers agree that more common risks like road traffic accidents, street crime and demonstrations while travelling are a bigger concern to them than terrorism. The mean score on the scale for this sample was 6.7 with 62% agreeing (a score of 7+).

The CTE perception of how travellers feel was quite different, and they significantly over-estimated the concern of terrorism versus more common threats. The mean score for CTEs for the more common threats was 5.6, with only 36% agreeing with the statement (at 7+).

This, like a number of other measures, seems to indicate stoicism among travellers.

### More common risks like road traffic accidents, street crime and demonstrations are a bigger concern than terrorism



## Other Safety Risks – traveller sample

To put the traveller fear and anxiety levels with reference to terrorism into context, we used the same scale to measure the levels for other possible scenarios they may encounter during business travel. None of the safety risks achieved what can be considered high scores for fear and anxiety levels.

Based on mean scores, robbery or mugging is most feared at 5.6 and with the mean score for fear of terrorism overall being 5 among this sample.

Being stranded due to lockdown or curfew scored 5.3, and an in-flight terror incident or major health risk such as SARS, Ebola or Zika were next ranked at 4.9. Travellers were considerably less fearful of risk of kidnap 3.7 and sexual assault 2.8.

Business Travellers									%
Fear Rating	Robbery or mugging	Stranded due to lockdown or curfew	Terrorism threat overall	In-flight terror incident	Major medical health risk	Shooting incident	Risk of kidnap	Sexual assault	
1	3	8	9	13	9	15	21	41	
2	7	7	11	13	14	14	19	18	
3	14	14	14	11	13	15	16	11	
4	10	9	10	10	10	11	11	9	
5	13	12	11	10	11	11	10	7	
6	12	9	11	7	9	8	6	5	
7	21	18	18	17	18	11	7	5	
8	15	13	10	10	11	9	6	2	
9	5	6	3	6	3	5	2	1	
10	2	3	3	5	3	2	2	1	
<b>Mean score</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>2.8</b>	

1= Not at all fearful/anxious    10= Very fearful/anxious

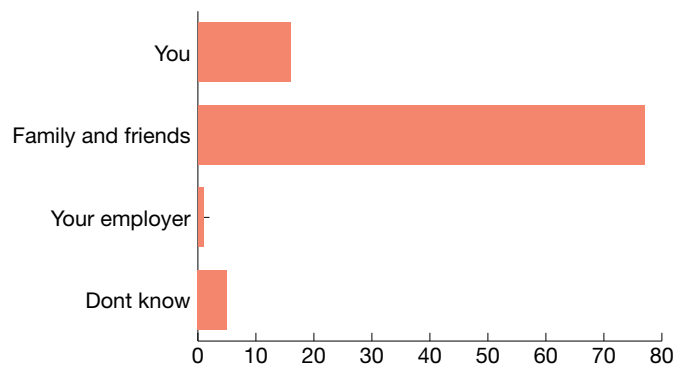


## Psychological effects & traveller wellbeing

67% of travellers say there is a psychological effect on either them or their families when directed to travel to a region where they may not feel safe, 20% felt there was no effect.

When asked who is most concerned when they are travelling, 77% state family and friends, while only 16% name themselves. Their employer was mentioned by only 1% of respondents and 5% did not know. This highlights the pressure travellers might feel from family – and the concern travellers might have about the stress their travel is having on their family.

### Who is most concerned about you when you are travelling?



Personal health and stress levels (mean score 5.4) are felt to be affected to a greater extent than either productivity and performance (4.7) or willingness to stay with their company (4.1)

Effect of travelling to a region where you may not feel safe	Personal health and stress levels	Productivity and performance	Willingness to stay with the company
1=Not at all 10=A very great extent	Business Travellers %	Business Travellers %	Business Travellers %
1	10	15	28
2	9	13	12
3	10	10	9
4	8	9	9
5	9	12	10
6	8	8	7
7	21	17	23
8	16	10	7
9	5	3	3
10	4	2	3
<b>Mean score</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>4.1</b>

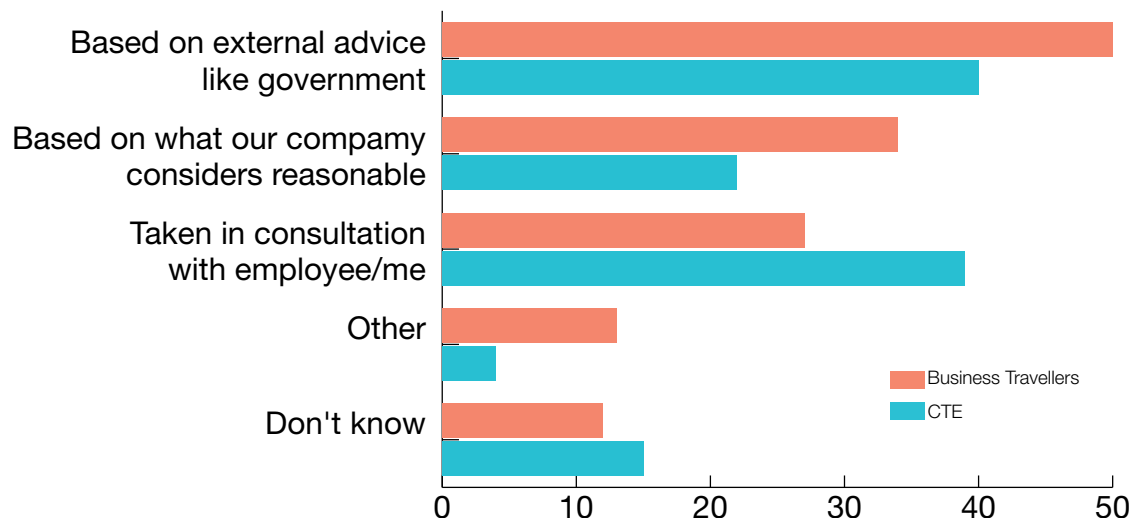
## Factors influencing decision to go back to a destination after a terrorist incident

After any terrorist incident, there is the issue of how much time should elapse and what should influence the decision when to either send an employee in CTE cases or visit if a traveller.

Among the CTEs, external advice such as government travel advisory notices is clearly the most used determinant with almost 50% of them naming this option. 35% base their decisions on what their own organisation considers to be a reasonable amount of time while 28% claim to consult the employee in the process.

This decision making process is seen from a different perspective by the travellers who feel that they are more consulted (39%) and less based on what the company feels is reasonable time (22%) .

### Decision when to re-visit a destination after an incident



## How long after incident or threat increased fear lasts

Published passenger data from the US Department of Transport, Bureau of Transportation Statistics from November 21st 2005 and the IATA report “The Impact of September 11 2001 on Aviation” detail the decline and recovery post 9/11. Over time, the passenger numbers normally recover back to pre-incident levels. In an attempt to try and quantify the time-scale, we asked travellers how long after an event or threat there continues to be a significantly increased fear associated with travelling to that destination.

**20%** of travellers felt  
that fear started to subside  
after a week.

A total of **65%** gave  
the time scale as up to 3  
months.

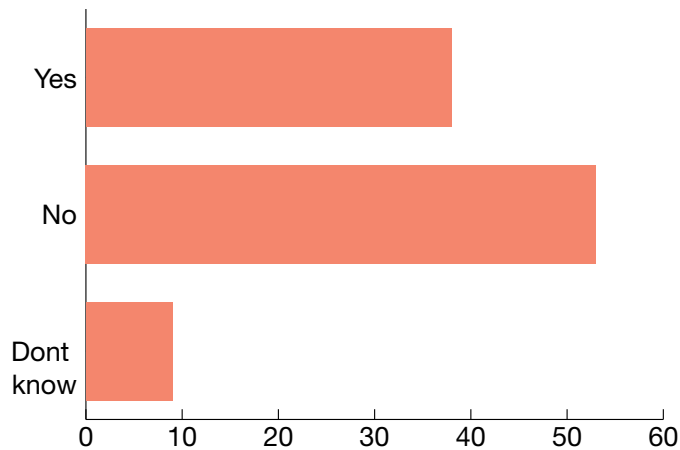
**5%** thought it lasts  
over a year

and an additional **6%**  
feel that the fear lasts  
indefinitely.

## Effect of terrorism on combining tourism with business travel

Recent terrorist activity has often been in and around tourist spots. As a result of this, 38% of travellers would be less likely to mix tourism with a business trip because of safety concerns for either themselves or their family

**Would you be less likely to mix tourism with business trips**



## Contacts & methodology

### Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE)

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[enquiries@panaceapublishing.com](mailto:enquiries@panaceapublishing.com)

## Methodology Overview

The survey was conducted by **Traveller Insight** using an online methodology. Fieldwork and data processing was conducted by **SSI** (Survey Sampling International), one of the largest providers of global data solutions and business-to-business survey research in the industry. Fieldwork dates were from 16th March to 12th April inclusive.

## Sample

The survey comprised two separate sub-samples: corporate travel executives and business travellers.

**CORPORATE TRAVEL EXECUTIVES** CTEs were predominantly recruited from the **ACTE** database by a personal email invitation explaining the purpose of the research and containing a link to the online questionnaire. To maximise the size of the sample it was also supplemented with readers of **Buying Business Travel** magazine. A screening question was used to qualify the respondents.

The **ACTE** database has a broad geographical coverage and although respondents were recruited from a range of regions, it is US centric and this is reflected in the sample profile. The final total sample for corporate travel executives was 270.

**BUSINESS TRAVELLERS** The business traveller sample was recruited using a similar methodology but the database utilised was the print and online subscriber base for **Business Traveller** Magazine. **Business Traveller** Magazine has a number of regional editions and survey participants were recruited from 60 countries in total. The final total sample for business travellers was 606.

