

E-Newsletter

This leading paid subscription business travel email newsletter focuses on business travel distribution and technology, published as news happens 49 weeks a year. The Beat also offers a travel business community at www.thebeat.travel website containing news and opinion via multiple blogs by internal personnel and corporate travel industry leaders.

(E-Newsletter published daily, as news happens)

The Beat Website

The Beat website (www.TheBeat.travel) offers the business travel community a portal for news as it happens and opinion with multiple blogs by The Beat staff and corporate travel industry leaders. The website also houses the keyword-searchable news archive for The Beat's email newsletter... available only to The Beat subscribers.

The Beat Live

An edgy 2 day educational business travel conference taken from the "pages" of The Beat. This executive-level conference open to subscribers to The Beat e-newsletter is an intimate forum focused on the key issues driving change in managed corporate travel and business travel technology. Featuring candid commentary and substantial audience interaction, the event offers attendees a deeper understanding of all the industry dynamics in flux, and insight on key strategies they need to navigate it.

E-Newsletter

KDS Launches Mobile Booking Tool, Will Test Automated Door-To-Door Itineraries

The Beat ~ a travel business newsletter
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KDS last week launched what it claimed is the first fully functioning mobile corporate booking tool, offering no filter and content from global distribution systems, low-cost carriers and rail operators.

At a client conference here, KDS also unveiled a key performance indicator dashboard suite and demonstrated Project Neo, an ambitious vision to streamline the corporate online booking process to three clicks and two screens by on where travelers want to go, when and for how long.

Mobile app includes an expense approval facility for line managers and the ability to save a booking. The app is available immediately for Android and BlackBerry devices, and is scheduled for iOS later this year.

A main barrier to booking a flight on a mobile phone, KDS opted to restrict the initial search to the most popular airlines and earliest departure times. Travelers can request additional flight options; any option outside the initial search results can be extracted in the usual manner.

Product strategy Oliver Quayle said a simplified mobile display with reduced options encourages users to book directly. The same philosophy lies behind Project Neo, although the key strategic aim is to reduce the number of clicks. "We think this kind of user interaction will stop travelers from booking on mobile devices," said KDS CEO Dean Forbes.

When and where they need to arrive and how long they will stay, Project Neo conducts a search for the most efficient components, such as flight, hotel and taxi. Results are presented on a single screen, with a timeline of the trip would start and finish. An expense line shows total cost and the itemized breakdown.

To eliminate what it terms "blind choice" by proposing an itinerary, removing flights that are not in the client's policy, KDS is offering out options that would violate a client's travel policy. Instead, traveler choice is restricted to options that are allowed. Results are able to amend or eliminate any part of the itinerary and search for new options. Once a booking is made, the expense line is updated accordingly.

The app also displays estimated additional costs for the journey, such as meals, "so we are pre-empting the expense line."

Question about Project Neo's viability after a planned beta test with clients in the second half of the year. "We are testing the algorithms to deal with so many possibilities," Forbes told The Beat. "There are a middle part of the journey, the flight and hotel, is relatively easy. If you have a meeting the night before, and your policy and recorded personal preferences will reduce the choice of options."

The new business won by KDS last year was for its integrated travel and expense solution.

Website

The screenshot shows the The Beat website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'HOME', 'NEWS', 'VEWS', 'INTERVIEWS', 'DATA HUB', and 'THE BEAT LIVE'. The main content area features a 'News & Views' section with a featured article titled 'KDS Launches Mobile Booking Tool, Will Test Automated Door-To-Door Itineraries' dated February 6, 2012. Below this is a 'Data Hub' section with a line chart titled 'Corporate Car Rental Rates Falling' showing average full-year cost per day by brand from 2008 to 2011. The chart shows a general downward trend for most brands, with Hertz and Avis showing the most significant drops. The sidebar on the right contains a 'Subscribe to The Beat's Premium News!' section, a 'Why subscribe?' section, and a 'BTNG'S SUPPLIER DIRECTORY' section.