



The Next Wave: Defining a New Era of Corporate Travel

How Rearden Commerce Revolutionizes Corporate Travel
by Encompassing All Business Services

A REARDEN COMMERCE TRAVEL WHITE PAPER



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Executive Summary

Until now, most online travel solutions favored the needs of either travelers or corporate travel buyers, failing to completely satisfy both. For example, early entrants into the online travel space typically offered strong travel policy and control features but unfriendly user interfaces which hindered adoption. Some travel management companies developed their own tools, but most offered limited functionality and created more value for the travel management company than for travelers. More recently, consumer online travel agencies have attempted to cross over to the corporate market. While their tools provide highly flexible, appealing user interfaces that encourage adoption, they lack the global and general services capabilities that established travel management companies provide.

Companies are also beginning to realize that the same cost savings that several first generation booking engines provided when procuring flights, hotels, and car rentals online could also be extended to other relevant business services. Ideally, companies want a solution that both enables procurement of multiple business services from a single interface and overcomes the limitations of previous travel solutions. Enter Rearden Commerce.

Rearden Commerce goes beyond the traditional travel offering and delivers a one-stop-shop for employees to purchase a variety of business services including travel, package shipping, audio and web conferencing, and dining. The breadth of the solution satisfies the needs of both travelers and corporate travel buyers, transforming the way employees and organizations schedule, purchase and manage all services as they relate to a single business trip. The Rearden Travel module, in particular, is the industry's first solution that satisfies the needs of both travelers and corporate travel buyers and exceeds expectations by delivering a total travel experience. It is a user-centric, highly efficient online travel application that integrates seamlessly with the global services offered by traditional travel agencies. Using Rearden, corporate buyers can respond to employee demand for a better travel tool without forfeiting their business relationships with global travel management service providers or their rigorous travel policies. Unlike first-generation tools, Rearden integrates with multiple suppliers so that employees can view a comprehensive set of travel options and choose the most economical option that also meets the business need. Beyond knowing they're seeing a much more extensive list of options, employees have even more incentive to use the solution because Rearden provides valuable conveniences such as integration with employee calendars, automatic updates when reservations change, and the ability to select and review travel arrangements from any Internet-connected device.

As stated previously, the Rearden Commerce Network extends far beyond traditional online travel to deliver a total travel experience. With Rearden, employees can now leverage all the services that surround a "trip" such as shipping collateral for an important sales meeting, booking dinner reservations for a key client, and scheduling a web conference for a critical internal team meeting. Employees use the same familiar interface for all services, which increases adoption, creates process efficiencies, and reduces total cost of ownership for the company. Cost savings increase further because the Rearden Commerce Network is based on the On-Demand model of computing, which eliminates the need for IT to invest in solution hardware or software.

This white paper explains the benefits of the revolutionary Rearden Commerce Network. It begins by describing the unique challenges of employee business services procurement in general, and travel procurement specifically. It also explains the limitations of existing travel solutions and their inability to meet these challenges. The paper concludes with a description of the Rearden Travel service, including its advantages to employees and corporate travel groups, and its cost savings potential.



Unique Challenges of Travel Procurement

Companies have come to recognize that the same innovations that Travel groups introduced for procuring flights, hotels, and car rentals online can be extended to other employee business services as well. The ideal services procurement solution, similar to existing e-procurement solutions for goods, would enable employees to procure all business services, including travel, from the same interface, encouraging adoption by increasing employee convenience. Unlike e-procurement solutions for goods, however, an e-procurement solution for services has been elusive because of the complex technology requirements (see Table 1) and the complex characteristics of services.

Table 1 – Unique Challenges of Business Services Procurement

SERVICES CHARACTERISTIC	HOW IT COMPLICATES PROCUREMENT
Calendar-based	Services are inherently time sensitive and calendar-based. Ideally, a scheduled service should be dropped on a user's calendar and if a service is reserved or changed, the calendar must be updated.
Time-critical	Many employee services purchases are urgent, and do not lend themselves to laborious or extended approval processes.
Requires confirmations and updates	Employees need confirmations and updates—acknowledgement that a reservation has been made, or a package shipped.
Real-time inventory	Availability, such as a particular airplane seat or hotel room rate, changes from minute to minute and cannot be represented in a static product catalog.
Dynamic pricing	Because the inventory changes dynamically, airlines adjust their pricing based on demand and often require buyers to act immediately to secure the best price.
Often group-oriented	Different people's requirements and preferences must be coordinated when the reservation is made.

Travel presents unique procurement challenges in addition to those common to all employee business services. It remains one of the most difficult kinds of services for Procurement groups to control and optimize for the following reasons:

- **Travelers' limited flexibility and need for frequent changes.** Unlike consumers, business travelers have little flexibility in their transportation plans and usually cannot travel on a different day to receive a better fare. It is sometimes in the company's best interest to pay a premium price for air travel if a flight is the only one that can transport an employee to the customer site in time to help close a large deal, for example. Similarly, trip details might change with little notice, sending corporate travel buyers scurrying to respond to itinerary adjustments that affect tickets, hotel, and rental car or limo reservations.
- **Rising employee expectations.** Consumer Internet tools for travel booking have raised the bar for corporate travel tools. Employees expect faster performance and friendly interfaces. If the corporate tool falls short, adoption rates suffer and employees will go outside of the company tool to buy services.



- **Low adoption.** Adoption rates for online booking systems in many companies are low, mostly because online travel systems are cumbersome and difficult to use. Employees often need to access multiple applications—one to book their airfare, hotel, and car rental, and others for services associated with the trip, such as web and audio conferencing, dining, and package shipping. Each system has its own interface, business logic, login and password. In addition, employees often don't know where to find these applications because they are buried on the corporate intranet. To make matters worse, employees can typically use these applications only from their desktops—not from the road when travel plans constantly change. Another reason for low adoption is that online booking systems, like consumer travel tools, fail to provide conveniences such as integration with the employee's calendar, contacts, e-mail, and PDAs. Low adoption leads to a loss of corporate control and an increase in off-contract buying that drives overall corporate costs significantly higher.
- **Maverick spend runs rampant.** Employees will always take the path of least resistance. If they get a poor user experience with internal applications, they are often inclined to bypass the applications their company has installed in favor of more user-friendly consumer travel tools on the Internet. This behavior creates a scenario where Procurement doesn't have visibility into spend and doesn't consume their contracted rates with suppliers.
- **Forced usage met with employee resistance.** Despite the limited functionality and travel options provided by first-generation online travel tools, travel managers have in some cases increased adoption by mandating their use, typically by issuing directives to company managers to enforce usage in their departments. End users often resist, however, because they feel that these tools don't offer comprehensive travel options. And seeing additional options through a consumer travel tool reinforces the employee's perception that the corporate online tool is in some way limiting them and in turn not providing optimal value to the business. This perception has the unfortunate effect of undermining the managed corporate travel program, which often leads to a further increase in off-contract spend.
- **Training costs and burden.** The present generation of corporate online travel tools is cumbersome and often requires extensive training, both for employees and internal help desk personnel. The help desk also incurs costs for supporting the booking engine, particularly if it links to other online booking sources for airlines or hotel websites. These costs raise Total Cost of Ownership (TCO).
- **Increasing fragmentation.** Travel procurement was simpler when the Global Distribution Systems (GDS) served as the warehouses for all travel inventory. Now companies in search of the best fare must also aggregate web fares, the individual websites of airlines that don't participate in the GDS, and hotel merchant models. Additionally, new GDS companies with better economic models for the supplier are forcing travel managers to consider alternatives to a traditional GDS.
- **Silo approach.** Today's travel applications deliver only basic flight, hotel, and rental car options when employees really need one application for everything they will need on a trip such as restaurant recommendations and reservations, ticketing services, mapping services, meeting catering, and package shipping.



Limitations of Existing Approaches

Employees can source travel in one of two basic ways: by calling a travel agent or using the web. Web options include using a company-sponsored online tool, online travel agency, or an individual supplier website.

CALLING AGENCY DIRECTLY

Booking travel directly through a corporate travel agency offers numerous advantages, including high levels of customer service as well as assistance with sourcing suppliers, managing vendor relationships, and providing reporting and data aggregation. The corporate agency is familiar with the company culture and applies its knowledge to serve individual travelers while complying with corporate travel policies.

A drawback of booking travel through the agency is that customer service comes at a cost, in the form of a substantial agency “processing fee.” Reducing this fee serves as a major incentive for companies to book more travel online. Another disadvantage is time: making a reservation and receiving confirmation can easily take 10 to 20 minutes, and the agents frequently do not offer callers all available cost-saving options because doing so consumes even more time.

FIRST-GENERATION CORPORATE TRAVEL TOOLS

Travel tools must meet the distinct needs of two user groups. Procurement wants spend control, visibility, and compliance, while employees want ease of use, convenience, and the confidence that a better option isn't available elsewhere. First-generation corporate travel tools tip the balance in favor of the needs of procurement and the travel manager, providing control, policy management, and visibility at the expense of a friendly interface. Even the control capabilities come up short because the company is often forced to adopt the tool's policy controls instead of tailoring the tool to enforce the company's own policies.

Employee adoption of first-generation travel procurement tools lags because the tools have been slow and frustrating, built without benefit of Internet technologies. In addition, they have not kept pace with consumer booking tools that allow people the flexibility to select flight, hotel, and car in any order. Instead, they force the user down a rigid booking path. Finally, their fare search engines are limited and employees often leave the designated corporate tool without making a purchase, destined for consumer sites that they suspect might provide lower-cost or more convenient options to meet the business need. Travel arrangements made outside the corporate travel tool impose significant hurdles for Procurement as it attempts to enforce policy, aggregate travel data, and leverage transaction volume for a better negotiated price.

CONSUMER BOOKING TOOLS

Today's consumer booking tools are easier to use than first-generation corporate travel tools, so travelers prefer them. They fail, however, to meet corporate travel buyers' needs. One reason is that they operate completely independently of the corporate agency, causing the company to lose the agency's service benefits. Worse, employees make their purchases outside of the managed travel program, so the travel manager loses a large measure of control over processes such as managing approvals for out-of-policy travel requests, or providing reports and trending information about policy deviation. Companies lose supplier leverage as a result of this out-of-program spending. When employees book travel outside the managed program, companies also have a more difficult time tracking these employees when they are on the road, in the event of an emergency for example. Finally, the companies that provide consumer booking tools focus primarily on merchandising inventory to meet their revenue targets rather than providing travel options that reduce the corporation's spend. That is, their interests are not aligned with those of the company.



ATTRIBUTES OF THE IDEAL SOLUTION FOR TRAVEL PROCUREMENT

To help travel procurement groups meet their requirements for low cost, control, visibility, and compliance, the ideal travel procurement solution would do the following: Combine the responsiveness and familiarity of consumer tools with the control of corporate procurement-focused tools.

- Model the requirements of the company’s travel policy rather than force the company to model its travel policy to meet the requirements of the tool.
- Eliminate IT costs associated with developing or maintaining a dedicated system.
- Enable travelers to follow a flexible booking path, beginning with the flight, hotel, or car.
- Deliver a complete travel experience by accommodating other types of business services
- Associated with trips, such as package shipping, dining, and audio and web conferencing, further driving employee adoption and simplifying procurement processes.
- Provide added value to the traveler to drive adoption and end user satisfaction—for example, by integrating with employees’ calendars and contacts from Microsoft Outlook and Lotus Notes groupware, and communicating with the different types of devices that employees use, including PCs, laptops, and PDAs.

Table 2 shows the extent to which today’s travel procurement options meet the requirements of the ideal solution.

Table 2 – Comparing Approaches for Travel Procurement

ATTRIBUTE	IDEAL SOLUTION	CALLING AGENCY DIRECTLY	FIRST-GENERATION TRAVEL TOOLS	CONSUMER TRAVEL TOOLS
Friendly interface	X	X		X
Control of travel spend	X		X	
Flexibility to reflect any corporate policy	X	X		
No IT costs for development and maintenance	X	X		X
Ability to purchase other services through same interface	X			
Flexible booking paths	X			
Integrate with groupware applications and devices, such as PDAs	X			



The Rearden Commerce Network

The Rearden Commerce Network automates the scheduling, purchasing and management of business services including travel, dining, package shipping, audio and web conferencing, and much more.

The Travel service provides travel procurement groups with the control they need to enforce policies and provides employees with the convenience features and familiar interface that stimulate adoption.

THE BREAKTHROUGH

Rearden Commerce has overcome the technical challenges of employee business services procurement with a unique web services-based architecture, the result of five years of research and development. The Rearden Commerce Network can manage connections to multiple suppliers of all types: Global Distribution Systems (GDS), individual airlines that don't participate in a GDS, as well as service providers for package shipping, dining, conferencing, and others. The underlying Commerce Platform can also manage multiple related business processes in parallel, instead of in sequence, so that the solution can simultaneously check multiple sources for flight and hotel availability and consult multiple travelers' calendars. The result is an easy to use interface with enhanced performance. Adoption rises because employees can procure services quickly, from a single interface, and have the confidence that they have been presented with a complete list of options, rather than a subset that might omit the best choice for the business need.

COMPONENTS OF THE REARDEN COMMERCE NETWORK

The Rearden Commerce Network is the world's largest online marketplace for services. It helps employees find, purchase and schedule services from hundreds of thousands of trusted suppliers, and provides sellers immediate access to thousands of qualified buyers at the point of purchase.

REARDEN PERSONAL ASSISTANT

The Rearden Personal Assistant is an online, identity-based tool that enables employees to find, schedule and purchase the services they use on a daily basis from a trusted network of more than 130,000 suppliers. The Rearden Personal Assistant puts the web to work for

Shifting the burden of compliance from the corporate travel buyer to the employee

The fact that the Rearden Commerce solution can integrate with multiple Global Distribution Systems, as well as non-participating airlines, overcomes a major frustration of Travel Procurement—imposing inconvenient or restrictive options on the corporate traveler. The travel manager would prefer to be seen as providing an appreciated service rather than imposing tools and rules that are difficult to use, overly constraining, and sometimes make little business sense. Rearden makes both the travel manager and the traveler's life easier.

By providing employees with a more comprehensive list of options that meet their travel needs, Rearden *shifts the burden of making cost/convenience tradeoffs from Travel Procurement to the traveler*. That is, in the old model, Travel Procurement made the decision to not present a particular flight option because of its cost. In the new model, the traveler can view all options, and is trusted to make a reservation that meets his or her business needs at the lowest cost. Travel Procurement flags preferred options, but does not prevent employees from booking more expensive options if needed—for example, by enabling an employee to fly cross-country that evening in order to close a deal. Research studies show that employees make the most economically responsible decision if provided with the needed information.

Rearden also enables procurement to seamlessly and easily impose strict travel policies when necessary. With a click of a mouse, procurement can add an approval process, restrict expensive travel options, and turn off entire levels of service such as business class travel and expensive rental cars. Rearden also gives the company ultimate flexibility to administer different policies to different groups and turn off suppliers when necessary. Rearden enables all of this flexibility with no IT involvement.



employees. Once a service is booked, it automatically updates the employee's calendar, sends invitations, and even notifies them of changes via email, SMS, fax or phone.

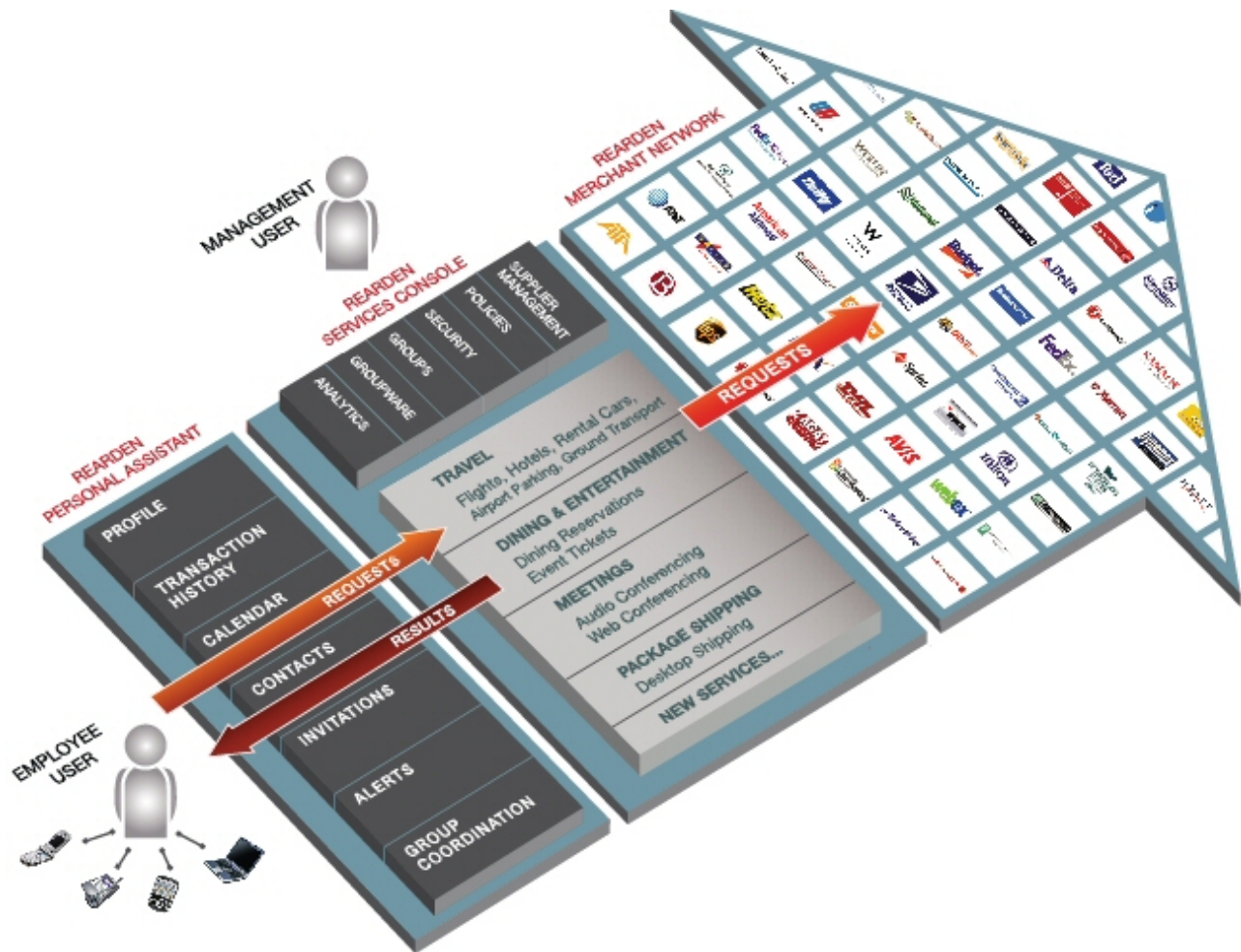
REARDEN SERVICES CONSOLE

The Rearden Services Console provides business and procurement managers control over their organization's services spend at the point of purchase. They can easily provision new services, suppliers and policies to thousands of employees with mouse clicks. As business needs change, managers can add and change employee service levels, suppliers and policies on the fly – all without impacting employees or business processes.

REARDEN MERCHANT NETWORK

Plugging in to the Rearden Merchant Network offers merchants of business and consumer services a unique opportunity to connect with qualified buyers at the point-of-purchase.

Figure 1 - The Rearden Commerce Network



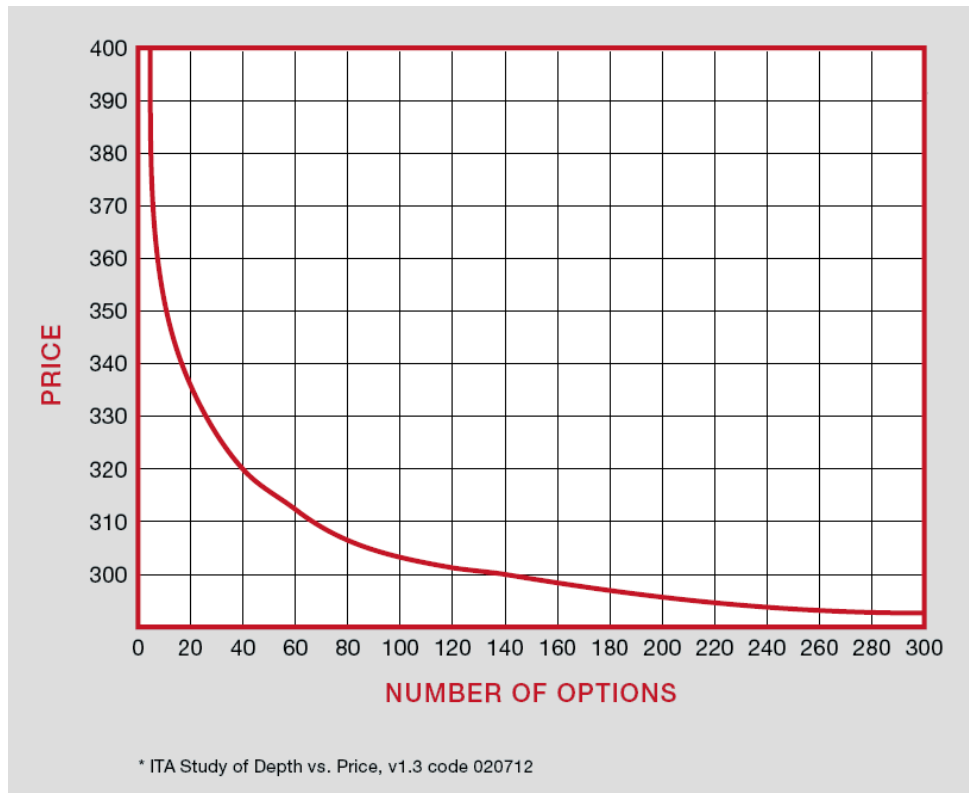


Advantages of the Rearden Commerce Network

PROVIDES MORE OPTIONS, REDUCING REALIZED PRICE

Multiple studies have found that the number of travel options presented to the user is correlated with lowest realized price (see Figure 2). When presented with lower-priced alternatives that meet the business need, employees will usually make the right economic decision. Travelers can quickly identify the option that makes most sense by sorting results according to the criterion that is most important for the trip: price, number of stopovers, stopover cities, and others.

Figure 2 – Relationship Between Number of Flight Options and Price



IMPROVES USER ADOPTION WITH USER-CENTRIC APPROACH

The Rearden Commerce Network encourages adoption by making it easier for employees to reserve travel in the following ways:

- **Plan trips using multiple inventory sources.** Recent deregulation eliminates the requirement for airlines to appear in every GDS. Rearden can build reservations sourced from a number of Global Distribution Systems so that travelers never need to be concerned that they're not seeing a more appealing option available from another airline.
- **Receive service status notifications.** The Rearden notification system automatically notifies travelers of the status of their reservations, by e-mail, voicemail, fax, updates to their Microsoft Outlook or Lotus Notes calendars, or messages sent to a PDA—whatever methods the employee has specified. Notifications are sent in the event of a reservation confirmation, reservation change, or



cancellation. If the user changes a reservation, for example, the solution automatically updates the entry in the user's calendar.

- **Designate others as travel delegates.** Employees can designate others as their travel delegates, or even ask others to appoint themselves—a convenience for executives who rarely or never sign on to the system. Once designated, these individuals can book, change, and cancel travel reservations on behalf of others, and manage traveler profiles.
- **Plan complete trips with a single search.** Employees save time when shopping and booking travel with Rearden because they submit flight, hotel, and car rental searches on one page (see Figure 3). Travelers can select and purchase flight, hotel, and car rentals in any sequence. For instance, if a user selects a flight option first, the system immediately uses this information to narrow down the hotel options. At the click of a button, the system begins selecting itineraries meeting the employee's requirements. Because the solution integrates dynamic availability and pricing information from multiple technology partners, the employee is spared from having to search multiple times, once with each tool.

Figure 3 – The User Interface

The screenshot displays the Rearden Commerce Travel Planner interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Services' and 'Settings' tabs, and links for 'Sign Out' and 'Need Help?'. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home > Travel > Travel Planner'. A secondary navigation bar shows 'Search >> Flights >> Hotel >> Rental Car >> Review'. The main heading is 'Select your departure flight'. Below this is a grid of airline logos and their lowest fares. A table below the grid shows 'Non-stop' and '1 stop' options for each airline. A message box indicates that there may be in-policy flights available at alternate airports. Below the grid are buttons for 'Find flights from/to nearby airports' and 'Find flights by complete trips'. The search results section shows 'Your Search' details: From: San Francisco, CA, US (SFO); To: New York, NY, US (JFK); Fare Type: Lowest Available. It also shows sorting options: 'Sort flights by: Best Value | Shortest Flights | Departure Time'. A note states '* Airfares are subject to change. [Find out why]'. Two flight options are displayed: 1) Alaska Airlines 6084 (operated by Delta Air Lines) for \$549, leaving Mon, Nov 27 at 7:30 AM, arriving at 4:05 PM, non-stop, total flight time 5h 35m. 2) Delta Air Lines 1448 for \$554, leaving Mon, Nov 27 at 7:30 AM, arriving at 4:05 PM, non-stop, total flight time 5h 35m, with an on-time performance of 80%.

Airline	Non-stop	1 stop
Alaska Airlines	From \$549	-
Delta Air Lines	From \$554	From \$1,044
American Airlines	From \$1,129	From \$1,139
United Airlines	From \$1,129	From \$1,139
Multiple Airlines	-	From \$677
America West Airlines	-	From \$939
US Airways	-	From \$983
Northwest Airlines	-	From \$985



- **Manage unused tickets and change tickets online.** Domestic unused tickets are automatically tracked and offered for exchange whenever a reservation is created or changed online. Travelers can change or cancel any airline, hotel, or car reservation that has been booked online. Companies can establish policies that require travelers to redeem unused tickets to offset costs of new tickets and changed tickets. This feature drives dramatic cost savings because corporate travelers rarely exchange unused tickets.
- **Plan trips in flexible ways.** The Rearden Commerce Network accommodates the various methods employees use to plan trips:
 - View offline and online bookings in one place – Reservations are automatically synchronized with those made at the travel agency. That is, changes and cancellations that the travel agency makes are accessible to employees online; and employee reservations executed online are instantly available to the travel agency.
 - View local currencies – Rearden automatically converts airline prices, hotel rates, and car rental costs into the employee's local currency. US-based travelers see prices in dollars, for example, while European travelers see prices in euros. Currency conversion is updated daily from leading exchange sources.

FACILITATES TRAVEL PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- **Manages compliance with travel policies.** The travel manager can model its guidelines by selecting from more than 60 policy parameters, including class of service, preferred vendors, airfares restrictions, hotel room rates, car sizes, corporate charge cards, and many more. To increase compliance, Rearden notifies travelers of non-compliant options before they are reserved. The company can select from multiple ways to enforce policy, depending on the corporate culture. For example, if the traveler's request deviates from policy, travel management has the option to require the traveler to explain why, or to request permission. The permission workflow is handled automatically. Travel approvers are automatically notified of policy infractions or noncompliant travel requests.
- **Encourages selection of preferred providers.** The system automatically flags preferred airlines, hotel chains, and car rental companies to encourage employees to select these vendors. Travel Procurement can even enter seasonal preferences—such as one hotel chain during the winter holidays and another during the summer.
- **Helps ensure that realized price equals negotiated price.** When employees call vendors directly or use their websites, they often don't receive a negotiated discount rate. The convenience features of the Rearden application give travelers the incentive to use the system, which helps ensure that the realized price the company actually pays equals the negotiated price.
- **Facilitates communication with employees.** To communicate online travel procurement policy to employees, Travel Procurement groups typically hold a series of group meetings. The alternative, sending an e-mail announcement, is difficult because few organizations maintain a mailing list of all employees who travel. Rearden provides a solution by enabling Travel Procurement to post messages for travelers and travel delegates to view at the point-of-purchase. Messages can be customized based on the destination, type of service (flight, hotel, or car), vendor, or date of travel.

For example, if the Travel group receives recommended driving routes in a city hosting a convention, it can prepare a message that appears only to employees who book a service in that city during the convention dates.



- Manages approvals for travel requests. Companies that prefer to personally review travel requests, for all or a subset of employees, can assign travel approvers. In this case, all requests are routed to travel approvers who check for policy non-compliance and pre-trip travel approval.
- **Integrates with travel agency infrastructure and processes.** Rearden fully integrates into a company's designated travel agency. The application makes reservations using the same format used by the agency's travel reservationists, so that reservations from the two sources are indistinguishable.

Reporting is a core competency of corporate travel agencies. Therefore, the Rearden Commerce Network simply provides the needed data for the agency's reporting system rather than attempting to duplicate the reporting function.

REDUCES COSTS

Table 3 lists components of cost savings that companies achieve with the Rearden Commerce Network.

Table 3 – Sources of Cost Savings

SOURCE OF COST SAVINGS	EXPLANATION
Improved adoption	The user-centric features of the Rearden Commerce solution encourage adoption. A company that spends \$10 million annually on air travel with a discount of 20% has a \$2 million savings opportunity if employees leverage negotiated rates.
Elimination of losses from unused tickets	The Rearden Commerce solution tracks the expiration period for exchanging unused tickets and automatically prompts travelers to exchange them.
Reduced fees associated with managing unused tickets	By using the Rearden Commerce solution, companies eliminate the fee that agencies assess to exchange unused tickets, sometimes up to 50% of the ticket value.
Lower ticket prices	Rearden presents more travel options than single-GDS solutions, and the number of options a traveler receives correlates directly to a lower realized price.
Reduction in agency booking fulfillment fee	The more bookings made online, the lower the fees associated with the services provided by the travel management company.
Elimination of technology transaction fees	Companies pay a flat subscription rate for the Rearden Commerce solution, which covers travel transactions and all other business services. The fee applies no matter how many transactions employees make. Companies completely avoid the per-ticket fees associated with first-generation online tools.



Conclusion

In corporate travel procurement, the metrics for success include adoption rate, average ticket price savings, transaction fee savings, and reduction of out-of-policy spend. Rearden Commerce addresses all of these mandates by combining the strong policy enforcement of first-generation procurement tools with the ease of use of consumer-oriented tools.

Rearden creates even more savings opportunities by enabling online procurement of package shipping, dining, and audio and web conferencing in addition to travel—all from the same interface. A complete business services procurement solution has been elusive until now because of the dynamic nature of services pricing and the enormous technological sophistication required of the underlying platform. Rearden Commerce offers that integrated business services solution today, with the world's first on-demand, web services-based architecture. By using the Rearden Commerce Network, Travel Procurement organizations can better manage procurement, standardize processes across categories, and dramatically reduce costs.

For more information, please visit www.reardencommerce.com.