Artificial intelligence electrifies Lightning online booking for CTM

Personalized booking results shave more than a minute off each online booking

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Corporate Travel Management (CTM), the world's fourth largest global travel management company, has launched proprietary artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities in the company's award-winning online booking tool, Lightning, to power personalized search results for each traveler's booking.

"Adding artificial intelligence and machine learning into our Lightning OBT experience delivers the results we know travelers want to book, but that also fit company policy," says Joel Bailey, CTM's CTO North America. "CTM has worked behind the scenes to train multiple overlapping algorithms to work with historical booking data, company policies, known preferences, and other variables. In doing so, we can serve up more relevant options to travelers with prediction accuracy continuously increasing as more bookings are made."

By adding personalized recommendations into search results for multiple travel types, CTM is driving greater speed and simplicity into the online booking experience for Lightning users while building trust with travelers that will raise program adoption, supporting travel managers in their goals of delivering savings and duty of care.

The launch of Lightning's AI gives CTM the ability to intelligently recommend personalized options, even as different content types and options from suppliers exponentially expand the amount of choice today's travelers see at the point of booking.

"If there are fifty options that fit within a company's travel policy, that triggers the 'paradox of choice,' where too many options make it harder for a traveler to choose and feel confident in their decision quickly. We're doing the hard work for them, cutting booking times by a minute already," says Bailey.

New CTM customers can take advantage of Lightning's AI capabilities immediately by sharing data booked with their previous travel management company and some initial customer value segmentation by the CTM team based on policy and booking data.

CTM's Chief Product Officer, North America, Lehi Mills, has led the project and is excited to see it unveiled. "We've been quietly building a dedicated team of AI, ML, and Data Science specialists for the last three years," he says. "This announcement is the first public acknowledgment of that dedicated team and how their work is shaping the future of CTM innovation across multiple products. Lightning's AI works like your own personal travel consultant who knows what you've booked, what you'll like, and your policy."

CTM is launching Lightning AI in North America, its largest global market, with its other global regions following in the next 12 months.

Lightning's artificial intelligence has been built using proprietary data models and leverages cloud-based cognitive search capabilities. CTM began indexing booked travel choices in

2019 and today uses a variety of AI and machine learning data points to produce company and traveler-specific rankings to surface the perfect options for each traveler and client.

2022 GBTA Convention attendees can get a sneak peek of Lightning AI at CTM's booth, #3037, during expo hours each day.

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