Life, and travel, in the fast lane

How border management agencies can use registered traveler programs to accelerate passenger processing, increase satisfaction and enhance security
As evidenced in Europe alone, there is a growing demand for fast and efficient travel. Recent European Member States’ data shows there were 700 million external border crossings in 2011,\(^1\) while the rise in travelers entering and exiting through the European Union's air borders is projected to increase by 80 percent, from 400 million in 2009 to 720 million by 2030.\(^2\) Border agencies are challenged with maintaining security with limited human capital, physical space, and financing in addition to coping with these growing traveler numbers. The innovative application of technologies can facilitate legitimate travel by enabling border officials to increase traveler processing—without negatively impacting security—while managing budgetary constraints.
Now, as the European Union introduces proposals for a formalized registered traveler program as part of a “smart borders” initiative, border agencies have a unique opportunity to not only enrich the experience of the vast majority of the traveling public and simplify life for the frequent flyer, but also to focus security efforts solely on the small minority of travelers who may pose a risk. In this way, if the tangible benefits of registered traveler programs are widely known and the program itself is straightforward to join and use, traveler processing can be further automated to present a win-win proposition for all.

Why registered travelers?

There are many examples of successful programs that automate identification and introduce virtual borders. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s US-VISIT program, for instance, is the world’s second largest biometric database and can perform searches across 140 million unique identities in seconds, has increased the number of daily transactions from 75,000 to 400,000 and identifies 5,000 illegal visitors a day. Such unique identity services can have an even greater impact when complemented by expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travelers, such as the United States Customs and Border Protection’s Global Entry program. The effects can be most dramatic among the repeat traveler populace. In our experience, more than 80 percent of visa-waiver travelers tend to be repeat travelers each year. Bearing in mind the projected 17 percent increase in new unique identities in the next six years, taking these repeat travelers out of the security process through a registered traveler program could save a considerable number of hours—and cost—on regular verifications for border agencies.

In addition to faster passenger processing and tighter border controls, there are strong economic reasons for promoting registered traveler programs.

In total, non-European Union residents contributed €271 billion to the economy when traveling to the European Union in 2011.¹ Business travelers, workers on short-term contracts, researchers and students, third-country nationals with close family ties to European Union citizens or living in regions bordering the European Union, are all likely to cross the borders several times a year.

However, there are challenges; registered traveler programs are only as successful as the numbers who register for them and take up can be slow; issues such as concerns about privacy and data security or lack of confidence in the process at the border can affect the general public’s willingness to participate. Indeed, unless the traveler is presented with clear and demonstrable value, the incentive to join a registered traveler program is severely reduced.

Travel can be frustrating, especially for frequent flyers who may be repeating the process of check-in and security two or three times as they link their journeys across continents through connecting flights. Queues, random inspections, removing shoes and examining bags are all essential to the border staff, but can add substantial time to the overall journey for the traveler.

¹ Includes European Union citizens and third-country nationals. Source: European Commission Impact Assessment Paper February 2013
² European Commission press release, February 28, 2013
Achieving success with registered traveler programs

How can border agencies encourage citizens' collaboration to implement successful registered traveler programs? Accenture believes that by incorporating customer relationship management approaches in their registered traveler program efforts, border agencies can achieve the tipping point that improves the traveler experience and realizes tangible border efficiencies.

Specific steps toward successful registered traveler programs include:

1. Create an engagement model to define target market segments, engagement tactics and enrollment drivers
2. Use marketing programs to educate and stimulate interest with user-friendly guidance on eligibility
3. Travelers apply for the registered traveler program via the Web, kiosk or mobile services hosted through the cloud
4. Basic demographic and traveler information can be captured, such as data of birth and employer, as well as voice or signature
5. A fee typically secures registration and an in-person interview/biometric enrollment completes the application process
6. Use background checks or other screening methods to determine existence of derogatory information that may pose a risk or may be grounds for removal from the program
7. Share data among participating entities according to relevant policies
8. The accelerated process means registered travelers can enjoy an enhanced travel experience and border agencies can focus on unknown travelers
In Europe, the many different authorities operating across various countries reflect a broader range of entry points that add greater complexity to entry than the work of a single federal authority in the United States.

**The traveling tipping point**

Digitization, or in other words, the use of automated technology, is helping to accelerate the flow and reliability of information that is the core of border verification processes. Collaborative relationships with commercial data providers could help to aggregate and transform credit, demographic, criminal, marketing and industry-specific data to drive analysis for risk assessments. Valuable traveler demographic details may be captured at this time—from trusted sources such as Passenger Name Records and Advanced Passenger Information, as well as less traditional sources such as social media—to enhance records with essential details around individual travelers’ behaviors and preferences.

Although privacy constraints and the need for governance measures must be recognized, creative solutions should be sought and patience is key—border agencies focusing on these traveling “customers” must accept that commercial viability needs time and persuasion. To understand the needs of the traveling public, an initial step for border agencies involves accurate targeting to successfully identify, attract, and retain the customers they serve. Simplicity should be encouraged, with user friendly, practical guidance on the enrollment process and a clear explanation about eligibility. Ongoing education is a crucial aspect to communicate the value to any infrequent travelers, seasonal travelers, and traveling populations outside of the primary demographic; it can also be used as a means to increase public trust and address privacy concerns. Above all, travelers are more inclined to opt in when the benefits of registered traveler programs are clearly stated and understood.
Where are the benefits?

A new, borderless environment using a registered traveler program helps to:

- Ease the logistical difficulties for low-risk and/or frequent travelers from third countries entering the Schengen area.
- Alleviate the stress of travel and increase public trust by allowing the traveler to assume some personal control over the security clearance process.
- Introduce a streamlined, expedited process that shortens wait times for processing travelers through the border and security checkpoints—enabling travelers to enjoy more time to browse departure halls and purchase goods.
- Address security and efficiency priorities by improving the quality of the information held online and retaining that information to flag potential issues with high-risk travelers down the line.
- Make it simpler to cross European borders to help present the continent as an attractive destination and boost economic activity and job creation.

Aside from the gains of preclearance in terms of the absence of queues and time-consuming security checks, there are additional positive benefits with registered traveler programs. For instance, airlines might work with hotels to offer travelers favorable rates in their preferred chains to extend further the positive benefits of opting in to a registered traveler program.
Better border control

Although there is no “silver bullet” to enhancing border management, registered traveler programs can help those who spend their professional or personal lives in the fast lane to also travel in the fast lane and allow border agencies to focus on the unknown traveling population.

In a data-rich world, border agencies have an opportunity to use different treatment strategies for the traveling population to achieve the best of both worlds—creating more satisfying traveler experiences and expediting screening initiatives.
About Accenture

Accenture is a global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company, with approximately 266,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Combining unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities across all industries and business functions, and extensive research on the world’s most successful companies, Accenture collaborates with clients to help them become high-performance businesses and governments. The company generated net revenues of US$27.9 billion for the fiscal year ended Aug. 31, 2012. Its home page is www.accenture.com.

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