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Data Insights:
Flight disruption during the winter travel season

Winter means holiday cheer — and unpredictable weather. Here's how to navigate and book the most reliable flights for your team, no matter what the forecast brings.

Managing corporate travel isn't easy – especially in winter. Your job is to make sure your travelers arrive safely and on time, no matter what the season throws your way. Winter brings its own set of challenges: weather disruptions, delays, and changes that can make planning and connections tricky. Here's what you need to know to keep your team moving smoothly.
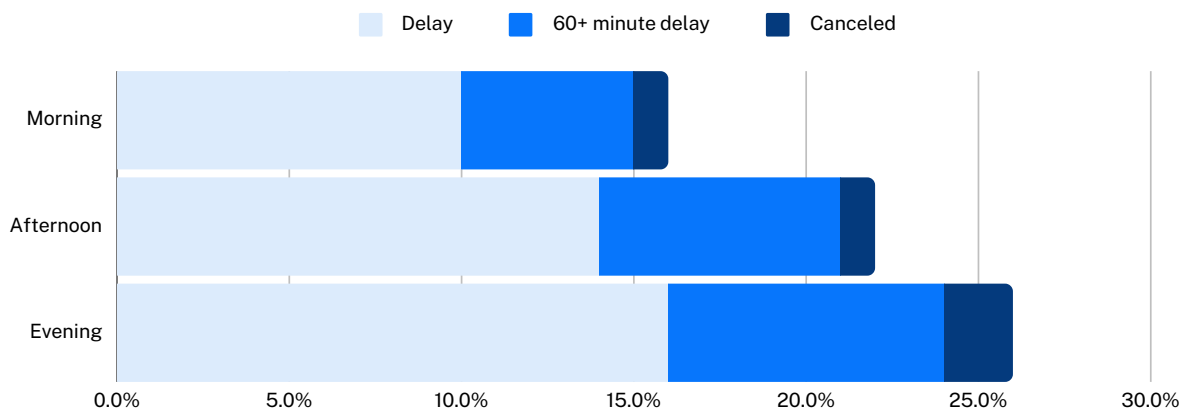
Winter Travel: Fewer Delays, More Cancellations

Winter might not be as chaotic as summer for flight disruptions, but cancellations see a sharp uptick compared to fall and even summer. When planning winter travel, it's essential to factor in this heightened risk. By staying prepared, you can ensure your travelers stay safe, comfortable, and on track — even when winter throws a curveball.

Winter Flights: Morning Wins the Day

Winter weather might be unpredictable, but here's a steady rule: morning flights are your best bet. Data shows that morning flights face a 16% chance of delays or cancellations, compared to 22% in the afternoon and 26% in the evening. Booking earlier in the day can significantly reduce your travelers' chances of encountering disruptions and keep their trips running more smoothly.

Go Early! Portion of flights delayed and canceled by departure time

Legend: Delay | 60+ minute delay | Canceled

Departure time	Chart data
Morning	(bar extends to ~16%)
Afternoon	(bar extends to ~22%)
Evening	(bar extends to ~26%)

X-axis: 0.0%, 5.0%, 10.0%, 15.0%, 20.0%, 25.0%, 30.0%
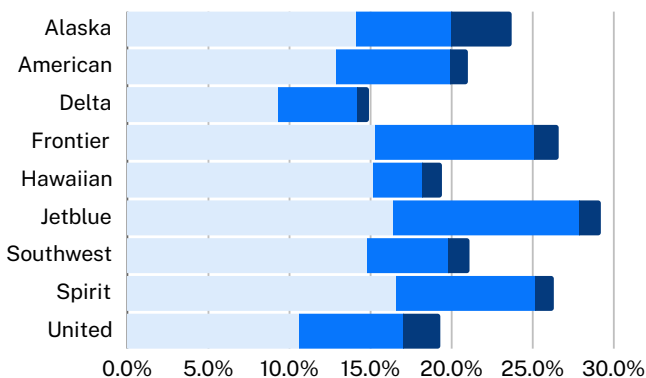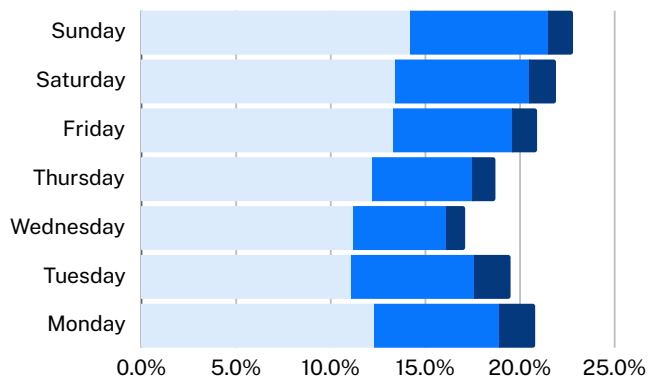
Choose connections wisely this winter

Not all cities handle winter weather the same — your choice of connections matters. Cold-weather hubs like Minneapolis and Detroit shine with strong snow-handling systems, while southern cities like Atlanta and Houston sidestep major winter disruptions. Northeast hubs like NYC and Boston can grapple with storms and congestion, and vacation spots like Orlando and Miami see volume- and airline-driven delays. Travelers can minimize risks by choosing well-prepared hubs or booking nonstop flights whenever possible.

	Delay	Sev. Delay	Canceled
Minneapolis	9%	5%	1%
Atlanta	11%	5%	0%
Salt Lake City	11%	5%	0%
Washington D.C.	10%	6%	1%
Newark	10%	6%	2%
Detroit	10%	6%	1%
Houston	12%	6%	1%
New York City	11%	7%	1%
Phoenix	13%	5%	1%
Chicago	11%	6%	2%

	Delay	Sev. Delay	Canceled
Seattle	12%	5%	2%
Charlotte	13%	6%	1%
Los Angeles	13%	5%	1%
Boston	12%	7%	1%
Denver	14%	6%	2%
Dallas	14%	7%	1%
Las Vegas	14%	7%	1%
Orlando	16%	9%	1%
Miami	18%	9%	1%
San Francisco	18%	10%	2%

The best days of the week to fly

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Saturday continue to reign as the most reliable travel days — even in winter. Of these, Tuesday takes the top spot. If your team has tight schedules or critical meetings, consider planning trips around these days and aim for morning flights to boost reliability and keep things running smoothly.

Airline reliability: Stick to the data

When it comes to airline reliability, the numbers don't lie. Choosing the right airline can make all the difference for a smooth trip. JetBlue, with its heavy focus on the weather-challenged Northeast, tends to face more disruptions. Meanwhile, Delta, United and Hawaiian lead the pack in reliability, with Southwest and American following close behind. Let the data guide your decisions for stress-free team travel.

Next Step: Communicate

In addition to using this data to pick the best suppliers for your program you can share this insight with your bookers & travelers. Encourage your team to book and travel smart this winter.