



The Direct Connect Disconnect: Sabre Separates Fact from Fiction

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*Corporate travel leaders urged to look beyond the chatter as research findings highlight **four critical misconceptions** about connecting directly to airlines*

SOUTHLAKE, Texas, Sept. 18, 2025 /PRNewswire/ -- [Sabre Corporation](#) (NASDAQ: SABR), a leading global travel technology company, today issued a reality check on the chatter around direct airline connections in corporate travel. While some carriers make bypassing intermediaries – or "cutting out the aggregator" – sound appealing, new analysis shows those promises can be a mirage. What looks convincing on the horizon fades under closer scrutiny, leaving corporate buyers with unexpected costs, fragmented servicing, and solutions that fail to scale.

Analysis of leading US airlines – representing over 117 million annual Sabre bookings – together with a [global survey of 500 agency executives across 14 markets](#) shows a clear pattern: direct connects often promise more than they deliver. Instead of clarity, they create blind spots. Instead of guaranteed savings, they can return higher fares. And instead of smoother travel, they risk introducing inconsistencies that put duty-of-care at risk and frustrate employees on the road.

"Direct connections absolutely have a role to play – they are part of the industry's evolution as airlines pursue new retailing models," said **Roshan Mendis, Chief Commercial Officer and Executive Vice President, Sabre**. "But, for corporate buyers, they aren't the silver bullet they are regularly positioned as. Travel management companies (TMCs) connected to large-scale platforms like [SabreMosaic™ Travel Marketplace](#) provide what corporations truly need to offer their corporate clients the best results: a full view of content, consistent traveler experiences, scalable infrastructure and measurable value."

[Sabre's latest review highlights four common misconceptions](#) about direct airline connections in corporate travel:

Misconception #1 - Cheaper fares? Almost never

Direct connections are often promoted as the cheapest route, with some carriers suggesting their lowest fares are only available direct. In practice, airline sites and APIs are built to maximize yield for the airline – not minimize cost for buyers. Marketplaces uncover hidden value by combining NDC and EDIFACT content and constructing itineraries that include split tickets or mixed-carrier options. A Sabre analysis of U.S. airfares during June 2025* found [SabreMosaic Travel Marketplace](#) delivered **equal or lower fares in over 90% of searches – with 41% of cases cheaper than direct**.

Misconception #2 - More content direct? Think again

Some airlines suggest their direct NDC APIs provide richer content. In reality, those 'direct connects' use the very same NDC APIs that airlines already provide to Sabre – they aren't a fundamentally different technology. But because an airline's API only connects to that single carrier, TMCs would need to manage dozens of separate connections, each with unique technical and commercial requirements, to see the full picture. In [Sabre's global survey](#), **91% of agencies said they juggle four or more booking systems** and three-quarters report the number has grown in the past three years – a clear sign that content fragmentation is rising. That fragmentation means travelers may not see all available fares, managers lose visibility across suppliers, and programs miss opportunities to optimize spend.

Misconception #3 - A smoother experience? Not for corporates

Direct connects are often promoted as the "modern" way to access airline content, with ancillaries, bundles, and richer visuals that older systems can't always display. The reality is far more complicated than this tidy narrative. Each airline builds its direct connect differently – creating inconsistent booking and servicing experiences. For leisure travelers, that might just be an irritation; for corporates, it's a liability. Business trips involve multiple suppliers, last-minute changes, and duty-of-care requirements. If each connection behaves differently, travelers risk poor servicing, managers lose visibility, and programs face compliance gaps.

Misconception #4 - Built for the future? Not at scale

Airlines often promote direct connects as "future-ready." The reality is business travel runs at massive scale – with millions of searches, bundles, and last-minute changes that need to be processed instantly, securely, and consistently. One-off airline connections can't deliver that scale and, in some cases, airlines even throttle results when "look-to-book" ratios are too high, meaning travelers may not see every available fare. With Artificial Intelligence multiplying searches, the risk grows. Platforms built for scale, like Sabre's cloud-native marketplace, protect against these gaps – ensuring corporates see the full picture, get consistent access to new airline features, and aren't tied to a single carrier's version of the future. In fact, the SabreMosaic Travel Marketplace itself is a wide collection of direct connects, enhanced by industry-leading shopping, caching and AI-infused algorithmic intelligence that ensures buyers see the most relevant and competitive options.

Together, these four misconceptions tell a consistent story: direct airline connections may look attractive on the surface, but the evidence shows they can create complexity, raise costs, and reduce corporate control. Marketplaces provide the visibility, comparability, and scalability that managed travel truly needs.

"Ultimately, this debate is about effectiveness and consistency over complexity – building programs that save money, keep travelers satisfied, and protect people on the move. The data is clear. So is the path forward," added **Roshan Mendis**.

SabreMosaic Travel Marketplace unites content from 38 NDC airlines, 150+ low-cost carriers, 420+ EDIFACT carriers, 2 million+ lodging options, and 70+ car and rail providers into one platform - giving corporate buyers the breadth of offers they need with the consistency and scale they can trust.

* Results based on the analysis in June 2025 of top airlines in the US Point of Sale, representing a sample of over 117m annual Sabre bookings. Main cabin utilized as the benchmark class; [Airline.com](#) sourced from Google Flights. Margin of statistical error +/-5%. Content Fragmentation Research Methodology: Survey of 500 travel agency senior executives conducted via Qualtrics across 14 countries, fielded between April 18-April 30, 2025.

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About Sabre Corporation

Sabre Corporation is a leading technology company that takes on the biggest opportunities and solves the most complex challenges in travel. Sabre

harnesses speed, scale and insights to build tomorrow's technology today – empowering airlines, hoteliers, agencies and other partners to retail, distribute and fulfill travel worldwide. Headquartered in Southlake, Texas, USA, with employees across the world, Sabre serves customers in more than 160 countries globally. For more information visit www.sabre.com.

Media

Liz Hands

Liz.hands@sabre.com

SabreNews@sabre.com

Investors

Jim Mathias

jim.mathias@sabre.com

sabre.investorrelations@sabre.com

The Sabre logo is rendered in a bold, black, sans-serif typeface. The letters are thick and blocky, with a distinctive design where the 'a' and 'b' have a stepped, geometric appearance. A registered trademark symbol (®) is positioned at the end of the word.

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