

Boston Blizzard Shutdown

Boston airport shuts down in the middle of a 350 person meeting.



About the Client

Our client partner is a global market leader in diagnostics and information technology solutions for animal health (veterinary and livestock), water testing, and milk quality.

The Challenge

On the final day of the client's North American Sales Meeting in Boston, a major snowstorm was predicted to cripple the Boston airport. With 350 departures scheduled for that day tracking the storm - and creating a contingency plan - became the major focus.

The Solution

Creative Group employed its monitor-mitigate-manage approach to crisis management toward a successful resolution. As early as Wednesday, the onsite team and our Travel Services team joined forces to start moving late flights on Friday to earlier in the day.

Reports began saying the storm could hit earlier in the day. Some airlines began cancelling flights out of Boston for late Thursday and early Friday, adding to the challenge. Concerned participants began calling the Hospitality Desk. The onsite team sent emails to participants twice daily to keep them in the loop.

The Travel Services team worked through the night to rebook passengers. The snow started to fall around 9 am on Friday. Most of the non-cancelled flights got out through 1 pm, which is when the airport shut down for the next 24 hours. The onsite team checked the hotel manifest, identified those still stranded and contacted participants via cell phone to make sure they had everyone accounted for.

The team provided stranded guests with food and accommodations. By Monday, all participants were accounted for and rebooked.

Our flight monitoring software gave us the knowledge we needed to get a head start on rebooking, and since we had booked the air tickets, we had the access we needed to change all reservations in-house. Further, with real-time integration between SABRE (airline reservation tool) and our registration tool, CreativeEDGE®, we had accurate information to manage the additional room nights, food & beverage, and airport transfers required.

The Outcome

About 250 of the 350 participants departed before the storm hit thanks to the efforts by our Travel Services team and our ability to hit the ground running on rebooking.

We issued 89 ticket exchanges to secure alternate flights after cancellations. In addition, roughly 50 ticket changes were made by our consultants working directly with airline representatives to secure new arrangements at no additional cost.

We extended hotel accommodations at the group hotel for 38 people who might otherwise have had to stay at the airport overnight, and provided food and a place to congregate for support.

Many airlines do not provide automatic refunds due to weather disturbances. However, Creative Group worked with Delta, Air Canada, United and Alaska Air to negotiate and secure refunds totaling \$5,243.46.



Strong supplier relationships and the hard work of our Travel Services staff, allowed us to secure over \$5,000 in cancelled flight refunds due to weather.