ONTIC

GUIDE

# Protecting Executives in Motion

## Why executive travel protection requires a more connected approach



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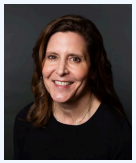
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# Why executive travel protection requires a more connected approach

Protecting executives on the move has always been complex. Every trip requires careful coordination across advances, intelligence, logistics, people, and contingency planning, all built around a principal whose schedule drives the operation.

"A good advance gives you a strong plan, but that plan is often static. Once an executive is in motion, your team needs to be able to see what's changing, understand what it affects, and adjust the operation without losing time or context."



**CYNTHIA MARBLE**

Senior Director, Executive Protection Practice, Ontic

Today's threat landscape makes that job even more challenging. Geopolitical instability, conflict, extreme weather, and growing negative sentiment toward executives and the industries they represent are making executive travel risk more dynamic. And both the trip and the risk picture can shift at any moment. A flight gets delayed. A meeting moves. New intelligence emerges. In Ontic's **2026 Corporate Security Benchmark Survey**, travel risk ranked second among threat categories security leaders said had increased over the past year, cited by 65% of respondents, behind only geopolitical and regulatory risk (70%).

Keeping an executive safe in that environment requires the intelligence surrounding the trip to stay connected to the operation itself. It also creates an opportunity to use AI more meaningfully. When AI can work across connected travel details, intelligence, procedures, and operational history, it can help teams identify what changed, understand what may be affected, and focus attention where it matters most.

**IN THIS GUIDE**

This guide explores how connecting your data and workflows creates that foundation, helping your team maintain a current picture of risk, adapt as conditions evolve, and use AI to support faster, better-informed decisions throughout the trip.

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# Where static travel planning falls short

Executive assistants, chiefs of staff, GSOC operators, intelligence analysts, protection agents, drivers, vendors, and local partners may each own part of a trip. The itinerary may sit in a travel application or spreadsheet. Advance material may be stored in documents. Intelligence may arrive through separate feeds and alerts. Changes may be communicated through email, text, or messaging threads.

**Those tools and processes can work well for their individual purpose. The problem appears when a change in one part of the operation alters the assumptions behind another.**

## A travel disruption can change the protection plan

A flight delay can change the executive's arrival window, require a new driver or route, or create a staffing gap. If those downstream changes are not identified and addressed quickly, the executive may be left waiting, face a rushed handoff, travel with a gap in planned coverage, or be placed near a location when conditions on the ground have changed. The team needs to quickly determine whether the original plan is still appropriate, what needs to change across the operation, and who needs to act.

## Zero-fail missions require teams to adapt

Canceling a trip is often not an option. The principal will still board the flight, attend the meeting, visit the site, or appear at the event. The protection team's job is to facilitate that movement as safely as possible, even as conditions evolve.

## New intelligence can change the trip

New intelligence can quickly change the risk picture around a trip. Severe weather may move toward the destination, a nearby incident may disrupt access to the venue, or new online activity may be directed at the executive. The team needs to understand whether it intersects with the executive's timing, location, or movement, and what needs to change downstream, from the route and staffing plan to the security posture at the destination. When intelligence and travel operations are separate, that assessment takes longer and can leave the executive moving toward an area of increased exposure while the team is still determining whether the plan needs to change.

Making that movement happen requires teams to do more than manage individual updates as they arrive. They need a connected view of the trip, the risk surrounding it, and the procedures that turn new information into action.


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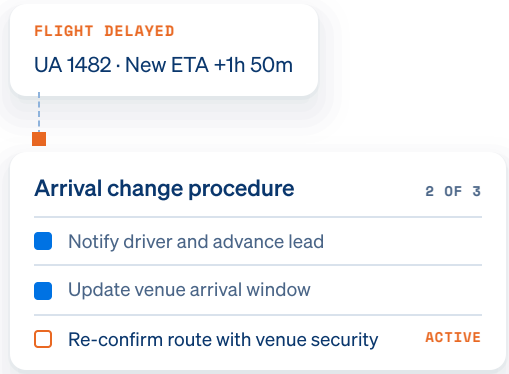
# Build a travel operation that stays connected

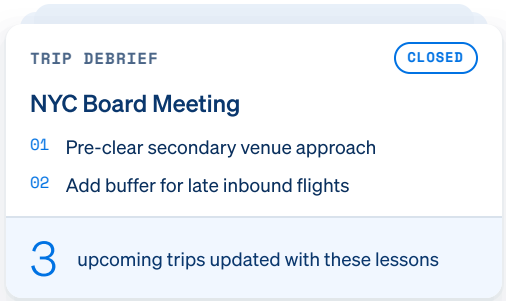
Connected Intelligence is an approach to security that brings together the data used to understand risk, the procedures used to manage it, and the insights gained from each operation. It helps teams see how information about people, places, threats, and events relates to the work happening around them, so they can make better-informed decisions and coordinate a response.

For executive travel, Connected Intelligence creates a more complete picture of the trip, the risk surrounding it, and the work needed for the trip to happen safely. It connects the executive, itinerary, locations, intelligence, and operational plan, then helps the team understand how a change in one area affects the others.

## A connected travel operation is built on three principles:




### 01

Bringing the full picture around the trip together by connecting travel, risk, and operational information

### 02

Connecting procedures to the information and intelligence they depend on so you can turn a change into the right action

### 03

Using every trip to strengthen the next by preserving the decisions, outcomes, and lessons that build institutional knowledge over time


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PRINCIPLE 01

# Bring the full picture around the trip together

The operating picture should connect the executive and their itinerary, including flights, hotels, venues, and routes, with the information the team needs to understand how those details affect risk and the operation. That includes threat intelligence, weather, local incidents, advance documents, staffing assignments, vendor and contact details, medical resources, and contingency plans.

That information should also carry from one trip to the next. A hotel, transportation provider, or destination should retain useful history, including previous advances, incidents, vendor experiences, and decisions that affected the operation.

Bringing this information together also gives AI the context to work across the trip rather than individual pieces of it. Instead of simply summarizing an intelligence alert or itinerary change, AI can help connect that information to the executive, their location and timing, and the operation surrounding them.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR TEAM

## Test whether your travel information is connected

- [ ] Where does the information that shapes each trip live today? A central system or siloed tools?
- [ ] Who can access the latest itinerary, advance information, intelligence, and operational details when they need them?
- [ ] Where could an update be missed, delayed, or disconnected from the people and decisions it affects?
- [ ] Does the team retain useful context about destinations, vendors, and previous travel operations?


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PRINCIPLE 02

# Connect procedures to the information they depend on

The plan is more than an itinerary. It includes the work that turns travel details into a protected operation: the advance, threat review, staffing and transportation assignments, briefings, communications, and contingency actions.

When a flight, route, venue, or risk signal changes, the team needs a defined way to turn that update into action. They should be able to see what else the change affects, reassess the executive's exposure and coverage, assign the next decision, and ensure agents, drivers, and other partners receive the current plan.

This operational context also makes AI more useful. When the system understands how your team works, including ownership, escalation paths, and the steps that follow different types of changes, AI can do more than surface information. It can help identify what may need attention next while the protection team remains responsible for assessing the situation and making the decision.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR TEAM

## Test how your team responds when plans change

- [ ] What are the disruptions that most often require the team to adapt the plan?
- [ ] When one occurs, who receives the update first and who is responsible for assessing its impact?
- [ ] Can the team quickly identify what else needs to change, from transportation and staffing to routes, local contacts, and contingency actions?
- [ ] How does the updated plan reach the people operating in the field?


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PRINCIPLE 03

# Use every trip to strengthen the next

Capturing planning decisions, incidents, outcomes, and lessons from travel operations allows teams to identify recurring issues across the program. You can see which destinations require additional support, which vendors create repeated friction, what types of threats most often affect executive movement, and where staffing or transportation plans tend to change.

That accumulated history becomes even more valuable with AI. Rather than requiring teams to manually piece together lessons across individual trips, AI can help surface recurring patterns across destinations, vendors, incidents, itinerary changes, and operational decisions. Over time, the team can use that context to prepare more effectively for what they may encounter next.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR TEAM

## Test how well your team leverages past insights

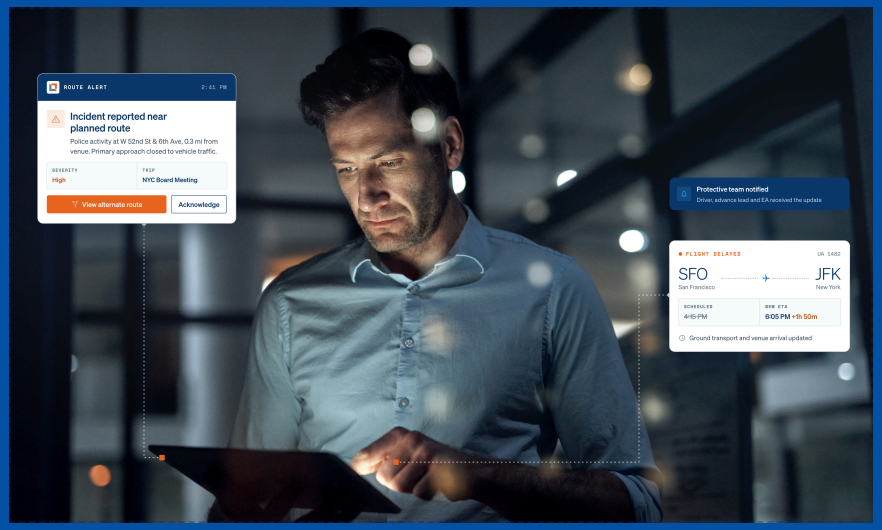
- [ ] What changed during the trip, and how did the team respond?
- [ ] Did the change create delays, coverage gaps, added exposure, or other operational friction?
- [ ] What should inform the next advance, including information about the destination, route, vendor, or protection plan?
- [ ] Can the team identify patterns across multiple trips that point to a broader operational issue?


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SCENARIO

# When two small changes collide

Consider an executive traveling to a major city for a high-profile meeting. The advance is complete, transportation is scheduled, the route has been reviewed, and the intelligence assessment has been distributed. Hours before arrival, an incident near the planned route affects access to the venue, and the executive's inbound flight is delayed.




## IN A DISCONNECTED OPERATION

The flight update may go to the executive assistant, while the incident alert goes to the intelligence team. The protection team may not immediately know that the executive will arrive later, which means they're still assessing the incident against the original arrival window and route. Until those updates are brought together, there is a gap between the changing risk picture and the team's understanding of how it affects the operation. The GSOC and protection team then have to reconstruct the current situation across messages, systems, and people before they can determine whether the route, driver assignment, staffing coverage, or arrival plan needs to change.

### OUTCOME

The trip may still move forward, but with more last-minute coordination, a greater chance of delays or coverage gaps, and added risk to the executive if the team cannot identify and address a change in exposure quickly enough.

## IN A CONNECTED OPERATION

The flight delay and incident are visible alongside the executive's full trip picture. AI helps the team quickly understand what changed since the original plan and surfaces the potential overlap between the incident, revised arrival time, and planned route. The protection team assesses the risk and determines whether the route, driver assignment, staffing coverage, or arrival plan needs to change. If an alternate route or driver is needed, the updated plan is shared with everyone supporting the trip so agents, drivers, the GSOC, and local partners are working from the same current information.

### OUTCOME

The executive can move through the trip with fewer interruptions and downtime while the team maintains coordinated coverage, adapts to changing conditions, and takes the right steps to keep them safe.


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# Put the model into practice on your next trip

Change is unavoidable in executive travel. Flights will be delayed, meetings will move, local conditions will evolve, and executives will make last-minute decisions. A connected travel operation gives protection teams a more complete and current picture of the executive's environment, while preserving the decisions and lessons that make every future trip stronger.

Creating that level of connection is easier when your team can bring travel, intelligence, and operational information together in a centralized security platform. But you can begin building a more connected operating model today by identifying where information and decisions become disconnected, creating clearer processes for managing change, and preserving the context your team needs for future travel.

## 01

### Create a shared operating picture for one upcoming high-priority trip.

Bring together the current itinerary, advance information, executive and local contact details, staffing and transportation assignments, relevant intelligence, and contingency actions. Make sure everyone involved knows where to find the latest version of the plan.

## 02

### Walk through the changes most likely to affect that trip.

Consider a flight disruption, venue change, local incident, severe weather event, or emerging threat. For each scenario, identify what else could be affected, who assesses the impact, who makes the decision, what needs to change across the operation, and how the update reaches agents, drivers, and other partners.

## 03

### Capture the information that should carry forward.

After the trip, document what changed, the actions the team took, the outcome, and what should inform future travel to that destination or with those vendors and partners. Look for patterns that could help your team reduce delays, avoid coverage gaps, or better prepare for the next operation.

## 04

### Identify where AI can support the operation.

Look at the manual work surrounding the trip and identify where AI could help your team work through information faster. Consider tasks like identifying changes between plan versions, summarizing relevant intelligence, surfacing possible conflicts, or generating travel briefs. Focus on areas where AI has enough connected context to be useful and where your team remains responsible for assessing risk and making decisions.


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THE PLATFORM

# Corporate security software built for Connected Intelligence

The steps in this guide can help your team begin identifying and closing the gaps that make executive travel harder to manage. As your program grows, a centralized security platform can make those connections easier to maintain across every trip, team, and location.

Ontic brings travel details, risk information, operational procedures, and historical context together so protection teams can understand what has changed, see what the change affects, coordinate the right response, and help keep executives safe as conditions evolve.



## Learn more about the Connected Intelligence Model

See how it can support a more connected approach to executive travel protection.

**Contact Us**

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