

CASE STUDY

# Travel Capitalist Ventures Builds Resilience with Help from BlueJeans

The collapse in international travel in 2020 left many businesses fraught with uncertainty, and Travel Capitalist Ventures was one of them.

The venture capital firm invests in fast-growing travel companies such as start-ups, travel technology platforms, and in-flight services providers. So when the COVID-19 pandemic brought travel to a standstill, the situation required Travel Capitalist to be proactive and resilient in its response.

Fortunately for the firm, it has always kept its operations lean and nimble. Its team members work in different parts of the world and meet in person a few times a year. “We loosely follow Warren Buffett’s model for his businesses, where the parent company has a few dozen people and the investments have the numbers,” says Founding Partner Abrar Ahmad.

It also helped that before the pandemic, the firm switched to the video conferencing platform BlueJeans Meetings for its daily meeting needs — from monitoring companies it is invested in to attending investment pitches and having one-on-one calls.

“The last thing we needed to worry about were technical issues, connectivity problems, enabling new features, and a slow communication platform when every business metric was falling off a cliff,” says Ahmad.



**Industry:** Finance

**Challenge:** In critical moments during the pandemic, Travel Capitalist Ventures needed to constantly communicate with companies it was invested in, partners, and co-investors to make urgent decisions.

**Solution:** The firm relied on BlueJeans Meetings for its meeting and collaboration needs, investment pitches, and ad hoc discussions with partners and team members around the world.

**Results:** Travel Capitalist has ensured the continuity of its operations during COVID-19, enabling it to support partners, co-investors, and companies it invests in.

It has been able to frequently connect with partners and co-investors to discuss sensitive investment matters without issues or delays.

The firm has continued to pitch to capital providers and been able to meet increased documentation and compliance demands.

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– ABRAR AHMAD, FOUNDING PARTNER, TRAVEL CAPITALIST VENTURES

### Enabling Communication During Critical Times

With the COVID-19 crisis unfolding, it was critical for Travel Capitalist to communicate all the time as it made pivotal investment decisions and completed investments already underway. The firm also had to make sure it could quickly react as the crisis evolved.

“We had to share advice during the barrage of tough decisions that we had to make on every call, to authorize and record key shareholder approvals, share our individual experiences from outside the office, and support our founders, management teams, and their staff,” says Ahmad.

Spread across five countries, his team members relied on BlueJeans Meetings to be on the same page and to build resilience amid the crisis. They quickly shifted to virtual investment pitches, enabling them to continue attracting capital from pools of investors. They would have richer discussions throughout the investment process, thanks to the ease of getting on a call and the quality of the audio and video. And if invitees missed a call, they easily caught up by replaying key parts of the discussion captured using BlueJeans’ Smart Meeting Highlights.

“Replaying highlights and decisions showed not only what was said but how, in what tone, and in what context it was said,” says Ahmad. “This was extremely helpful in a way I never anticipated.”

### Ensuring Constant Availability

BlueJeans’ Personal Meeting option was especially handy for Ahmad as it allowed him to be always available during the most critical moments of the pandemic. Personal Meetings are permanent virtual rooms that are particularly useful for quick huddles and ad hoc discussions.

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He adds that voice intonation and clarity of message matter when people pitch to Travel Capitalist for an investment, or when his team deals with investors. “Attendees would repeatedly comment about how clear our calls are, which was one of our key reasons for choosing BlueJeans.”

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### Supporting Diverse Uses

But what impressed Ahmad the most was BlueJeans' ability to support every device, location, bandwidth, and platform — whether it was browser or mobile. “Our use cases significantly vary, and we have to account for apps that are allowed within a country's firewall, how much bandwidth is available, and the types of devices used,” he says.

“BlueJeans allows us to sail through these hurdles. The audio and video quality, even in a low-bandwidth mode, ensures clear calls and discussions in a way that other providers can't support.”

Ahmad believes that Travel Capitalist's return on investment in BlueJeans Meetings speaks for itself. “It's in the time we've saved from traveling, the frustration-free experience when discussing sensitive pre- or post-investment company matters, and the opportunity cost savings from having our partners and co-investors easily connect, discuss matters, and move on,” he adds.

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### Preparing for Post-Pandemic Investing

As the world slowly opens up, Travel Capitalist is confident that it will thrive and can continue to support travel companies in the new normal of investing.

“Much more documentation and compliance are required in a post-COVID investment world, but BlueJeans can help us handle them without constantly requiring add-ons and new training,” says Ahmad. “As COVID-19 wanes, fingers crossed, BlueJeans allows us to maintain a level of efficiency and productivity that our team members are used to, whether they work virtually or in the office. It will continue to be a key part of our day-to-day use going forward.”

#### ABOUT TRAVEL CAPITALIST VENTURES

Travel Capitalist Ventures identifies and invests in rapidly growing travel companies, many of them start-ups. It has investments in six countries including Brazil, India, Turkey, and the United States. Established in 2010, the firm has team members in France, India, Qatar, South Africa, and the United Arab Emirates.