

Inside Business Travel Survey from Carlson Hotels Reveals the Reality of Travel

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Oprah Winfrey Tops Bill Gates, Angelina Jolie, Brad Pitt and Hilary Clinton as Business Travelers' Dream Companion

It may come as no surprise to modern-day road warriors, but "last-minute flight cancellations and delays" are the biggest gripe of today's international business travelers, ranking just ahead of lack of communication by airline personnel in a recent survey of more than 1,000 globe trotters by Carlson Hotels Worldwide. The survey also found that hotel-bound business travelers remain frustrated by basic inconveniences, led by "the condition of hotel rooms" including "beds that are uncomfortable" and "not receiving non-smoking rooms."

International business travelers shared their views as part of a survey conducted by Synovate Travel & Leisure research firm on behalf of Carlson Hotels Worldwide, one of the major operating groups of Carlson, a global leader in providing marketing, travel and hospitality services and a leading hotel operator with 965 locations in 71 countries including Regent Hotels & Resorts, the company's luxury brand, Radisson Hotels & Resorts, Park Plaza Hotels & Resorts, Country Inns & Suites By Carlson and Park Inn.

The Carlson Hotels Worldwide survey also found the majority of respondents (24 percent) would like Oprah Winfrey as a seat mate, followed by Bill Gates (23 percent), Angelina Jolie (22 percent), Hillary Rodham Clinton (14 percent) and George W. Bush (13 percent). Other "dream" companions included The Pope, The Dali Lama, and Barack Obama.

Chatty Seat Mates More Irritating Than TSA When it comes to airlines, 75 percent of business travelers surveyed said last-minute flight cancellations were their most frustrating travel experience. Delays, "lack of communication" and "sitting on the tarmac" also ranked high.

International business travelers are surprisingly more irritated by screaming children (61 percent) and incessant talkers (47 percent) than by confronting the hassles of airport security (32 percent).

Hotel Service---Let's Get Back to the Basics Seventy-two percent of hotel-bound business travelers cited that the "basic condition of rooms" frustrated them most followed by uncomfortable beds (64 percent) and rooms that are were not ready following a late arrival (64 percent). "Requesting a non-smoking room and not getting it" and "miscellaneous surcharges" each frustrated 61 percent of survey respondents.

More than half of the respondents (53 percent) said they are more frustrated by a non-working television in their hotel room than by waiting in line to check in and out (47 percent). More than 50 percent of respondents cited a hotel brand's "global presence" as a contributing factor when selecting a hotel loyalty/frequent guest program.

Any Business Travel Perks Left? The "best" perk of business travel is "visiting interesting places," at 70 percent, followed by "change of pace" (60 percent) and "meeting new people" (51 percent). Respondents also cited "alone time" (35 percent), "not having to make their bed" (27 percent) and "no family responsibility" (15 percent).

Business travelers also find time to reward themselves while traveling for work. Nearly 60 percent sightsee, 41 percent splurge on an expensive meal, 38 percent go shopping and 10 percent shut themselves off from the world by turning off their cell phone/blackberry.

The most popular hotel perk was a room upgrade (59 percent), followed by the availability of free Internet service (56 percent) and an exceptionally comfortable bed (50 percent). Also, 23 percent of survey respondents said redeeming frequent flyer miles is much more difficult than redeeming hotel loyalty/frequent guest points.

Given five million frequent flyer miles or hotel loyalty points, the majority of survey respondents (73 percent) would "travel around the world." Thirty-three percent said they would transfer their millions of miles to a family member, and 26 percent would "reserve a plane for a roundtrip flight with friends and relatives."

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