

U.S. Business Travelers Find Ways to Manage Work-Life Balance

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Expedia Corporate Travel survey shows business travelers use creative strategies to keep travel from disrupting their lives

Expedia(R) Corporate Travel today announced the results of a survey of more than 1,100 U.S.-based business travelers conducted to better understand how they maintain and manage work-life balance while traveling for business. Overall, the results illustrate that travelers are getting creative to make business travel more convenient to their everyday lives. The findings demonstrate that 66 percent of those surveyed do not have trouble balancing work responsibilities with personal obligations. As a way to maintain their regular routines, travelers say they are using technology and other strategies to stay in touch with loved ones and bringing the comforts of home out on the road.

Staying Connected with Friends and Family

One way business travelers maintain their relationships is by instituting regular practices to keep in contact with friends and family while on the road. According to the survey, 86 percent of respondents stay connected with friends and family via email and phone while they are traveling for work. Sixty-seven percent establish a nightly ritual of calling their family every evening before they go to bed and 19 percent of travelers snap interesting pictures to share with their kids when they get home.

"One myth about business travel is that travelers have to put their lives on hold and cannot stay in touch with friends and family when away from home, but the results of this survey show that's not consistently true," said Rob Greyber, senior vice president of North America for Expedia Corporate Travel. "The findings show that travelers are getting creative when it comes to maintaining their relationships while traveling, like the seven percent that use a web cam to connect online with their family. With advances in technology, it is getting easier for road warriors to keep in touch with their friends and family."

Bring Family and Friends Along

Business travelers are also leveraging company travel to enjoy personal time. Surprisingly, survey responses indicate that more than 68 percent of business travelers are actually spending more time on the road. Additionally, 59 percent have someone join them for all or part of business trips so they can spend free time together and, in some cases, travelers even bring their pets on work trips. John Gordon, a director at ASBA-Leadership Development brings his wife along on annual conferences, "We try to arrange our vacation days to accompany each other."

Travelers Taking Time Out for Themselves

The majority of travelers are finding creative ways to maintain their healthy habits and priorities while on the road. Travelers are not letting work trips disrupt their routines, such as having downtime, eating healthy foods and going to the gym. Fifty-five percent of respondents say they take time to relax in their off hours, like using the facilities of health-conscious hotels, such as in-room workouts, healthy offerings in the mini-bar and on-site gyms to stay fit while on the road or the 52 percent who plan a relaxing or fun activity during their trip.

"I have made it a point (when traveling for work) to spend a little time finding something local to see or do," says Dave Hatton, a marketing manager with Select Comfort, makers of the Sleep Number bed. "I have seen Navy Pier in Chicago, been on an airboat ride in Louisiana, been to the top of the arch in St. Louis and eaten BBQ in Memphis. These trips, along with many others, have given me a greater appreciation for our country and for my job which allows me to see and do such amazing things."

Travelers are also using resources to pay bills and take care of other responsibilities while on a business trip. Forty-eight percent of respondents say that they use downtime such as the period waiting for a delayed flight to take care of personal activities like making personal phone calls. Others say they use this time to enjoy spa treatments or work out while waiting in the airport.

"We are seeing more select-service hotels where travelers can cook their own meals, work out in the hotel gym and maintain an overall healthy lifestyle while traveling," said Greyber. "Business travel has become such an everyday part of people's jobs that the priority has shifted towards providing the services and amenities that allow them to maintain their daily routines."

In order to better meet individual travelers' preferences, ECT enables them to search specially negotiated Expedia Corporate Rates for over 2,300 hotel properties around the world based on location and amenities, such as workout facilities. Developed with the corporate traveler in mind, these rates offer not only specially negotiated rates as high as 25 percent, but often include corporate friendly amenities such as free high-speed or Wi-Fi access, breakfast and gym access. Some featured hotels are going as far as partnering with software companies to bring technology to the traveler, which can include web cams, printers and computer stations.

Overall, the results of the survey show that business travelers are finding ways to stay connected to their friends and family. Most road warriors believe they are able to manage work-life balance and take advantage of time away from work obligations to either relax and enjoy themselves or take care of personal matters like paying bills.

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