

CREATURE COMFORTS TOP OF BUSINESS TRAVELLERS WISH LIST

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SIGHTSEEING, TV AND A COMFORTABLE BED AS IMPORTANT FOR TODAY'S BUSINESS TRAVELLERS AS LAP-TOP CONNECTIVITY

Survey shows personal time increasing for business travellers as advancements in technology bring about productivity gains

London, 20th October 2005 - A survey out today from American Express Business Travel reveals that European business travellers are surprisingly productive on the move.

The Productive Traveller survey illustrates that advances in technology such as PDA'S, wireless access in airport lounges and hotels, and laptop connectivity, have made people feel as industrious as their office-based colleagues, but these technology improvements have also enabled travellers to enjoy more personal time as a result.

The average business traveller spends three working days a month travelling, equivalent to one month a year, according to the findings from a survey of 500 European business travellers in the UK, France and Germany, conducted during September 2005. The key findings were:

- 'Me time' as well as 'work time' - 75 per cent of European travelers ensure they get personal time when travelling on business. Spending time with colleagues and catching up on work were bottom of the 'after work' activities with phoning home the favourite pursuit (70%) followed by sightseeing (45%) and shopping (44%).
- Hotel TV - UK travellers spend more time in front of the TV (56%) than elsewhere across Europe whilst their German counterparts prefer shopping and the French favour sightseeing. Only 28% of those surveyed overall took the time for a workout after a day of sitting in meetings.
- Productivity Pitfalls - Transport delays are the main bane of business traveller's lives (61%), closely followed by poor mobile reception (48%). However, despite these frustrations, 67 per cent believe that they are still as productive on the move as they are in the office.
- More technology, less stress - A staggering 81 per cent agree that technology has increased their productivity when travelling over the past two years. This may explain why travellers report that there appears to be little difference in stress levels when working on the move compared to working in the office.
- 'Sleep to rule' - Destroying the myth that business travellers enjoy a champagne fuelled lifestyle, the survey shows that 72 per cent of travellers cite a 'comfortable bed' as the number one reason for choosing a hotel, rather than being tempted by hotel restaurants or spas. 62 per cent of travellers also cited decent IT access at a hotel as important to their decision-making process. However, UK travellers appear to be the party people of European business travel - they are more likely to choose a hotel on its bar / nightclub facilities than for its convenient hotel business centre.

“At first glance it looks like travellers are playing ‘truant’ from work by taking more time out to relax. But in reality travellers are just working in a different but more efficient way by using PDA’s and wireless connection points, for example, to get through emails whilst they are on the move. Furthermore, increasingly we are seeing travellers put more thought into planning their trip itineraries, in order to maximize their time away from the office, said Ron DiLeo, Senior Vice President, Head of Business Travel EMEA. “Advancements in technology have enabled us to be more flexible, with travellers taking full advantage to work smarter and take more personal time.”

The survey confirmed that business travel is continuing to rise and 38 per cent of those questioned reported that they believe their business travel will increase over the next 12 months.

Ron DiLeo added, “The challenge for travellers is to find new ways to improve productivity, while businesses need to recognise that this fundamental shift is taking place and allow their staff to be flexible in building an itinerary around their personal and work preferences.”

Differences in European Traveller Behaviour

UK travellers are the least productive of all European business travellers. Only 41 per cent of British respondents felt they were effective at making business travel a constructive part of their working day - compared to French (70%) and German (69%) travellers - and worryingly 10 percent felt they were completely ineffective. However, this could be linked to typical British modesty or indeed to ambivalence towards the impact of technology - 24% of Britons surveyed saying they were unsure whether advances in technology had resulted in them being more productive whilst working away.

German travellers seem far more hard working and conscientious than other survey respondents with 74 per cent spending more than a quarter of their travel time working. German travellers also like to spend personal time shopping (48%) and are more likely to socialise with their colleagues on business trips.

French travellers seem to be the least stressed of all Europeans, with 42 per cent reporting that they found working on the move less stressful than being in the office. They also enjoy sightseeing as their number one personal activity (61%). The French also seem to suffer the most productivity losses from transport delays with 72 per cent citing this as the biggest drain on their time.

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About the American Express Productive Traveller Survey

Loudhouse Research conducted the survey of 500 business travellers from the UK, France and Germany on behalf of American Express Business Travel during September 2005. Each respondent was required to have taken at least two business trips in the past 12 months.

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credit cards, Travellers Cheques, travel, financial planning and investment.

Contact: Atalia DaSilva
+44 207 976 4677/4604
Atalia.M.DaSilva@aexp.com

Deepa Bose
+44 207 976 4677
Deepa.B.Bose@aexp.com

Cherry Giles/Tom Flisher
+44 (0) 1753 672 755
cherry@octopuscomms.net