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THE BUSINESS TRAVEL ISSUE

Everything frequent business travelers and entrepreneurs need to know for conducting business around the globe



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Bring the Family

Taking loved ones on a business trip requires proper planning.

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Seeing the Sights:

Family time in Paris

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Being away from home on a business trip can be difficult for parents, but thanks to evolving views on work-life balance, bringing the family — including four-legged members — has become more common in most workplaces.

A recent survey of 4,000 employees from the United States, United Kingdom, Germany and Spain conducted by travel tech company TravelPerk revealed more than half of business travelers have brought family members on work trips. Many companies

have begun embracing the idea of allowing their employees to bring their families since it doesn't add to their payroll costs and is seen as a perk. Ninety percent of the corporate travel managers surveyed in a recent Global Business Travel Association survey said their employees were interested in combining business trips with recreational travel. Advisory firm Market Research predicts spending on blended business and leisure, or bleisure, trips will reach \$731 billion globally by 2032.

With some thoughtful planning and good communication, it's easier to incorporate quality family time into your professional commitments. Here are some best practices to keep in mind to make sure your next work trip goes smoothly.

COST SAVINGS AND FAMILY TIME

Bringing loved ones on business trips offers the chance for memorable family time, and it's also a great way to save money. If

your company already covers your flight and hotel room, this can be a budget-friendly mini-vacation for travel companions staying with you. Of course, if you wish to extend your trip, you'll be paying for additional hotel nights.

However, before booking your family's travel arrangements, consider the type of business trip you're taking: A more flexible itinerary with plenty of downtime makes more sense for family inclusion than a schedule packed with wall-to-wall meetings, team-building activities and networking dinners.

Determine if the destination offers enough for your family to do while you're working. Can your travel companions spend time at the hotel spa, pool, golf course or casino? Many conferences organize group spousal or family programs that include transportation to shopping areas, local events or nearby attractions. If you're attending a conference in Orlando, for example, your family can enjoy the theme parks and resort pool and then join you for dinner.

CHECK COMPANY POLICIES

While some business travelers prefer not to share their plans to bring a spouse or children on a trip, transparency always proves the better course. Check well in advance of your travel as to whether your company allows family on business trips. As bleisure travel becomes more common, many organizations have specific

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policies and processes in place, so speak to your supervisor or human resources department to find out which travel expenses they cover and how to file reports. Ask whether they can extend any group discounts to your family if you wish to extend your stay. Find out if you have to sign any waivers if they accompany you on off-site excursions and what kind of insurance coverage you are responsible for.

Consult your manager up front and be open about your desire to bring loved ones with you. Do your research in advance so you can share the steps you've taken to stay productive and professional while also spending time with your family during the trip. For example, discuss childcare arrangements you've looked into or any transportation and logistics you will organize on your own. Many companies support blended travel, and your boss is

Play Time:

A hotel with a nice pool, spa or other activities can keep the family entertained during work hours.

PHOTO: © JAYSHI DREAMSTIME.COM



Pet-Friendly:

It's easier than ever to bring your four-legged friends along.

PHOTO: © FLYDRAGONFLY | DREAMSTIME.COM

more likely to approve your request if you're proactive.

At many corporate events, guests may join the opening or closing gala as well as some offsite activities, so ask about those, too.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT LODGING

If you have flexibility to book your hotel, look for a family-friendly one near your work events that also lies close to local attractions, restaurants and other activities your loved ones will enjoy. Properties serving free breakfasts or ones with kitchenettes prove practical, especially if you're bringing small children, as are ones with family suites or adjoining rooms.

Some hotels offer babysitting services or kids' clubs that feature a wealth of age-appropriate activities to keep everyone busy. Look for lodging where there's a pool, play area or games room on site. Many hotels provide baby gear such as playpens, cribs and high chairs at no extra charge. Bring along your own foldable stroller and other essential items your children need.

TRANSPORTATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

In addition to rides to the airport or hotel, you'll need to book and pay for your family's plane fare and rental car or transportation to activities while you're working — and don't forget asking for a car seat if your child needs one.

One smart and affordable option for families visiting large cities including New York, Chicago, Orlando and San Diego is buying a CityPASS, which includes admission to multiple popular sites, museums and activities. Not only will you save money, but in many cases your family also won't have to stand in long lines.

PET-FRIENDLY PLANNING

Taking your pet with you on a business trip is paw-ssible as long as you do your homework. A small dog can travel with you on road trips and in a carry-on case on trains and on many domestic and international airlines.



There are many pet-friendly hotels and vacation rentals at all price points in most major cities around the world, so always ask in advance whether your dog or cat is welcome. Be prepared to pay a daily fee, which varies widely depending on the property.

When considering whether to bring your furry friend, ask the hotel or rental property manager about safe places to walk them in the area and whether there are any restrictions.



Separate Spaces:

It's important to find a quiet place to get work done (top), and keep track of all receipts to manage business and personal expenses (bottom).

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MANAGE YOUR EXPENSES

Because costs incurred by your spouse and children are usually not covered by your business travel allotment, it's important to keep track and separate expenses when blending work and personal trips. Whenever possible, stay in the same hotel as your co-workers and use the same rental car and

flight booking arrangements; just keep your family's costs on a separate invoice when booking, including any charges to your hotel room or activities and meals.

Keep all your receipts so you can provide a detailed expense report that corresponds to your company's requirements.

PROTECT WORK BOUNDARIES

Make sure your family understands you will be working on this trip and might not be able to join them for most of their activities. Setting clear expectations before you depart makes for a smoother voyage.

Having a separate space to work and stay focused is helpful, too. Most properties provide a business center, conference room or club floor where you can take business calls or join meetings without worrying about being disturbed by family members.

For many people, business trips offer the chance to travel to places the family might never vacation otherwise, so seize the opportunity. With advance planning and flexibility, your loved ones can join you so you can all make lasting memories together.