

The Business Traveler's Solution for Staying Productive

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These days, every provider of travel services, from hotels to airlines to car rental companies, is focused on providing the most progressive and technologically advanced services to its clientele.

Business traveler-oriented hotels – whether budget or luxury – are now offering as a matter of course free Wi-Fi in guest rooms and public areas (lobbies, restaurants, meeting spaces), desks with comfortable chairs, task lighting and ample (and easily reached) sockets for plugging in laptops, PDAs, and cell phone chargers.

Car rental companies offer satellite navigation systems, quick pickup and drop-off capability and, increasingly, the ability to check into a flight from the car rental return area.

Airlines, particularly international carriers, are getting much more savvy about providing products and services that allow passengers to get work done in-flight. Flying in Business Class on long-haul flights on these top carriers means more than seat-back entertainment systems and top-offs of Champagne, although road warriors don't seem to mind that one bit. On many of the progressive airlines, including British Airways and Singapore Airlines, it now means flat beds, with cushy pillows and down duvets; onboard Internet access; meals on demand, and even, in the case of Malaysia Airlines, a functional in-flight workstation.

Then there are the converged devices that help keep travelers in touch at home and office wirelessly; using all manners of gadgets and accessories. Following, we highlight some of our favorites.



How to Use Down Time at Airports

- **Catch up on e-mails.** Many airports have free Wi-Fi service in waiting areas. Failing that, find a Laptop Lane (www.wayport.net) business center for a private workstation.
- **Play golf.** Some major airport hotels have one or more 18-hole golf courses within a few minutes of the terminals. Check out Hyatt Bear Creek at D/FW Airport. It has two 18-hole courses and club rentals.
- **Do personal errands.** Get a shoeshine, haircut, or manicure. Buy stamps; mail the materials gathered on your business trip to your office instead of lugging everything to your next stop.
- **Nail down the details of your business trip.** Boston's Logan Airport has a concierge who functions the same way as your typical upscale hotel major domo. Other airports with concierges: New York's JFK and Atlanta's Hartsfield.

● *Need a quiet place to work while you're at the airport, and you don't belong to an airline's VIP club?* **Priority Pass**, best known for its hotel rewards, bills itself as the world's largest independent airport VIP lounge access program. For a modest annual fee, you'll get access to 450 lounges in 245 cities in 80 countries, regardless of which carrier you're flying or the class of your ticket. For info: www.prioritypass.com

● *Taking notes during a meeting is essential*, but a bit of a nuisance, since your scribbles have to be keyed into a computer if they're to be stored and/or shared. One solution is a **Hewlett-Packard Tablet PC**. Another is the digital pen. The **Logitech io2**, looks, weighs and feels like a premium pen; it has an ink cartridge so you can see what you're jotting. And while you write, a tiny camera with an optical sensor captures your work and registers the pen's movements, while a processor digitizes your words and images. After placing the pen in its cradle, all your information gets transferred to your PC or onto a network server. For info: www.hp.com, www.logitech.com

● *Traveling abroad sans laptop and don't want to rely on Internet cafes to access e-mail?* **Roadpost** offers a Blackberry rental program designed for the occasional international traveler. Roadpost Blackberry Mail allows users to access unlimited roaming data services from 70 countries and have e-mails forwarded and received through their regular e-mail address while traveling. (Travelers can also opt to use an

assigned e-mail address just for their trip.) The service includes unlimited data (meaning no megabyte charges.) For info: www.roadpost.com

● *Want to work out, but don't have the time or wherewithal to find a personal trainer in a city you don't know?* Earlier this year, **Hilton Hotels** launched the Personal Trainer Program, which gives guests access to more than 5,000 certified personal trainers employed by Bally Total Fitness for the length of their stay. In addition, each Hilton hotel is now equipped with "Travel Fit Kits," mobile in-room gyms developed by Bally's head of personal trainers. The kits can be checked out free of charge at the Front Desk, and include pairs of 3- and 5-pound dumbbells, resistant tubes for upper body conditioning, elastic bands for leg exercises, a yoga mat, and a booklet with suggestions for an in-room workout. If you'd rather stick to cardio only, many Hilton properties will also deliver a treadmill directly to the guest room for \$15.95 per day. For info: www.hilton.com

● *Stuck at an airport on a layover and in dire need of a snooze?* **MetroNaps**, which made a splash when it opened its first "power napping" center in the Empire State Building, has expanded to airports. Vancouver International Airport (YVR) has installed three of the company's cushy "pods," where the travel weary can drift off to the sounds of nature, delivered via Bose noise-cancellation headphones and then



be gently awakened by vibrations. For info: www.metronaps.com

● *Driving around in an unfamiliar city has just gotten a lot easier with the **Garmin nüvi***, a handy device that incorporates global positioning system (GPS) technology into a portable, user-friendly gadget about the size of a deck of cards. With it, you get detailed maps, turn-by-turn voice directions and automatic routing; there's also a text and spoken-language translator for nine languages, an international currency converter, a world clock, a built-in MP3 player and a JPEG picture viewer. For info: www.garmin.com

● *Tired of lugging a laptop around from meeting to meeting?* The new **Panasonic Toughbook-W2** weighs less than three pounds, and is built to handle the rough-and-tumble world (cramped luggage compartments, X-ray machines, careless bellhops) of the road warrior. The computer is also thin enough to fit easily into a briefcase – at its thickest point it's two inches, at its thinnest, only one. Besides its shock-absorbing capability, The Toughbook has a heroic battery, which can run for six hours between recharges. For info: www.panasonic.com

● *A picture is worth a lot more than 1,000 words* if it can seal a deal or make a trip to a trade show more productive than usual. That's why the **Veo Mobile Connect** Web camera is such an interesting concept for the business traveler. The device clips onto a laptop and plugs into a USB port, letting you record video or still images and send them back to the office. For info: www.veo.com

WEB RESOURCES

British Airways
<http://www.ba.com>

Hong Kong Tourism Board
<http://www.DiscoverHongKong.com/usa>

National Business Travel Association
<http://www.nbta.org>

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Discovering the Treasures of the Gateway to China

ONE OF THE GREATEST BENEFITS OF BUSINESS TRAVEL is that it gives road warriors the opportunity to see the world. For most travelers, that's the single most gratifying aspect of life on the road. That's why the majority of trips – 60 percent, according to the YPB&R/Yankelovich Partners National Business Travel Monitor – combine some aspect of leisure travel with a business trip, either by adding a few days (or even a free afternoon) onto a trip, and/or by bringing a companion along.



For travelers to the Pacific Rim, it turns out they're not only adding time to a **Hong Kong** visit, they're visiting Hong Kong whenever they're in Asia for business. There are many reasons why. Hong Kong is the window to Asia and the gateway to China. English is spoken fluently here, along with Cantonese. And while it is a big, modern city, Hong Kong appeals to these travelers for its intriguing fusion of East and West.

Some of the world's best hotels are here too, not to mention world-class shopping (from 'ultraluxe' department stores to colorful local markets), superb dining, and festivals and other special events that draw visitors from all over the world. In sum, Hong Kong is a culturally rich, ever changing city with experiences that will be enriching for both the first time visitor and the very well traveled.

For example, the Culture & Heritage Festival (April 28–May 5) celebrates the Bun Festival and the Birthday of Lord Buddha. Enormous bamboo towers studded with edible white Chinese buns, are part of a week-long celebration, whose grand finale is marked by a colorful street procession of costumed children on stilts. The Birthday of Lord Buddha is a celebration of great reverence in Hong Kong's Buddhist temples and monasteries; Po Lin Monastery on Lantau Island, home to the world's largest, seated, outdoor bronze Buddha, will be the hub of the activity.

Next year is particularly apt for a visit to Hong Kong. 2006 has been designated "Discover Hong Kong Year." Twenty-two hotels and a new convention facility have opened this year, and many new attractions and activities have been planned throughout Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, the New Territories and the more than 200 islands that make up the destination.

To find out more, visit www.DiscoverHongKong.com/usa and/or download the *Leisure Guide for Business Travelers* to your PDA.

- *Want to check into your international flight before you leave for the airport?*

British Airways is the first global airline to offer online boarding pass capability on nonstop international flights from all of its U.S. gateways. That means London-bound passengers can choose their own seat and print their own boarding passes when checking in online – beginning 23 hours before departure.

The Online Boarding Pass, with a passenger-specific barcode, enables flyers with hand baggage to bypass conventional check-in desks and go straight to the security area. Passengers with luggage to check also print their boarding passes online and then use the British Airways Fast Bag Drop facility near the airline's check-in counters to check their bags.

The service is the latest of several British Airways has introduced to simplify the planning and booking process. At the airline's Web site, the popular 'manage my booking' section has been revamped to offer customized, relevant travel advice to passengers. The 'checklist' option, for example, enables customers to view a handy point-by-point list of tasks that will

help ensure their trip goes smoothly. With a few clicks, they'll find the quickest and easiest way to check-in for their flight; passport and visa information, including whether they're required to enter Advance Passenger Information before they travel. There also are city guides covering the destination being visited. For information: www.ba.com

- *Need to work on your flight?* **Bose QuietComfort® 2** noise-cancellation headphones will block out the drone of jet engines and a gabby seatmate; they also enhance the audio quality of an iPod even

when ambient noise isn't an issue. For info: www.bose.com

- *Need an office or a meeting room when you're far away from your own?* **Regus**, the world's largest provider of temporary office space, meeting rooms and videoconferencing studios, offers facilities in roughly 400 prime locations in 220 cities in 50 countries, in central business districts, office parks, or locations adjacent to airports. Every Regus center provides meeting rooms supported by high-tech audiovisual equipment, catering, telephones, and high-speed Internet access. For info: www.regus.com

Travel Managers Drive Value with Online Booking

In a recent survey of travel managers by the **National Business Travel Association (NBTA)**, 70 percent of respondents said that their companies use online booking tools, and another 24 percent indicated plans to implement online booking in the future.

These tools provide an interface similar to what many business travelers experience when they purchase personal travel online, and they give the company's travel department a mechanism for driving additional value. With online booking, travel managers can reduce transaction fees, and cut out-of-policy spending by loading the company's travel policies and setting up automated procedures for pre-trip approval.

For more corporate travel management information, visit www.nbta.org.