

Traveling Green on Business

The Road to Earth-Friendly Travel

EARLY LAST YEAR, BRITAIN'S PRINCE CHARLES WAS ROUNDLY

criticized in the media for generating 20 tons of carbon dioxide when he and his staff flew from London to Philadelphia – ironically, to accept an environmental award from Al Gore. So when he agreed to speak at an energy conference in Abu Dhabi last December, Charles delivered the speech in London, beaming a three-dimensional holographic image of himself to the meeting.

“I don’t think most U.S. business travelers are aware of the environmental impact of their trips,” said Brian Mullis, president of Boulder-based **Sustainable Travel International** (www.sustainabletravelinternational.org), a non-profit dedicated to green travel. “If they were, more companies would take steps to limit their impacts, reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, and travel more thoughtfully.”

The best way to reduce environmental impact is to travel less. One new study estimates 40 percent of U.S. workers who report to an office could feasibly work at home – telecommuting that would reduce greenhouse gases by 107 million tons a year and cut oil imports by 625 million barrels annually.

If desktop teleconferencing isn’t good enough, **Marriott** has a new face-to-face option, minus the travel: The hotel giant and **Hewlett Packard** are introducing “Halo Telepresence” rooms at Marriotts in major business cities. “Participants see each other in life-size images projected on high-resolution displays and can communicate with no perceived delays, regardless of how far apart they may be,” an HP spokesman said.



Orbitz.com has a sub-site for booking eco-friendly travel (www.eco.orbitz.com); one part of it locates hotels bearing the EPA’s Energy Star designation. **Reardon Commerce** (www.reardoncommerce.com) has a new Personal Assistant device for corporate travelers that includes a carbon calculator for air travel, and helps you book a web or audio conference instead; it also guides users to car service providers that have hybrid vehicles.

SETTING A GREEN EXAMPLE

In the U.S., the **National Business Travel Association** (NBTA) is starting to set a “green” example for its corporate members – for example, at its conferences, NBTA is reducing the amount of printed material, and using recycled paper and environmentally friendly inks; the organization requires that future convention venues be registered with the U.S. Green Buildings Council.

“NBTA is going to do all that we can at our meetings to minimize negative environmental effects and encourage our members and partners to do the same,” said President Kevin Maguire. Visit: www.nbta.org

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Adding Products and Services to Help Customers Save on Fuel

Dollar Rent A Car “is seeing more sensitivity from customers for more fuel-efficient vehicles,” says spokesman Chris Payne, and would like to add more hybrids to its fleet, but “demand for hybrid vehicles in the consumer marketplace is outstripping supply,” he notes. As more hybrids become available, Dollar Rent A Car will add to its fleet, he said. “Fortunately, 75 percent of our fleet gets 26 mpg or better, so the good news is we’re doing a pretty good job of meeting that sensitivity.” Some models in Dollar Rent A Car’s world-wide fleet exceed that mileage amount,

like the Toyota Yaris and Corolla, Honda Civic and Pontiac Vibe.

Meanwhile, Dollar continues to add products and services that help customers save fuel by not driving in circles or sitting in tollbooth lines or traffic. At 90 U.S. locations, Dollar Rent A Car offers the Garmin nuvi 660 GPS unit as an option, providing driving directions and traffic advisories. In Texas, Florida and Colorado, customers can purchase a pre-paid toll pass that lets them zoom through the gates.



Got a client or customer to impress? In some Florida, California and Las Vegas locations, Dollar’s Style Series includes cars like the BMW Three and Five series, Mercedes Benz models, and even the Jaguar S Type. Visit: www.dollar.com

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