



Current Events

Road delays can cause business-travel productivity loss

A lot of attention is placed on the delays travelers encounter at airports – long security lines, delayed flights, planes stalled on the tarmac, and so on. However, airports aren't the only culprit when it comes to lost traveler productivity. According to a study recently released by car rental company Avis, about 90 minutes of a three-day business trip is wasted in rental vehicles – by getting stuck in traffic, getting lost, or waiting in line to pay road tolls.

Not only is this wasted time a source of frustration, it also represents a productivity loss for busy travelers, and ultimately their employers. Car rental companies are responding to this problem by offering various add-on services to minimize these problems, such as electronic toll-collection devices and in-car navigation systems.

Travelers can also do several things to minimize time spent in their rental car:

- While a traveler may not know every destination they'll need to visit during a business trip, they should bring along printed driving directions to the locations they know they'll need to visit, as well as to some likely destinations, such as office supply or printing stores and coffee shops. Websites like Mapquest and Google Maps allow travelers to print directions to their destination, and even reverse directions for their return trip. Travelers with palm devices may wish to email themselves directions so they can access the information electronically while on the road.
 - More than 3,000 respondents to Avis' survey noted that about 12 minutes per trip is wasted waiting to pay tolls. Sites like Mapquest usually indicate toll roads in their driving directions, allowing travelers to plan ahead by adding extra time to their commute.
- Travelers should consider rush-hour traffic when booking flights and arranging on-site meetings. The busiest time on city roads is usually from about 6 – 9 a.m. and again from 3 - 7 p.m. Using roads before or after these times should minimize or prevent time spent stuck in traffic.
 - Additionally, if allowed within the parameters of their company's travel policy, travelers should stay in hotels as close as possible either to the airport or to the main location of their meetings, depending on the situation.
 - Once at the hotel, the concierge can help travelers leave their cars parked by providing recommendations for restaurants or other needed businesses within walking distance of the property.

Sources: Avis, USA TODAY

Travel Tips

Traveling to Japan

Editor's note: Global business, and subsequently, global business travel, continues to expand rapidly. In response, CWT Traveler will provide to readers each month in 2007 insights and tips on traveling from North America to other countries around the world. This month's installment focuses on Japan.

In business:

- As an international visitor, travelers may be asked many questions upon arrival, including information about their job, title, age, and responsibilities. This information will be used to determine how to refer to the traveler, using the many Japanese forms of address and honorifics.
- During negotiations, start with agreed-upon points or topics, and build upon those. Being positive and persuasive in presentations will yield better results than a confrontational approach.
- Age is equated with rank and respect. Younger members of a team generally will be expected to remain quiet and defer to their seniors during meetings.
- Western travelers will often be greeted with a handshake, as the Japanese are aware of Western habits. However, the bow is the traditional Japanese greeting. If this greeting is used, travelers should:
 - Bow to the same level as the greeter if they are a peer, as the depth of the bow indicates the status of your relationship.
 - Quickly lower their eyes and keep their palms flat against their thighs.
- Punctuality is extremely important in Japan; tardiness is considered rude.
- If an interpreter seems to be taking a lot of time to translate statements into Japanese, it likely is because he or she is using lengthy forms of respect.
- When working with Japanese citizens who know English, speak slowly, pause often, and avoid colloquialisms.
- Entertainment during business trips will take place after business hours, most likely outside the home. When invited to a gathering, the host will likely pay for any associated costs. Allow the host to handle ordering the meal, and be appreciative.
- While entertaining is generally used for building friendships, it is acceptable to discuss business as well.

Good to know:

- Japanese is the official language. Three different forms are used: kanji, which represents blocks of meaning; katakana, which is used for foreign names and words; and hiragana, which expresses the grammatical relationships between words.
- Being invited into a Japanese home is a great honor. To show respect, travelers should verbally express their appreciation and remove their shoes at the door.
- The Japanese are smaller in stature than most North Americans. Because of this, travelers may find many items, from shower stalls to train seats, difficult to use because of their size.

Source: "Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands: The Bestselling Guide to Doing Business in More Than 60 Countries," by Terri Morrison and Wayne A. Conaway. Published by Adams Media of Avon, Massachusetts.

Tips for a more comfortable flight

A number of factors, including cabin pressure, dry air, and lack of personal space, can make air travel potentially uncomfortable for passengers. While some of these elements are simply facts of life on a plane and are out of a traveler's control, there are a few things travelers should keep in mind to make air travel more pleasant.

Cabin Pressure

Studies have shown that the air pressure inside the plane's cabin can contribute to a general feeling of discomfort. Most airplanes are pressurized to a level equivalent to 6,000 to 8,000 feet above sea level. This is an altitude that lowers the oxygen saturation in the blood and may trigger symptoms similar to mountain, or altitude, sickness. Passengers without heart, blood or lung diseases can usually adjust to this change without noticing it, but bear in mind that low oxygen in combination with alcohol, inactivity and/or sleep can make a person feel dizzy or faint. Avoiding alcohol and doing arm and leg exercises before standing up can help combat these side effects. Chewing gum or swallowing during takeoff and landing can also reduce ear discomfort.

Dry air

The relatively low level of humidity of cabin air can be another source of discomfort. Dehydration, dry skin, and dry eyes are all symptoms of a passenger reacting to dry air. Drinking water, as well as avoiding alcohol and caffeine, can help with dehydration. Using skin moisturizers and wearing glasses instead of contact lenses should also help relieve dry skin and eyes. Dry air can also aggravate allergies or asthma, so travelers with those conditions should take necessary precautions.

Personal space

For travelers flying in coach class, tight quarters are often a challenge. Especially for taller passengers, it may not be possible to stretch out much in the seat. One potential side effect that can occur in planes (or trains, cars, buses or other tight spaces), is blood clots in the legs, known as deep vein thrombosis. To avoid this risk, travelers should move about the cabin periodically during times the captain has the seatbelt sign turned off. If possible, travelers should also try not to stow bags under the seat in front of them, in order to free up more leg room for stretching.

General tips for a more pleasant flight also include getting enough rest before takeoff, avoiding overeating, and consulting with a doctor about any health concerns that could be aggravated by air travel.

Sources: Aerospace Medical Association, HealthDay News, Boeing.com

Supplier News

Continental, Jet Blue top recent J.D. Power ranking More than 9,000 travelers recently awarded Continental Airlines and JetBlue why reversed? top satisfaction rankings in the traditional network carrier and low-cost carrier categories, respectively, as part of the J.D. Power and Associates 2007 North America Airline Satisfaction Study. Airlines were judged by passengers on the following criteria:

- cost and fees
- quality of flight crew (e.g. courtesy, appearance)
- in-flight services (e.g. availability of food, beverages)
- ease of check-in
- timeliness of boarding
- deplaning and baggage retrieval
- aircraft features (e.g. leg room)
- quality of flight reservation services

Respondents, who were required to have flown on a major North American airline at least once between January and May 2007, indicated that the top-ranked airlines had mastered both process-related factors, such as check-in and accuracy of baggage delivery, as well as people-related factors, such as aircraft amenities and service from airport staff and flight attendants.

Sources: CNN Money, J.D. Power and Associates

Virgin America Airlines begins operations in the United States

Virgin America Airlines completed its inaugural flights on August 8, arriving in the airline's hub, San Francisco, from Los Angeles International and New York's John F. Kennedy International airports.

The new airline began selling tickets in July after receiving its operating license from the Federal Aviation Administration. Tickets are currently being sold from San Francisco to Los Angeles International and New York's JFK. Over the next three months, Virgin America expects to add routes to Washington, D.C.'s Dulles International and Las Vegas' McCarran International. Within the next year, Virgin America plans to be flying to 10 cities or more.

The airline has been promoting features such as "mood lighting," black leather seats in the main cabin, 110v power outlets at each seat, and other in-flight entertainment options. A first-class cabin is also available with additional amenities.

Sources: Reuters, San Francisco Business Times, The Washington Post, Virgin America

Regional

Across the country, airports expand environmentally-friendly practices

As various segments of the travel industry have made efforts to reduce their carbon footprint, so too have airports across the United States. New rules and technology, as well as government subsidies, have paved the way for this progress.

As previously reported in *CWT Traveler*, hybrid car drivers are given preferential parking at Boston Logan International, and hybrid taxis may cut to the front of the wait line, eliminating the usual 30- to 60-minute wait times.

Additionally, airports in San Jose, San Francisco, Milwaukee, and New York have purchased vehicles that run on alternative fuels. At San Francisco International, vendors such as hotel and parking companies are charged lower fees if they use vehicles that run on alternative fuels. Nearby Oakland International Airport requires that taxis' and other ground transportation companies' fleets run 50 percent on alternative fuel.

Sources: USA TODAY, The Boston Globe, ATA SmartBrief

International

RFID luggage tags to debut at Heathrow

Next month, London's Heathrow International Airport will become the largest European airport to test the use of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to track luggage as it moves throughout the airport. Depending on the specific technology, some tags may be readable from several feet away.

RFID tags will be part of the labels attached to each piece of luggage at check in. While this technology is more expensive than printed labels, savings will likely be achieved from a more streamlined process and fewer lost bags, which should also improve customer satisfaction. The International Air Transport Association estimates RFID technology could save airlines more than \$800 million USD each year.

Source: The Register (U.K.)

Virgin Blue plans to launch new, long-haul carrier

As travel from United States to the Asia Pacific region has grown rapidly in recent years, one airline has identified a way to take advantage of this trend by creating an airline to specifically serve the U.S.-Asia Pac market.

Australian airline Virgin Blue has announced it plans to launch a new, long-haul airline called V Australia. It hopes to run 10 flights weekly between Australia and locations in the United States by late 2008.

Virgin Blue plans to invest \$62 million USD in V Australia, including \$2 billion on six Boeing planes. The new carrier recently received approval from Australia's International Air Services Commission to fly the routes and is currently waiting for similar regulatory approval from the U.S. government.

Sources: Reuters, New Zealand Herald

Government/Legislation

US, EU reach agreement on airline passenger data

On July 26 the United States and the European Union reached a new agreement regarding the sharing of Passenger Name Record (PNR) data for individuals traveling from Europe to the United States. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the purpose for collecting this data is to detect "potentially dangerous transatlantic travelers" and "to prevent and combat terrorism and transnational crime."

The current agreement replaces an interim agreement that had been in place since 2004. The previous agreement had allowed for the sharing of more PNR data fields – 34 in total, as compared to the new agreement's 19 fields.

The 19 pieces of passenger data that will be collected are:

1. PNR record locator code
2. Date of reservation/issue of ticket
3. Date(s) of intended travel
4. Name(s)
5. Available frequent flier and benefit information (i.e., free tickets, upgrades, etc.)
6. Other names on PNR, including number of travelers on PNR
7. All available contact information (including originator information)
8. All available payment/billing information (not including other transaction details linked to a credit card or account and not connected to the travel transaction)
9. Travel itinerary for specific PNR
10. Travel agency/travel agent
11. Code share information
12. Split/divided information
13. Travel status of passenger (including confirmations and check-in status)
14. Ticketing information, including ticket number, one way tickets and Automated Ticket Fare Quote
15. All baggage information
16. Seat information, including seat number
17. General remarks including other service-related information (OSI), special services information (SSI), and special service request (SSR) information
18. Any collected advance passenger information system (APIS) information
19. All historical changes to the PNR listed in numbers 1 through 18

In addition to the requirement of fewer data items, another significant difference between the previous agreement and the new one is the amount of time that the collected data can be stored.

- **Under the previous agreement**, data was stored for 3.5 years. If the PNR data had not been manually accessed during that time span, it was then destroyed. If the data had been manually accessed during that time, then it was transferred to a deleted record file, where it would remain for eight years before being destroyed.
- **Under the new agreement**, data will be stored for seven years in an active database, after which it will be moved to dormant, non-operational status for an additional eight years. While the DHS expects that EU PNR data will be deleted at the end of this period, this topic is still under discussion.

DHS has indicated that under normal circumstances it will receive the PNR data 72 hours prior to the flight departure time, and then will receive subsequent updates to ensure data accuracy. There may be exceptions in the event of a specific threat, when data would be gathered prior to the 72-hour mark.

While DHS has stated it will filter and delete any sensitive EU passenger data unless it is accessed for an exceptional case, this remains an area of concern for some privacy advocates, who worry that the PNR data could end up including sensitive information about passengers. Provisions of The Privacy Act of 1974 apply to PNR data stored for individuals regardless of their nationality or country of residence. Travelers who believe their data includes inaccurate information can seek corrections or redress by visiting: <http://www.dhs.gov/trip>.

Sources: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Dow Jones Newswires, The Washington Post

Cigarette lighter ban no longer enforced; liquid ban still in effect

Beginning August 4, travelers were allowed to carry on to planes butane lighters, such as Bics, and refillable lighters, such as Zippos. These items previously had been confiscated at security check points, but Federal Aviation Administration authorities recently decided to change the rules, given that the collection of these items slowed down security checkpoint lines and has cost a significant amount of money—about 22,000 lighters were being collected nationwide each day, costing approximately \$4 million USD a year for disposal.

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officials say lifting the ban allows security officers to concentrate on looking for more sensitive, potentially harmful objects. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security supported lifting the ban, so long as it could be determined that lighters were not a significant threat to civil aviation security. The ban on small scissors and other tools was lifted in late 2005 for similar reasons. Conversely, matches have never been disallowed.

In related news, the ban imposed last summer, which restricts carrying onto a plane more than three ounces of liquids, gels, or aerosols, will continue to remain in effect for the foreseeable future. Longer term, TSA officials suggest this ban may be eased with the eventual deployment of high-tech X-ray machines that would produce 3-D images of luggage contents, rather than the current two-dimensional view.

As a reminder, all liquids, gels, and aerosols must be in 3-ounce or smaller containers and be placed in a single, quart-size zip-top, clear plastic bag, which must be placed in a bin or on a conveyer belt for security screening.

Sources: New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Transportation Security Administration

Technology

In-flight cell phone use gets go-ahead in Europe

The European Aviation Safety Authority recently announced it will allow the deployment of Global System for Mobile Technology (GSM) on airplanes, for the first time giving European passengers the ability to use their cell phones and palm devices in flight.

The technology, provided by OnAir, is expected to cost \$0.50 USD for text messages, while international roaming charges will apply for all calls made. Airlines will begin testing the technology in several months, beginning with Air France-KLM flights on short-haul aircraft. TAP, bmi and Ryanair are also planning to test this new functionality.

In-flight cell phone use has sparked heated debate throughout the travel industry over the past several years, and it remains to be seen how the practice resonates with European travelers after it is implemented. As previously reported in *CWT Traveler*, the U.S. Federal Communications Commission and Federal Aviation Administration have thus far declined to allow cell phone use on flights, though the issue will likely be revisited in the future.

Source: Market Watch

Industry Trends/Innovations

Art is a growing part of airport offerings

It's no surprise that travelers are required to arrive earlier at airports, often demanding additional food and dining options while waiting for flights. So, it may not come as much of a surprise that airports are taking passenger preoccupation to a new level by hanging art, or dedicating whole areas of space to art, at many airports throughout North America.

Art has found its way into airports large and small – from regional airport Asheville Regional in North Carolina, which displays 47 local-artist designed sculptures and paintings, to the world's busiest airport, Atlanta's Jackson-Hartsfield International, which offers busy travelers more than 300 pieces to admire throughout the building.

Many airports take a page out of Asheville Regional's book by featuring, or even restricting collections to, local or regional artists. Experts say this gives visitors a sense of the place they're visiting before they've even left the airport, and adds a calming element to bustling, hectic terminals.

Sources: USA TODAY, ATA SmartBrief