

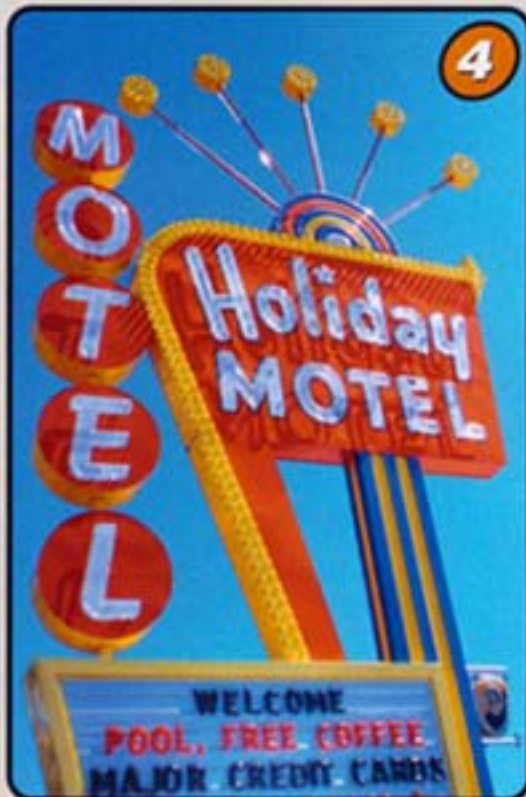
# How to Survive Business Travel

FOURTEEN TIPS FOR MAKING BUSINESS TRAVEL MORE ENJOYABLE

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by Susan E. Davis

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**T**ravel agent Paul Metselaar once had a client with what he calls a "doozy of a trial-exhibit problem." The lawyer lived on one coast, and the case involved a pig—"it was some kind of ag issue," says Metselaar, who confesses to being unable to remember the details of the case. What he does remember is that when the trial started on the opposite coast, the pig was just a piglet that could be transported, via airplane, in a standard dog carrier. But then the trial went on and on, as trials tend to do. And this little piggie got bigger and bigger, as pigs tend to do, until eventually it became a full-fledged sow, which created a full-fledged problem for the litigator in question.

"You can't put a sow in a dog carrier," Metselaar explains. "But we still had to get her to the trial." So Metselaar, a former New York litigator who now owns Lawyers' Travel Service, which (not surprisingly) arranges specialized travel just for lawyers, assigned his agency's Special Services Desk concierge to figure out a solution. End result? "Someone cobbled together four giant dog crates to make a carrier big enough to transport the sow back and forth across the country," Metselaar says. "That worked."

Now, you may not have livestock to ship to and from trials, but if you're on the road more often than you want to be, you may be dealing with other challenges—including the sense that modern airplanes are more like cattle cars than luxury jets. So we surveyed a number of high-mileage attorneys about the perils and pleasures of business travel these days. Here are their best tips for making your trips a little more, well, humane.

### **1** STAY FLEXIBLE

According to Metselaar, the average attorney changes travel plans six times during each trip. "Attorneys are subject to the vagaries of clients, courts, and other attorneys," he says. "Moreover, 90 percent of their flights are booked just 48 hours in advance. Nonrefundable flights don't work."

Gloria Allred, a partner in Los Angeles-based Allred, Maroko & Goldberg, agrees. "I need travel plans that can be canceled and rearranged at the last minute," she says. "I always need to be able to make alternative arrangements. Flexibility is key."

### **2** TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Joan Haratani, a civil litigator with Morgan Lewis in San Francisco who

travels more than 100,000 miles a year, insists on good beds at her hotels. And she says she prefers the Kitano Hotel in New York City above all others, because "they have enormous vats of hot water available all the time and some great green teas. Little things like that make a difference."

Craig Barbarosh, a 75,000-to-100,000-miles-a-year traveler and cochair of Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman's national insolvency practice in Costa Mesa, says he'll stay only in hotels that have gyms. "I try to exercise once a day when I'm traveling," he says. "It's the only way I can handle the physical stress."

Both Haratani and Barbarosh say they drink massive quantities of water to avoid getting dehydrated during their flights.

### **3** LOOK FOR BUSINESS AMENITIES ...

Many high-end hotels now offer attorneys a whole range of business services, including high-speed Internet access, conference rooms, wireless services, and even "war rooms" where attorneys can conduct mock trials, secretaries can work, and there's room for copiers, fax machines, and printers.

"Attorneys are the Number One most lucrative clients for hotels," Metselaar says. "In fact, the rooms are just loss leaders at this point. The hotels really make their money off ancillary business services, like telephone calls, client entertaining, and meals."

### **4** OR GO FOR PRICE

Morgan Chu, a partner with Irell & Manella in Los Angeles and one of the *National Law Journal's* "Top Ten Trial Lawyers," travels at least once—if not twice—a week, to points ranging from Tyler, Texas, to Manhattan. He says he's grown to appreciate inexpensive hotel chains, like the Hampton Inn.

"They're clean, and they have everything I need," he says cheerfully, "like a bathroom and a bed. Plus, they have free Internet service and free breakfast. I can't figure out why a \$350-a-night hotel would want to charge you \$22 for Internet service and \$20 for a pot of room service coffee. I mean, aren't you paying enough already? And certainly the clients appreciate it."

### **5** FLY OFF-PEAK HOURS ...

If you've flown a red-eye lately, it may be hard to imagine that there's such a thing as "off peak" in the airline industry. But Robert Darwell, who heads Sheppard Mullin's transactional entertainment, media, and communications practice group in Los Angeles, swears it's the only way to fly.

"I usually fly the flights that others tend to avoid, like the red-eyes and the

early-morning flights back to L.A.," says Darwell, who regularly travels to New York, London, Paris, Seoul, and Buenos Aires. "That way there's a good chance of being upgraded, and I'm able to sleep on the plane."

## **6** OR AVOID OFF-PEAK FLIGHTS

Allred says she eschews both red-eyes and the typical fly-to-New York-on-Monday-fly-home-on-Tuesday sprints many attorneys subject themselves to. "I don't like the wear and tear," she says bluntly. "It's too hard on my system. I like to have a little time cushion around my work. If I'm exhausted, I don't do my best work. I need a clear mind to be able to think and strategize."

## **7** EXPECT THE WORST ...

For Chu, the trick to contented travel is to expect nothing but nightmares. "Just start out by assuming there will be an awful, long line at security," he suggests. "Assume your flight will be canceled, and then the flight after that will be delayed. Assume you'll be stuck on the tarmac for hours, with no air-conditioning, and assume that a young child will sit behind you and fool with his food tray the whole flight. If you don't experience all of those inconveniences, you'll be incredibly pleasantly surprised."

## **8** OR ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

Haratani uses what she calls a "Jedi mind game" to get through the rigors of constant travel. "I actually look forward to the trips," she says. "I see it as five or six hours of uninterrupted time in a little airplane-seat office pod. It's a golden opportunity to be uninterrupted for hours at a time."

## **9** TRAVEL TO FUN PLACES

Allred, who says her favorite place to be is her home overlooking the ocean in Pacific Palisades, regularly

travels to the East Coast and San Francisco for business. This year she also traveled to Chicago, Indianapolis, Dallas, and other cities on a publicity tour for her recent book. But where she really likes to go, she says, is where her daughter, Lisa Bloom, and two grandchildren live: New York City. (Bloom is an anchor on CourtTV.) "I try to arrange a lot of trips up that way," she says, laughing.

Darwell believes that attorneys should figure out a way to get clients in fun cities. "During college I studied at the Sorbonne, and during law school I worked at the French Embassy," he says, "so I'm a Francophile. I always wanted a job that took me to France a couple of times a year, so I spent a couple of years learning the French media business and targeting clients there. I think too many people let their practice control their lives—I built my practice to match my interests."

## **10** OUTSOURCE IF NECESSARY

Many attorneys make their own flight arrangements or have their assistants do it. ("My assistant is a lot nicer than I am, so I'm always treated very well upon arrival," Darwell jokes.) But law firms—both large and small—are turning to travel-management companies to book their arrangements. Lawyers' Travel Service agents, for instance, can get airfare discounts for attorneys and know the ins and outs of travel for lawyers, including how to incorporate client billing numbers on itineraries, arrange multiple schedules for recruitment trips, and, yes, provide pig-savvy concierge services. And it can save assistants many hours staring at online booking services like Expedia or Travel.com.

## **11** KEEP THE HOME FIRES BURNING

(and choose a patient spouse)

It's easy to stay in touch with the home office—what with PDAs, high-

speed Internet connections, and law firm networks. Staying in touch with your real home (remember that?) can be much harder. Chu jokes that he's away so much that every time he returns home, he asks a friend to reintroduce him to his wife. More seriously, he concedes that neither he nor his wife loves his schedule, but they've grown used to it. "It comes with the territory," he says.

Barbarosh, who has two young children and whose clients are almost entirely in New York, says he tries never to be away from home for more than two nights in a row. "My family is the most important thing to me," he says bluntly. "So I'll often fly to the East Coast one day and return the next."

And Lynn Hermle, a partner with Orrick in Silicon Valley who travels a lot but doesn't really like to leave her family behind, often tries to bring them along on business trips. Darwell does the same if he's going to be gone for more than a week. (In fact, when he first responded to our emails, he was watching his children take horseback-riding lessons, down in Argentina.)

## **12** DO WHAT YOU GOTTA DO

Some attorneys never, ever check baggage (and, now, to avoid checking their "liquids," they are even FedExing their toiletries to their hotels in advance). Some always take the time for a massage at trip's end. Others choose international flights based on what movies will be playing. Some attorneys even go so far as to charter private jets to get to out-of-the-way destinations or for the sheer flexibility of the scheduling—despite the enormous cost.

Darwell took matters further: He bought apartments in both New York and Buenos Aires and had his interior designer wife furnish them. "That's what's made the most difference for me in traveling to New York

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