

10 Ways to Reduce Your Travel Costs



When the pressure is on to reduce costs, companies often reduce their travel budgets first.

When times are tough, however, maintaining good customer relationships becomes even more important, especially for the long term. So keep travelling, but keep it simple.

Here are our top ten ways you can save money while keeping your customers happy:

1. Book online.

If your travel plans are not too complicated, book the trip yourself using your company's online corporate tool as the fewer people involved, the bigger the cost savings. There's also an environmental payback for booking online. As almost everything is electronic including tickets, itineraries and car vouchers, there's a lot less wasted paper. Print only the items that you require.

2. Currency exchange tips.

Currency commission rates are fairly consistent from vendor to vendor, but the exchange rates may differ so watch this part of the transaction carefully. Of course, the exchange rate may change during your trip so, to protect yourself in the event of this happening, you can take out a "buy back" guarantee to make sure you don't lose value when you return. If you do this, be sure to check the "valid until" date – it's usually one month!

3. Review your class of travel policy.

Be aware of the differences in the various fare class policies. The range of fare options generally increase the further back on the plane you go so, by opting for a more cost effective but slightly less convenient option, you will be able to maintain your schedule of client visits as well as travel more often than your previous class policy – keeping your client contacts healthy and within budget!

4. Be aware of baggage allowance.

Check what are you allowed to take aboard the aircraft. Is it pieces or KGs? Carriers have different allowances for checked and carry-on luggage as well as for different classes so before you travel, find out from the airline your allowance to prevent being charged for excess baggage.

5. Be sure the trip is necessary before booking.

Booking costs and especially cancellation fees can be significant, so ask yourself 'Do I really need to make this trip?' before you book. Booking in advance can save costs too.

6. Stay in a nearby hotel.

There are several benefits to staying in a hotel in close proximity to where you're doing business.

- You can sleep in longer!
- You may be able to take advantage of the corporate rate of the company you are visiting.
- If you have a regular corporate account, you might be upgraded at no extra charge.
- You have the option to invite the client to break fast rather than an expensive dinner!
- You could walk to the office or if the hotel provides it, take advantage of the free local business park shuttle service.

7. Meals.

Do you really need 3 courses? Unless you're entertaining, do what you would do at home. Also, check the menu for service charges as some bills don't itemize them. Leave a tip only if a service charge is not included.

Before eating at a restaurant, review the room service menu as it is often cheaper to eat in your room. Discourage room service for other incidental items as these will incur an additional charge.

Finally, whether it's a meal on the plane or a complimentary breakfast at the hotel, take advantage of these 'free' meals. If you've been invited out as a business guest, why not go!

8. Hire a car.

Hiring a car locally may be more cost effective than you think, especially if you're staying for a long period of time and your hotel offers free parking. Remember to optimise the available car deals.

9. Hotel – check all the rates available to you before you book.

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10. T&E daily allowances. One for the Corporate Travel Manager to consider!

The ultimate way to manage costs is via a daily allowance that gives you precise control of what is spent. Anything over the allowance is the employee's responsibility.

