

Flying visits on the up: business travellers spend longer in the air than at their destination

11 April 2014

You're hired! 270,000 business travellers have made a 20+hour round trip to hire someone

New research conducted by Travelport, the leading e-commerce provider for the global travel industry, has revealed that business travellers frequently spend longer in the air than on the ground when it comes to travelling for business. This reveals a new trend for 'flying visits', where business people are willing to go the distance to seal that all-important deal, showing the significance they now place on face-to-face meetings. In the last 12 months over one million business travellers made a 20+hour round trip to far flung destinations such as China or Japan but spent less than 12 hours in the country.

Travellers flying to the top three most popular long distance destinations for business spent a whopping £3.4bn¹ on flights last year but spent less than half a day in those countries.

Where are business travellers heading?

The US (13%), Hong Kong (9%) and China (6%) top the list of long distance destinations people are travelling to for the shortest time, with 50% of business people spending 12 hours or less in these countries. Surprisingly Australia comes in near the top too; with approximately 134,800 business travellers spending less than 12 hours there, despite the 40+ hour round trip from Europe.

Conversely, people are spending longer on business trips to destinations that you might think they'd want to avoid right now such as Egypt, Pakistan or Turkey.

Almost one-third of those polled travelled afar to attend an important meeting (28%), and 16% travelled to sign a business deal in person. The survey also indicated that over 270,000 made a 20+ hour round trip just to hire someone.

Age isn't everything

Age plays a factor too, although the results from the business travellers surveyed throw out some surprises. Whilst those aged 55+ are more likely to be sent to destinations such as Western Europe and Asia than their younger colleagues, those aged between 18 and 24 are heading off to destinations such as North America, the Middle East and even Japan more frequently than their older peers.

"We're not surprised that business travellers are choosing to make these 'flying visits', heading to far-flung destinations for shorter stays than before. You can't beat face-to-face meetings for opening the relationship or closing the decision, as our research shows the majority of people surveyed still choose to fly abroad for important business deals or meetings. This held true even during the economic downturn when travel budgets were under strain. With business spending

set to grow a record 3.4%² in 2014, we expect to see businesses spending more on overseas trips and client entertaining than we did in the last few years,” said Damiano Sabatino, Vice President & Managing Director for Western Europe, Travelport.

“From our research we’ve seen that despite a recent dip in overseas business travel from 2012-2013³, 48% of business travellers now expect the amount they travel over the coming year to increase, and that the amount of younger business people travelling abroad is growing, which is really healthy to see,” continued Damiano. “This shows that despite advances in technology you can make a greater impact and really make those meetings count when carried out in person.”

About Travelport

Travelport is the technology company which makes the experience of buying and managing travel continually better. It operates a travel commerce platform providing distribution, technology, payment and other solutions for the global travel and tourism industry. The company facilitates travel commerce by connecting the world’s leading travel providers with online and offline travel buyers in a proprietary business-to-business (B2B) travel platform.

Travelport has a leading position in airline merchandising, hotel content and distribution, car rental, mobile commerce and B2B payment solutions. The company also provides IT services to airlines, such as shopping, ticketing, departure control and other solutions. With net revenue of over \$2.5 billion in 2018, Travelport is headquartered in Langley, U.K., has over 3,700 employees and is represented in approximately 180 countries and territories.

About the Research

Opinium Research carried out an online survey from 27th February to 5th March 2014 of 1,006 UK business travellers who fly at least twice a year..

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Data was supplemented with statistics from the ONS where applicable. ONS statistics show that in 2012-2013, 6.78m people made business trips out of the UK. This figure was applied to data carried out by Opinium on behalf of Travelport, to determine numbers of business travellers making certain journeys.

¹ Source: eBookers, booking flights from London (any) to Hong Kong, Beijing and New York from 4-6 June 2014, taking cheapest direct flight cost available

² Taken from the GBTA BTI™ Outlook – Western Europe

³ Source: Office of National Statistics as quoted on <http://www.experfly.co.uk/2012-2013-international-flight-statistics/>

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