

WHO RUNS THE NEW BUSINESS TRAVEL WORLD?

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There's a new wave of business travellers taking to the skies and hotel conference rooms around the world today. Where just a few years ago, business travel was almost exclusively the territory of middle-aged males, today's travellers are younger than ever and, very often, women.

In this eBook, we'll show you exactly how women are changing the world of business travel, including:

1. Turning 'Bleisure' into Business as Usual
2. A Man's World?
3. Something for Everyone

The new face of business travel brings unique challenges but also promises incredible rewards. One thing is certain: We are at a turning point in the history of business travel, and it's about to have a major impact on company values and corporate culture across the board.



Women and millennials have already breathed new life into the business world in recent years. Strongly focussed on values, communication and work-life balance, they drive their companies

towards more flexible, socially conscious policies and solutions that ultimately benefit everyone.

Forward-thinking employers, as well as travel providers such as hotels and airlines, are already looking at innovative strategies to accommodate this diverse, new crowd.

Today, millennials are already the most frequent business travellers and women make up the fastest growing segment of the business-travel community. As these two groups continue to flourish, two shifts occur. First, employers will adjust travel strategies to capitalise on their

new travellers' unique potentials and strengths. Second, hotels and travel service providers will up their game to appeal to these bustling new markets.

In other words, fuelled by new demand, the business travel industry will become a new hotbed for innovation.



TURNING 'BLEISURE' INTO BUSINESS AS USUAL

As more digital natives take to the business world, we're already seeing a new emphasis on mobility, social media and creativity. One topic that has attracted less attention, however, is the millennials' strong focus on added value.

Millennials forge deep connections with brands they admire – just look at the almost spiritual connection that many feel towards visionary corporate leaders like Steve Jobs and Elon Musk. They are also far more discerning than past generations when it comes to

By 2020, half the world's workforce will be millennials.

selecting products and services, taking factors like sustainability, lifestyle and online quality ratings into consideration. Even if cheaper options exist, millennials don't mind spending more to remain loyal to brands they

like, especially if they can justify higher costs in terms of better quality or service.

The millennials' pursuit of a happier work-life balance also deserves a closer look. Where past generations of business travellers settled for cheaper, more basic accommodations, a [new study by the Boston Consulting Group](#) finds that millennials are more likely, for example, to pay more for airfare and on-board upgrades than their Generation-X or Baby-Boomer counterparts. That's because millennials prefer not to skimp on enjoyable experiences, even when travelling for work. This has given rise to the phenomenon of 'bleisure', in which business travellers combine work with plenty of relaxing, leisure activities.

Tacking on an extra day for sightseeing at the end of a business trip is, of course, nothing new. Today's business traveller, however, inserts fun diversions, fine dining experiences or cultural encounters throughout the entire trip, and expects their hotel to serve as a home base for work as well as play.

Given the millennial business traveller's demand for memorable experiences – and their willingness to pay for them – it's time for hotels to update their B2B offerings.

From décor to amenities, the goal must be to strike the perfect work-life balance.

If a hotel offers a great gym, free bike rental, Instagram-worthy cuisine and, above all, friendly, internationally-oriented staff, millennial travellers will reward it, not only with their per diems, but also with glowing social media coverage. It's a win-win.



A MAN'S WORLD?

Women have helped launch the business world into the new millennium, so why should they settle for lacklustre service or outdated amenities obviously designed with a male consumer in

While most female business travellers don't expect hotels to give them preferred treatment over male guests, they are tired of bathrooms, menus and safety features that ignore their tastes and needs.

mind? Although 'gender equality' may have seemed like a sound policy for hotels, the [Women in Business Travel Report 2016](#) finds that a strong majority of female business travellers actually prefer travel providers who pay special attention to gender-specific needs.

Safety is one area that female business travellers are often far more concerned

with than their male counterparts, according to the report. There's a reason for that: Shockingly, nearly one-third of female business travellers reported encountering sexual harassment during a business trip. As a result, many female travellers now prefer to book with hotels that explicitly address safety concerns. For hotels, focussing on safety starts with raising awareness and providing special training to all staff members. It also extends to practical policy measures. For example, female business travellers appreciate hotels that offer discreet check-in (with numberless keys/key-cards), female room-service staff and 24-hour reception.

Female business travellers want their company travel managers to prioritise hotels and service providers who take safety seriously.

They also want their employers to take greater responsibility for their safety while on the road. That means developing a defensive training strategy and offering full support at every stage of the business trip.

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SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Travel managers may cringe at the thought of 'bleisure' or balk at the thought of additional training. However, they should see values-based travel spending as an investment in their company's future.

Not only does it achieve business goals, it also contributes to a healthy company culture. Job satisfaction and retention are key factors in today's super-competitive employment market. A diverse and engaged team, with plenty of international experience, is a company's greatest asset.

Travel is a perfect opportunity for companies to strengthen ties with their future stars.

There are many winners in this story. Hotels and travel service providers who rise to the challenges of catering to a younger, more female business-traveling class will be greatly rewarded for their efforts as these markets continue their astonishing growth. Meanwhile, employers can learn important lessons and sharpen their values by listening to their employees' travel needs.



This creates a culture of rich, shared travel experiences which is so attractive to millennial and female professionals.

Most importantly, by taking the demands of millennial and female business travellers more seriously, the travel industry becomes a safer, more relaxing and more vibrant environment for all consumers. Everybody can benefit from that.

The new generation of business travellers calls for an innovative, easy-to-use, customisable approach to travel planning. Booking.com for Business is the ideal partner for today's increasingly diverse business travel community.

With an offering of over one million accommodations worldwide, Booking.com for Business features carefully curated descriptions and user reviews, ticking the two boxes most important to the modern business traveller: optimal transparency and freedom of choice. Booking.com has already changed the way we plan our leisure travel. Now it's applying the same customer-centric approach to business travel, with tailor-made solutions for travel managers. For safe, stress-free, unforgettable accommodations, Booking.com for Business is the new business traveller's starting point.



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