

## **Survey: Nearly Half Of Small Business Executives Travel Overseas**

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DALLAS— A recent survey of small business travelers indicated that 45% travel internationally, some as frequently as 10 or more times a year, reported the American Small Business Travelers Alliance (ASBTA), which recently completed its first comprehensive online travel survey of current and prospective members. "Considering there are 25 million small business employees in the U.S., the survey suggests that the number of small business travelers doing business overseas is far greater than previously expected," said Chet Gray, ASBTA vice president of Sales and Marketing. "With such a high proportion of international small business travelers, America's international airports are rising to the occasion and offering more and better services to cater to this segment's specific needs."

For today's small business travelers, the study found that international services such as foreign currency exchanges, shoe shines and US Postal Service mailboxes are no longer enough. They indicate they need business-friendly services like a quiet workspace with fax machines and printers and a choice of WiFi networks.

They also want more seating at the gate, better dining options, private showers and more personal services. All of these elements are critical to international business travelers, particularly considering that an overseas flight can often mean at least a two- or three-hour wait at the airport.

According to the ASBTA, several airports have already stepped up to the plate with new services.

At Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, for example, business travelers with wireless-enabled laptops can choose from at least five WiFi providers in all of the airport's terminals. For travelers without wireless enabled laptops, the airport offers the option of high-speed kiosks and data ports. The airport also offers a wide-array of dining options, as well as personal services such as haircuts, massages and manicures that help save passengers time, as well as give them something to fill the time while waiting for a flight.

Also, DFW recently opened its international Terminal D that features 8,100-space capacity parking garage equipped with technology that helps guide passengers to open parking. Coming home, flyers will pass through a federal inspection facility capable of handling 2,800 passengers per hour.

At SFO, small business travelers can rent cellular and satellite phones by the day, week, month and even year. Travelers in Salt Lake City and Seattle-Tacoma International airports can rent portable DVD players and movies from a company called InMotion Pictures. Rental times can range from a few hours to an entire trip. For longer waits, the Hilton Hotel at Chicago O'Hare—the only hotel connected to the airport— offers passengers the use of a fitness room and a swimming pool for a fee.

"Today's sophisticated small business travelers know that their level of productivity during international travel is only as good as an airport's best services," said Gray. "Clearly, many airports have already responded to this, and as airports and airlines realize how important small business travelers are, we're sure we'll see even more of this positive growth."

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