

# DO YOU THINK BUSINESS TRAVELERS REQUEST LAVISH HOTEL AMENITIES?



Business travelers who have endured recent cost cutting measures find themselves seated further back on airplanes and booking rooms at lower tier hotels than they may have two years ago. And while many may have grumbled about the changes in business travel along the way, it seems that some of these changes have become the new norm if a 2010 study sponsored by Hilton Garden Inn is any indication.

That's because the top consideration when booking a hotel room for business has nothing to do with hotel amenities. The top consideration is price (80%), followed by a comfortable bed (76%). **The truth is many corporate travel departments know that their business travelers want to be good stewards of travel budgets.**

Given this, let's eliminate a few misconceptions about business travel. Some who have criticized the time and money that organizations invest in business travel would prefer to keep an uninformed public believing that business travelers always fly off to exotic locations and stay in lavish hotel rooms with high def 60" LCD TVs, original artwork and private butler service - not to mention the myth that they raid the guest room mini-bar on their corporate, nonprofit or government travel budgets...

**Sure, every full service or luxury hotel has a couple of VIP suites, but most business travelers find themselves staying in modest guest rooms - often with poor soundproofing - and someone must stay next to the elevator.** Of course, the room usually has comfortable furnishings. And as for those mini-bar items and basics like a bottle of water that may cost as much as US\$7.50, most business travelers know their bosses don't want to see these on an expense report. So what hotel amenities do business travelers want as standard? I'd like every hotel to offer unlimited Internet/Wi-Fi access available in every room as part of the guest rate. And nearly half (48%) of those surveyed agree.

By the way, it would be nice if everyone stopped describing this and other hotel services as "complimentary" or "free" - as if the cost of any hotel service isn't reflected in the guest room rate... Several years ago many industry consultants thought that hotel Internet fees would be absorbed into operating costs, but today many hotels in the U.S., Canada, Europe and elsewhere still charge a separate fee. I've paid as much as US\$30 for 24 hours of Internet access.

While many upscale (a mid-level) business hotels now make this available, it would be nice if all hotels would make it a standard service in guest rooms - not just lobbies or business centers. Call me old fashioned, but I prefer to know that I can work in the privacy of my room.

**And this brings me to the next items on my list of business traveler hotel amenities: a desk and chair in my room with easily accessible outlets, and a phone within reach.** Surprised that these are on a wish list?

Too often business travelers are forced to move furniture or try to figure out what electrical item to unplug so that it's possible to power the laptop. Travel tip: Pack a mini-power strip.

It astounds me each time I go through this exercise. If you think this is something that's limited to a budget hotel, think again... I've stayed in five star hotels that required me to hunch over the nightstand because that's where the phone was located. Once I was upgraded to a one bedroom suite in a Las Vegas hotel that didn't have a desk and outlets were difficult to find. Within an hour I downgraded myself to a guest room that had a desk and workspace (business travelers really do work on the road).

What other basic hotel amenities did survey respondents say they enjoy? **Business travelers**

**appreciate hotel housekeeping, wake-up calls, breakfast and fitness facilities.** I'd like to add sufficient staffing at reception, a bell desk, late night room service, natural bath products, quality linens, pillow options and a spacious room to the list. Friendly staff and personalized service are also nice, even if they are not actually hotel amenities.

The bottom line is that business travelers do enjoy hotel amenities offered by full service and other hotels because they create an environment that allows them to be productive and focused on work. I'm certain that if a business traveler perceived the business trip as if it were a vacation, he or she would probably be given an opportunity for extended time off.

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Date: 2010-03-22

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/hotel-amenities-what-business-travelers-really-want-news2110>