

MOST BUSINESS TRIPS VIEWED SUCCESSFUL - IF WELL PREPARED



Carlson Wagonlit Travel's consulting arm, CWT Solutions Group, released their most recent research results on the return on investment (ROI) of business travel. 10,000 travelers were surveyed in a bid to determine how they viewed the ROI of a business trip, as well as to provide a guidance on how to reduce the number of unsatisfactory business trips.

Respondents were required to measure how successful they consider their last business trip and **88% of all trips scored successful while 9.5% of them were seen as average** (without any significant benefits compared to their cost). Only the remaining 2.5% were deemed as unsatisfactory. Travelers who rated their trips as most unsatisfactory were then asked if they had expected this to be the case before commencing them; 68% agreed that they had. This shows that, in most cases, low success is often anticipated even before the trip kicks off.

A further investigation of low-success trips reveals common patterns: if a meeting ends up unsuccessful, it is mainly because of a lack of preparation (40%), or similarly, a lack of a clear agenda (16%). The main factors that relate to trip failure include: the total number of meetings held during the trip; the time spent at those meetings; as well as advance booking.

Studies have shown that the return on a trip is the sum total of all the returns of the meetings that took place during the trip. Thus, more meetings generate more value and subsequently a lower number of failed trips. Just a single meeting in a trip has been proved to produce an unsatisfactory result 19% of the time. This reduces by a factor of 2 if the number of meetings is raised to 6 and above. As a rule-of-thumb, each extra meeting lowers the probability of a trip turning out unsuccessful by about 10%.

Another factor that affects the success of a trip - and that is also related to the total number of meetings held - is the time spent at such meetings. 38% of the unsuccessful trips had their cumulative meeting time at 4 hours or below. A cumulative meeting time of one hour or less leads to the probability of the trip being unsuccessful in 28% of cases, which is further reduced to about 8% if a meeting takes up a total of 2 days or more.

The CWT report suggests the following tactics in order to mitigate the risk of a trip ending up unsuccessful:

- Make a plan to have more meetings per trip: only a single meeting during a trip produces unsuccessful results 19% of the time. As a rule-of-thumb, every extra meeting lowers the probability of a trip ending up unsuccessful by around 10%.
- Ensure that meetings get plenty of time: a cumulative meeting-time per trip of below one hour leads to a probability of unsuccessful trips of 28%. This reduces to about 8% if the meetings take up 2 days or more.
- **Plan and book early for a trip: the longer in-advance you plan your trip, the less likely it ends in failure.** Early planning leaves more time for travelers to book their trips, as well as to arrange their meetings well. The CWT research reveals that a trip booked less than 3 days in advance will run a 21% risk of ending up unsuccessful. Compare this to trips booked more than 2 weeks in advance that do have an 11% chance of being rated unsatisfactory at the end.

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