

# WHAT IS THE BUSINESS TOURISM FUTURE LIKE?



Business tourism generates important profits for companies as well as for the host territories. On a national or international scale, this activity is linked to various professional events such as trade shows, conventions, incentives and seminars. However, following the pandemic, the sector has faced many problems. So, what are the advantages of the post-Covid-19 working environment? What are the evolutions of business tourism? What solutions can be envisaged?

## Post-pandemic Work: Developments and Challenges

During the last three years, the labor sector has undergone important transformations. Indeed, professional structures have chosen to provide their employees with all the technological means necessary for remote work. **This new method has proved to be particularly effective and has even had the merit of increasing the performance of some companies.** It is not only a question of making significant gains, but also of offering employees more flexibility and above all a beneficial margin of freedom. At this point, it is unlikely that we will return to the pre-pandemic mode of operation.

As a result, business leaders (from all organizations) must redefine their organizational approaches to better understand this new reality. Since business travel has now been transformed into a majority of Zoom or Team meetings, business tourism has suffered heavy consequences due to the technological evolution of the work environment.

## A Thorny Equation: Costs vs. Gains

It is important to note that employees travel for a variety of reasons, and these reasons are of varying degrees of importance.

For example, turning a prospect into a customer is not the same as an internal business trip. Similarly, traveling at company's expense to attend a training or educational conference is not the same as representing the company at a convention that can help win new business.

We can see that the economic balance sheet of the companies has increased overall in the last few years due to the remarkable reduction in business travel costs. On the other hand, these budget savings have certain consequences. By adopting a policy of prevention, a company can lose valuable collaboration opportunities. This will have consequences in the short or long term, which can lead to significant losses.

## Corporate Social Responsibility: Fighting Global Warming

When talking about business tourism's future, it is also important to mention its impact on the climate. These business trips weigh heavily on the carbon footprint of companies. The remarkable reduction of the latter during the Covid period leads us to think about a sustainable and eco-friendly solution. This is part of the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) which is becoming more and more important objective for the companies concerned and committed.

For example, large multinationals aim to reduce their emissions by 30% before the end of the

decade. It is even possible to become carbon neutral by 2050. Thus, business travel will inevitably be restricted in the coming years. The idea is to give priority to virtual exchanges in case it is not absolutely necessary to make a business trip.

### **What about the Host Countries?**

In addition to being an important asset for companies, business tourism represents an important element for tourist activity and the economic development of the territories. It is important to know that a traveler visiting the destination for business generates much more income than a leisure traveler. In the context of business travel, statistics show that he or she will spend up to 5 times more. If an employee travels to attend a conference, he or she may not have time to discover the city or visit its cultural monuments. Thus, the person will potentially become a visitor who will return for a personal or family stay. Also, if the visiting professional is satisfied with the services received, he or she will not fail to talk to colleagues and superiors to repeat the experience.

Telecommuting, adopted as a permanent solution by more and more companies even after the pandemic, has been a real obstacle for thousands of business tourism actors. So, if territories want to attract business travelers again, better communication is required to apply the trans-fidelity principle.

Successfully attracting business travelers gives the area a higher profile with this target category. In addition, the economic benefits of this strategy are certainly noteworthy in terms of daily needs (housing, restaurants, activities) as well as business prospects and entrepreneurial development.

Japan is one of the best examples that can be cited as a destination known for business tourism. Indeed, the Japanese territory successfully organized the Tourism Expo Japan last November without any covid impact, for example.

### **Impacts on the Tourism Sector: The Need to Propose Adapted Solutions**

In view of the changes in the business sector, hotels and convention centers have adapted their offerings. In order to offer optimal support to companies wishing to organize conferences or seminars, these organizations are putting in place all the necessary tools to organize virtual or hybrid events. To do so, they acquire advanced technologies and hire agile and versatile IT profiles.

In addition, ever-changing travel conditions have made it necessary to be prepared for all eventualities. **Business travel professionals must be up to date with health measures and security restrictions.** They are also called upon to be resilient while mastering the new perspectives of the business sector.

Finally, there is still hope that business tourism will soon find a balanced recovery since the desire to meet face-to-face is more present than ever. To capitalize on business travelers, it is urgent to present services adapted to the new reality of work, that is innovative and highlights the know-how of host territories in particular.

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