

# GERMAN COMPANIES ARE EXPECTING MORE BUSINESS TRIPS AGAIN



finance, and sales.

Virtual communication tools and concepts like distance working have become staples in German companies. However, company leaders still value personal encounters and business trips. A survey conducted by AirPlus International revealed this. The survey involved 107 top managers in Germany, including CEOs, heads of

According to the survey, business trips are still crucial for companies, despite the availability of virtual meetings, remote work, and working from home. **97% of the German top managers who participated in the survey believe that replacing business trips with video conferences would have drawbacks, primarily due to the absence of face-to-face interactions and networking opportunities.**

The outlook for business travel within a company is optimistic. Nearly half of the participants surveyed (47%) anticipate an increase or significant increase in trips in the next year. 29% predict no change, while only 25% expect a decrease. Additionally, top executives anticipate an increase in "bleisure" or "workstation" trips, where employees combine business and leisure travel. 46% expect a significant rise in these types of trips.

## Face-to-Face Meetings: Networking Is Becoming More Important

Participants were asked to specify which business purposes required a face-to-face meeting. Like the previous year, they emphasized establishing trust and connections the most. However, the rankings also indicate a shift in priorities after another year of virtual conferences: networking and socializing have become relatively more significant, rising to second place (2022: 9), while training and education courses now hold fourth place (2022: 11). In contrast, meetings with emotional messages, such as feedback sessions, have dropped from 3rd to 12th place. Only one out of five participants deemed a personal encounter necessary.

## The Influence of Customer Preferences Is Increasing

In considering the factors that will affect travel behavior in the future, customer preference and social acceptance of travel are deemed to be the most significant. According to a survey, 55% of respondents believe these factors will have an increasing or significantly increasing influence. The safety of travelers follows closely behind, with a positive rating of 54%. In contrast, travel costs are ranked ninth, with only 44% considering them as a minor factor concerning other factors.

## Top Managers Expect More Air Travel

Transportation preferences are expected to change within the next year. According to a survey, 54% of respondents believe their colleagues will increase or significantly increase air travel. In addition, 52% expect the same for train rides and driving their cars. Rental cars are approved lowest at 49%.

## Cost Optimization: Numerous Measures already Implemented

Companies have been working hard to lower their business travel expenses recently. Compared to 2019, **a greater number of cost-saving measures have been put in place.** One such measure

that has gained popularity is using lower-cost travel options like Uber rides. In 2019, only 31% of companies implemented this measure, but more than half (55%) adopted it since then.

Although business trips are questioned more these days, personal encounters are still crucial for company leaders, especially regarding networking. Companies are now more focused on meeting customer needs and gaining social acceptance. Additionally, travel managers have used the low-travel period of the pandemic to prepare their companies for business travel returns, focusing on sustainability and duty of care.

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