

# GLOBAL BUSINESS TRAVEL SURVEY 2026 REVEALS HESITATIONS IN THE INDUSTRY



Business trips continue to shape company plans in fundamental ways. Still, findings from an SAP Concur poll point to widening gaps - between what firms gain and what workers feel. Drawing data from 3,300 employees who travel, alongside hundreds of managers and finance leaders worldwide, the 2026 business travel report captures a moment of strain. While companies see worth in face-to-face meetings far from home, many staff now find such demands harder to bear. Though useful for outcomes, these journeys weigh more heavily than before.

## Perceived Benefits for Travelers and Companies

Most employees still gain real benefits - personal and work-related - from traveling for business. Across countries, 93% say such trips improve their well-being; in Germany, that figure sits at 84%. A shift away from usual schedules helps some regain momentum. **Others find fresh motivation through face-to-face meetings instead of screens.** Movement between places often brings subtle but lasting lifts in mood.

Among those traveling with children, a noticeable shift emerges when it comes to rest and recharge - about one-third see vacations as relief from daily responsibilities, compared to just over a quarter without kids. A third lean toward wellness options, while fitness activities draw interest from roughly two in ten parents, versus fourteen percent of others. Preferences tilt differently here, shaped by routines back home.

Most top financial leaders see business travel as key to expansion. Nearly all - 97 percent - believe it directly supports growth. Budgets are expected to climb, with 82 out of 100 forecasting more spending ahead. Still, confidence comes alongside tighter demands: each journey must show tangible results. Proof of value now weighs heavier than before.

## Rising Hesitation and Security Concerns

Even so, unease around work-related journeys keeps growing. Around two out of three people globally - 67 percent, compared to 64 in Germany - feel less willing now than earlier to go on such trips. What's fueling this shift tends to be practical concerns piling up over time:

- Security concerns in geopolitically volatile regions (31%)
- Fear of travel disruptions (28%)
- Uncertainties around entry requirements and identity verification (16%)

As a result, many now perceive business trips as more stressful and difficult to plan effectively.

## Shifting Expectations of Employer Responsibility

Now shaping how workers view employers, fresh attitudes emerge alongside changing travel norms. A quarter plus two percent see bosses as more accountable when staff go for business trips - up from less than one in five just four years prior. Though individuals still accept duty for themselves, faith in company safeguards wavers noticeably. Barely over half express belief that help would arrive if crisis struck on assignment.

Though travel managers admit shortcomings in existing systems, certain CFOs still see safety and risk control as tasks falling mainly on staff members. Such differences highlight an expanding disconnect between what companies believe and how travelers actually experience their journeys.

## **Technology Offers Solutions – With Limits**

Most people now see digital tools as possible helpers in reducing risks. Nearly four out of five support using systems like real-time location monitoring to improve safety. Yet concerns emerge alongside adoption - questions about how personal information is handled, stored, and used linger strongly. While organizations adopt innovations to boost performance, they must also maintain credibility by respecting boundaries.

## **Bridging the Gap**

Business trips still spark growth, yet employee concerns are growing. The SAP Concur study shows leaders aim high but often miss traveler realities. **Innovation thrives through mobility; however, safety worries grow stronger.** Progress hinges not just on goals, but on listening closely. Trust fades when risks rise without response. Without balance, long-term success slips away.

Success after 2026 hinges on shaping business travel plans that balance safety, smooth operations, and confidence. Because risks evolve, companies must adapt using smarter safeguards, stronger guidance systems, honest tech practices, along with proof of benefit. Only those resolving these pressures can sustain corporate mobility amid growing instability. When uncertainty grows, steady travel policies become a quiet advantage. Still, results depend not just on rules but how well they're seen to work.

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