



Everybody thinks they've got travel dialed in. But I checked in with a pile of **executives** who collectively have logged hundreds of thousands of miles getting to and from far-flung cities in the interest of making a buck. Here are their words about what really makes a pro **business** traveler.

### 1. Never eat alone.

"I never eat a meal alone while traveling. Always entertain or try to combine eating and drinking with meeting colleagues and networking or just socializing."

--Mike DeFrino, CEO of [Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants](#).

### 2. Leave the hotel.

"Go out and take advantage of the city you are in, no matter how glamorous it is--or isn't. Take a few hours or an extra day to explore. You'll be shocked at what every little place has to offer. This only adds to the sanity of travel. Hotel rooms will make you go crazy."

--Rob Rae, vice president of business development for [Datto](#), a hybrid cloud-based backup provider that manages more than 160 petabytes of data and more than 1 million backups a week for its customers.

### 3. Invest in a decent pair of noise-canceling headphones.

"They make all the difference when drowning out plane sounds and you save your ears with lower volumes needed for video."

--Beth Murphy, Chief Marketing Officer, [Deezer](#), a digital music streaming service available in more than 180 countries with 6 million subscribers worldwide.

### 4. Stick with the same airline.

"Building airline status on one or two airlines is really worthwhile. Airport lounges give you access to Wi-Fi, showers, caffeine and quiet work spaces, which is useful for when flights are inevitably delayed. Also, being able to jump boarding queues and security lines [limits] wasted time. TSA pre-approval is also worthwhile doing if you can qualify."

--Patrick Llewellyn, CEO of graphic design marketplace [99designs](#).

### 5. Avoid bad habits.

"Traveling gets you out of your routine and that makes it easy to fall into bad habits. As the founder of a financial literacy non-profit, I'm pretty careful with how I spend money. But when I go on the road, it's easy for small costs to add up to big expenses. So, one bad habit I'll focus on avoiding during a trip is spending too much money. For example, instead of overpriced airport food, I make sure that I pick up protein bars at a grocery store before my departure. [This] overcomes another potential bad habit, a poor diet."

--Ted Gonder, cofounder and CEO of the financial literacy non-profit [Moneythink](#), which has been recognized by President Obama as one of the best new ideas for social innovation.

### 6. Avoid jet lag with three simple steps.

"Long international trips to places like South Africa or India were a fact of life in my old career, so I became master of avoiding jet lag and other common post-flight ailments with a few easy steps: First, disinfect everything. Entrepreneurs can't get sick, so carry wipes and use them liberally. Second, drink lots of water. And then more water. It clears your head and keeps you fresh. Third, be comfortable. Dress in layers for temperature control and bring moisturizer to keep your skin feeling good. Healthy, alert and comfortable wins the day anytime."

--Star Cunningham, founder and CEO of health management startup [4D Healthware](#).

### 7. Squeeze a bunch of cities into one trip.

"I'm an absolute stickler in trying to make the most of every business trip. Anytime I have a flight to say, Dallas, for example, I will look for all the customers we have that area and try to see them as well as any potential prospects. I'm also a big fan of multi-city tours for this reason [and am] doing SF>LA>Austin>Dallas>Atlanta>Birmingham>SF starting next week. The flight will be under \$1,000, but I'm seeking eight to 10 **customers** and prospects in one trip."

--Vladik Rikhter, CEO and founder of [Zenput](#), a mobile operations management app for more than 15,000 users among mobile/distributed workforces in food chains and retail and convenience stores.

### 8. Make a credit card work for you.

"An American Airlines credit card helped me get to Platinum status more quickly, resulting in free checked bags, a lot of first-class upgrades, priority boarding, and security lines. And, I get free flights every two months."

--Kevin Anderson, co-founder and VP of business development for payments platform [Appetize](#), which developed hand-held and fixed payment devices powered from the cloud for use in sports stadiums, entertainment arenas and other major hospitality venues.

### 9. Use a travel agent to book exclusive short-term rentals, instead of hotel rooms.

"Rental properties provide business travelers with many of the comforts of home, like more space and a kitchen, unlike a standard, tiny hotel room. Using a travel agent to book properties like this can not only limit the stress of planning a **business** trip, but can also provide exclusive access to quality-controlled short-term rentals across the globe that aren't available to the general public."

--Nico Nicholas, chief executive of business and vacation rental website [RentalsCombined.net](#).

### 10. Set personal or professional goals for the trip.

"A travel goal can be as simple as making time to get to know the area's culture and trying a new cuisine, or something more [related to business] such as meeting clients, prospects or other professionals in your field."

--Manoj Ramnani, CEO of [CircleBack](#), a cloud-based contact data management solution for businesses which has secured \$12 million in funding.

### 11. Stay in a lifestyle hotel.

"I keep a list of lifestyle hotels--Commune Hotels + Resorts, Virgin Hotels, Canopy by Hilton, Debut Hotel Group, Hyatt Centric, Graduate, and more--I've read about in the pages of HD magazine. When I'm going to that city, I choose which ones to experience and stay in them. Lifestyle hotels give the traveler a feeling of home - a more luxurious home - while they are on the road. It keeps me energized and comfortable while working, even when I'm on business."

--Cece Loft, marketing director of hospitality design group, [HD Expo](#).

### 12. Use essential oils for better sleep.

"Add 5 to 6 drops of soothing essential oils to your nighttime bath, such as lavender or chamomile, which help to reduce stress and enhance sleep quality. Or, place 2 to 3 drops of Naturopathica [Chill Aromatic Alchemy](#), a soothing blend of Lemon Verbena, Chamomile and Neroli, onto a tissue and place the tissue inside of your pillow case to promote rest and relaxation."

--Barbara Close, founder and CEO, botanical company [Naturopathica](#).

### 13. Start with an anchor meeting.

"For every trip, my team and I set a single business objective, which corresponds to an anchor meeting--or two if it's a longer trip. From there, I fill in additional time with meetings that would be nice to have, but won't make or break the trip. It's also good to prepare to have full days of meetings while the normal daily issues still arise at the home office, meaning that the already long days will undoubtedly be longer."

--Hazem Dawani, CEO and cofounder of the financial technology company [OptionsCity Software](#).

### 14. Understand cultural norms if traveling internationally.

"In Mexico, it's common that after closing a deal people will invite you to have tequila. It's Mexico's favorite drink and a 'no' as an answer sometimes is not taken well by the organizer. A business lunch in Mexico City may take longer than usual. Make sure you have no other appointments three hours after or clear your afternoon just in case."

--Julian Smaldoni, general manager of the boutique hotel [Thompson Playa del Carmen](#).

"Expect most events and meetings in Costa Rica to start 15 to 30 minutes after the scheduled time. As the culture is very warm and friendly, the conversation doesn't usually go straight to business.

Expect a few warm-up minutes of personal bonding conversation. [Don't] try to rush this part as it will be considered rude."

--Dennis Whitelaw, general manager of [Costa Rica Marriott Hotel San Jose](#).

### 15. Know that business meetings should be sensitive to culture, as well.

"For business meetings following Chinese protocol, the scale of the room and seating arrangements are very important. The preference is for a large and impressive room. In a bilateral board meeting, the most senior person from the hosting side will sit in the center of the table and face the door. The invited parties will sit on the opposite side of the table from the host with their backs to the door. The most senior person will also sit in the center across from the host."

g, assistant director of specialty markets for [Waldorf Astoria New](#)

make you a pro traveler? Sound off in the comments.