

# A Working on the road can be rewarding or harrowing. Here are some survival tips on packing,

ny travel can be exhausting and fraught with hassles, but even more so when there's work to be done. But if you plan ahead, you can make business travel less stressful and more productive. Here are some suggestions for where to start.

First, plan your itinerary carefully and keep two copies in different places (one in your carry-on luggage and another in your wallet, for instance) in case one gets lost. If you're going to cross more than one time zone, try not to schedule any big presentations or important meetings on the first day. If you typically need some recuperation time after a journey, arrange for an early check-in at your hotel. You certainly don't want to yawn during a client meeting or presentation. Allow extra time between meetings in case some last longer than expected. Don't create a jam-packed schedule that leaves no room for down time or unexpected glitches.

One handy tool you can make yourself is a laminated, credit-card-size list of important numbers—such as the office phone numbers of people you might need to reach, toll-free airline reservation lines, and your passport ID number. In fact, make a copy of your passport so that if you need to replace it quickly, the

process will go faster. Before you hit the road, make sure you bring a phone card; dialing long-distance from a hotel room can cost a bundle.

A common mistake made by businesspeople traveling overseas is not having proper documentation. In addition to a current passport, many countries require visas or work permits. You don't want to get there and discover that a customs agent or other official won't let you enter the country. To find out which documentation you need, check with a travel agent or an embassy office.

Now for some practicalities.

## Pack like a pro

Most airlines limit the number of carry-on bags to two. But if you pack efficiently, that may be all you need. If possible, don't check any luggage and carry one or two compact, lightweight bags, preferably the kind with wheels. That way, you don't have to worry about your important presentation materials and work clothes not reaching your destination.

Research the weather and climate where you're going by looking on the Internet or in *USA Today* or by calling your hotel or the weather number for that area. Decide what you're going to wear on each day of your business trip and pack accordingly. If you will be giving a presentation, find out what kind of attire would be right for the audience. If they work in a company in which the dress is business casual every day, you probably shouldn't wear a suit and tie or a dress and heels. Make a list of all business events you'll be attending and choose an outfit, including shoes and accessories, for each one. If an event is going to be outdoors, it's probably not necessary to dress up, even to present. On travel days, dress comfortably yet professionally. You never know who might sit next to you on a flight; it could be your next important business contact.

Pack your primary suitcase (the second case can carry presentation materials and so forth) with your business clothes, placing tissue paper or the dry

# On the

By Marjorie Brody



## presenting, and performing on the go.

cleaner's plastic wrap between each article to prevent wrinkling. No one knows why that works, but it does! I know a trainer who keeps her overcoat wrinkle-free on flights by placing it, neatly folded, in a drawstring plastic bag, which she slips under her seat.

Fold all blouses and shirts and place face down. Turn suit jackets inside out and pack the same way as blouses and shirts. Line the inside perimeter of your suitcase with shoes, belts, and toiletry bags to fill in the spaces. Be sure you pack toiletries in leakproof containers. Pack like-colored clothing so that you need fewer clothes and can mix-and-match outfits, especially in case of spills. You may want to bring some travel packs of Woolite or other mild cleanser to rinse out socks and pantyhose overnight. That means less to pack.

It can also come in handy to have along a small screwdriver, breath mints, aspirin, and antacid. Consider taking bottled water; more than likely, it will be better than the tap water where you're

going. Your carry-on bag should contain your prescription medicines, glasses, jewelry, and other essentials and valuables. You just have to make sure you don't forget the bag under the seat or in an overhead compartment.

What else? Bring both a hard copy and a disk of your presentation or training material. Make sure you have the appropriate plugs, extension cords, and adapters, especially for overseas destinations. In most European countries, 220 is the standard voltage; it's 110 in the United States. You can check with your travel agent or the appropriate embassy. If you're unsure whether your computer's power supply will switch to foreign currents automatically, don't risk it; you could damage the system.

If you just got your laptop, make sure you know how to use it before taking it on a trip, and don't let it go through an airport metal detector. Put it on the conveyor belt with other carry-on luggage. You may be asked to turn it on. Consider bringing a portable printer for your laptop, or you can

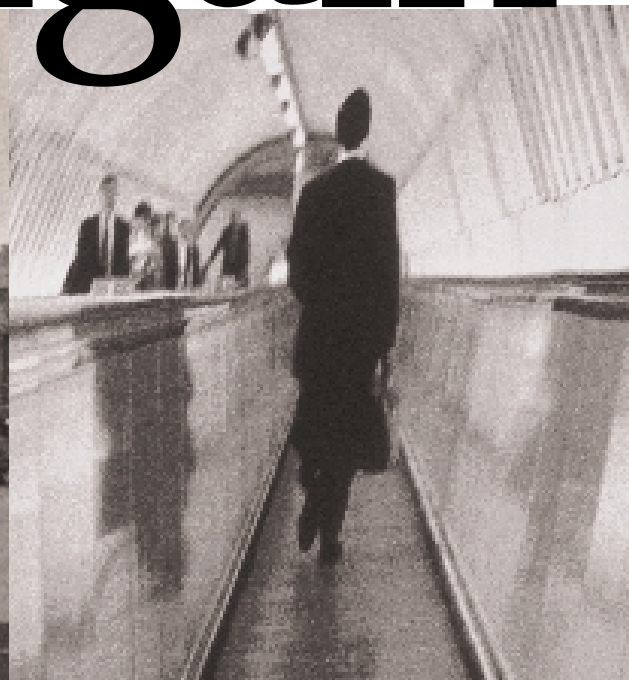
use the hotel fax machine as a printer, with permission. Get the hotel's fax number and transmit documents through your modem to the hotel's fax machine.

Whenever possible, ship ahead all of your training materials—manuals and technology. Make sure the package is well-marked so that the recipient knows which programs the materials are for. Don't ship too far in advance; the box could go missing. If you can't ship ahead or don't want to, carry the items you absolutely need in a carry-on bag. Make sure you put in enough business cards to take advantage of networking opportunities.

You can reduce your luggage load by arranging ahead for on-site audiovisual equipment. Who wants to lug around a projector or VCR?—even if you're driving. If you use videotape or other technology, let the client know your needs ahead of time—in writing—so the necessary equipment will be ready when you arrive. If you still need to bring some of your own gear, make sure it's compatible with the equipment you'll be using on-site.

Photographs by Patricia Galagan; photo on far right courtesy of Photonica

# Road Again



Once you're packed, take your luggage for a travel run. Walk around your office or the parking lot. If it's too heavy now, it will seem even heavier when you're trying to get to your gate at the airport. Eliminate items you don't really need.

## Getting there

Here are some tips for booking flights, hotels, and transportation—plus how to stay safe.

**Flights.** When you arrange for air travel, try to get a direct flight. Allen Klein—a professional speaker who's on the road a lot (see his book *Wing Tips*, Random House)—suggests that air travelers not take the last flight of the day because if it's canceled, you're stuck. He also says to avoid flights that depart or arrive between 7 and 9 a.m. and between 4 and 7 p.m. Those are the busiest airport times, and delays may happen. If you stay over on a Saturday, you can save money on airfare. Clients being billed for your fare will appreciate that. Klein also advises that you ask what type of aircraft. The most comfortable planes are 767s, 747s, MD-1s and MD-80s.

Klein recommends that before boarding your flight you should check your bags to see that they were tagged with the correct three-letter airport code of your final destination; baggage handlers do make mistakes. Attach additional luggage tags with your name, company name and phone number, and destination. There are blank tags at the check-in desk or kiosk you can fill in. Don't forget to remove old luggage tags or your bag could end up in Japan as you land in England. You should also put your itinerary and address or other contact information inside each piece of luggage.

There have been reports of some han-

dlers stealing items from checked luggage at several major airports. So if you're checking any bags, it's best to lock them or wind a couple of strips of masking tape around them so they can't be opened easily and quickly. It's also a good idea to mark your luggage with a distinguishing sticker or strap. That can help you find it faster on the baggage carousel.

One thing I've learned is that it pays to befriend airline ticket agents. I've even heard of people taking flowers and donuts to the airport, but just being pleasant and courteous can get results. Ticket agents can help you upgrade a flight or make sure you aren't bumped. If you are bumped and the airline can't get you on another flight arriving within an hour of your original ETA, it's supposed to offer you cash compensation. The amount you get depends on how inconvenienced you are. Many airlines still honor "Rule 240," which mandates that you must be placed on the next open flight on another airline, even if the only available seating is first-class. If you have to be forceful—for example, the airline canceled your flight or lost your luggage—be firm, yet polite. Ask for meal and hotel vouchers and any emergency supplies, such as a toothbrush or aspirin.

Don't assume that travel details haven't changed since you made your reservations. You may need to get reissued tickets. Take care of it. If you take a different flight from the one you're ticketed for, make sure you alert the airline or your travel agent. If you try to use the return portion without reporting the change, the airline can list you as a no-show and cancel the return reservation. **Hotels.** Diligent road warriors can find great hotel deals. Call around and ask for the best rates. Do a little investigative

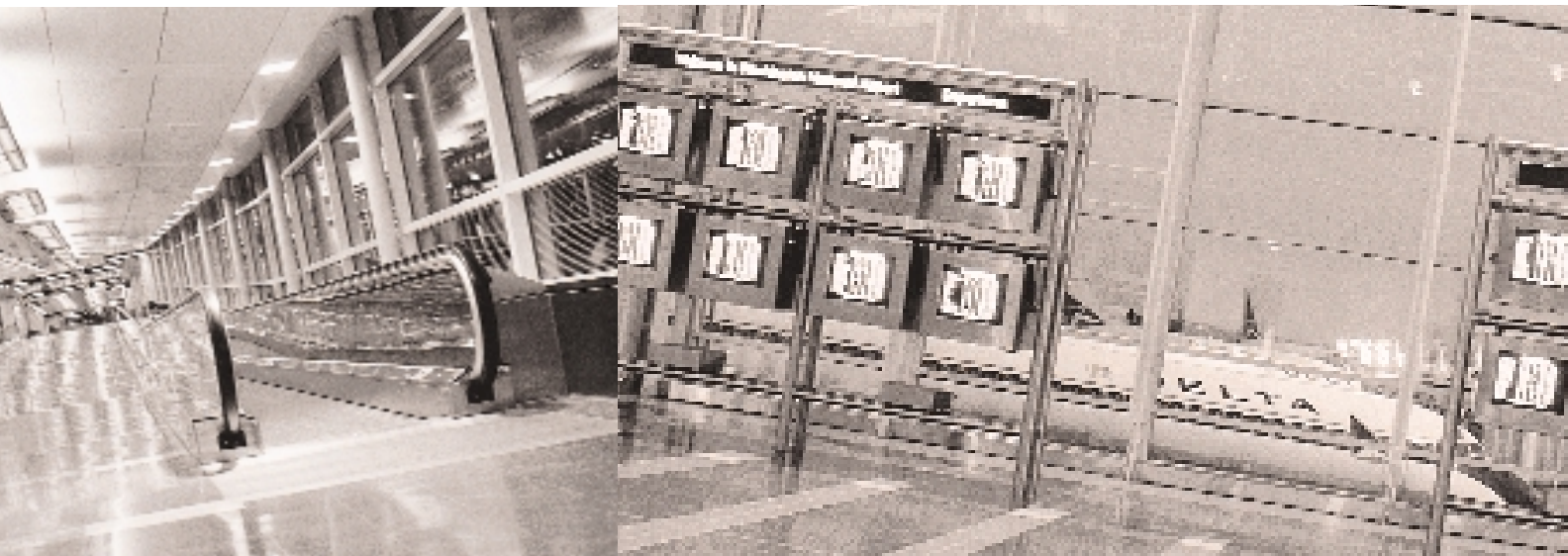
work: Look for a seasonal rate, leisure package, or corporate rate. A hotel's Website may advertise special prices. Don't settle for the first quote or hotel. Shop around and try to get at least three prices.

When making your reservation, ask about room location. You don't want to be near a noisy area—such as the ice machine, elevators, pool, or major highway—especially if you're trying to rest or prepare for a big presentation. When you check in, make sure the hotel accommodated your requirements.

If you didn't make a reservation and the hotel is booked full, ask about rooms slated for renovation that may not be available officially. There may also be a hospitality suite or the living room of a suite not in use in which the hotel can put a rollaway bed. If you had a reservation and the hotel overbooked, demand (politely) a complimentary night, discount, or other amends. If you have a confirmation number, you may want to insist that the hotel put you up at another lodging and give you cab fare.

Always do a last-minute check before departing your hotel room. When you're in a rush, you may leave behind your purse, wallet, luggage, cell phone, keys, or sunglasses.

**Ground transportation.** If you will be going by car, make sure it's up to the trip. Frequent auto travelers should have a roadside service such as AAA, even if only for peace of mind. And don't let your membership lapse. If you're going to rent a car, try to get a model that you're familiar with. A business trip isn't the time to learn how to use a stick shift. Don't over-insure the rental vehicle. Your existing coverage is probably sufficient, but check with your insurance agent. And always carry a cell phone



## Booking on the Net

There are scores of useful Websites with excellent resources for business travelers. Here's a sampling.

For directions and maps:

Mapquest, [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com)  
Maps on Us, [www.mapsonus.com](http://www.mapsonus.com)  
Mapblast, [www.mapblast.com](http://www.mapblast.com)  
Microsoft's Expedia Maps, [www.expdiamaps.com](http://www.expdiamaps.com).

For general travel information:

Travelocity, [www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com)  
Biztravel, [www.biztravel.com](http://www.biztravel.com)  
The Trip, [www.thetrip.com](http://www.thetrip.com)  
U.S. State Department, [http://travel.state.gov/travel\\_warnings.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html).

when using a rental car. If you don't have a cell, you can rent one as part of the auto-rental package. If you'll be on the road a long time, carry backup batteries or a charger for the phone.

If you need to rent a limousine or van, make sure you check out the company. Reputable ones will be happy to prove that they're insured and that their drivers are properly certified. Contact the National Business Travel Association at 703.684.0836 or [mbrship@nbta.org](mailto:mbrship@nbta.org), or use well-known companies with multiple offices, such as Manhattan Limousine.

Some car-rental agents offer satellite direction systems at a nominal fee. They're easy to use and can give you the best route and alternate directions during bad traffic.

Using the Net. Many road warriors no longer use a travel agent but book flights, hotels, and rental cars on the Internet. Some software programs even let you choose your airplane seat. There are many Websites where you can make

travel arrangements. All you need is a computer, modem, and credit card.

You can also use the Net to research the political and business climate of your destination. That can help you scope what may be your client's hot issues. In addition, you can really warm up an audience by referring to how the local sports team is doing. If you're not sure how to access the Internet while traveling go to [www.teleadapt.com](http://www.teleadapt.com) to learn about overseas modem configurations and so forth. This Website also tells you how to get a good connection while on the road.

## Safety

As a precaution, you should leave your itinerary and photocopies of your credit cards, driver's license, and passport with a family member and someone at your office in case your wallet is stolen or lost. Don't travel with a lot of cash if you can help it. Instead, pay by credit card or traveler's checks.

Here are some pointers for protecting yourself on the road:

- Speak quietly on public telephones when giving hotel-room and credit-card numbers; make sure no one is watching while you key in your phone-card or other personal-identification numbers.
- Never take taxis that don't display registrations prominently.
- Carry credit and ATM cards in a place other than your wallet. If you're robbed, at least you won't be totally strapped.
- Laptops are a hot item for thieves; don't let yours out of your sight, particularly in airports.

It's best to brush up on the customs, laws, and business etiquette in the countries you're going to. In some Middle

## Safety 101

Here are some tips from *Gutsy Women: Travel Tips and Wisdom from the Road*, by Marybeth Bond, to help make business travel safe for everyone.

- Don't be distracted from your belongings by a diversion—especially in airports and train stations. Someone may be trying to rob you.
- Try to find a parking space near the airport terminal or train station, and remember where you parked so you don't have to wander around an unsecured, perhaps empty lot looking for your car.
- If you're renting a car, ask for a map and directions so you don't get lost or end up in a dangerous neighborhood.
- Don't walk alone in unfamiliar places after dark. You wouldn't do that at home.
- Trust your instincts. If you get the feeling that an area isn't safe, it probably isn't. Leave or duck into a populated public place.
- If you must go off the beaten path in a foreign country, inform your embassy or consulate of your itinerary.

Eastern countries, you shouldn't order an alcoholic drink. In Singapore, you shouldn't chew gum in public. In some Arab nations, women shouldn't try to rent a car or wear shorts. Learn the tipping protocol; in some countries, heavy tipping is not proper and can invite crime. Making even minor social errors can mean major embarrassment or lost business.



## An Ever-Ready Laptop

Before leaving on a business trip, make sure all of your electronic equipment (laptop, pager, tape recorder, cell phone) is working and charge all the batteries.

Here are some tips so you'll always have fresh juice for your laptop:

- Don't let the batteries go unused for long stretches. Even if you have an AC power cord, switch to battery use from time to time.
- When you're not using the laptop, unplug the PC adapter.
- Label each battery with its expiration date and when it was last charged. Backup batteries will discharge even when they aren't used.
- Replace batteries when needed. If you have one that lasted two hours before and now works for only 30 minutes, it's time to buy a new one. Recharging won't help.
- Store batteries in a cool, dry place away from metal objects.

## Your Flight Plan

Here are some international travel tips from Sharon Wingler's book, *Travel Alone & Love It* (Chicago Spectrum Press):

- Cut out all caffeine after 10 a.m. on the day of your flight.
- Drink water all day; avoid carbonated beverages.
- Keep your preflight meal light.
- Set your watch to the time zone you're traveling to.
- Shut your eyes and relax until the meal is served—even if you don't fall asleep.

## Staying connected

Before you walk out of the office door, make sure co-workers know where you're going and how to reach you. You may want to mail back items you receive on the road from clients—such as paperwork, training proposals, and appointment dates. Some people carry postage and large self-addressed, priority-mail envelopes so they can send extra files and other papers back to the office. For \$3, you can get a lot into one of those envelopes. To ensure tracking, use FedEx or UPS.

Before leaving the office, change your voicemail greeting to let callers know you aren't available and the date you'll return. If possible, give the extension of someone who can help in your absence or a number where you can be reached. While away, check your voicemail regularly.

You can create your own office on the road. More hotels and conference centers are offering facilities with ample workspace and work-related amenities. The Harbor Court Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland, for example, has a 3,500-square-foot suite with a fax, a photocopier, and teleconferencing capabilities. The suite—rented daily, weekly, or monthly—also has a reception area, conference room, and kitchen as well as space for support staff.

Before leaving on your trip, verify all details. Make sure you have in hand all of the accurate directions and proper travel identification. For domestic flights, you need a valid photo ID (a driver's license will do). If you've changed your name recently for any reason, make sure the name on your ID matches the name on the ticket. Confirm all business appointments. Bring some work to catch up on in case you find yourself waiting for a late client or meeting. Also confirm any car rentals, limousine services, and other transportation. Confirm hotel reservations with a credit card and ask for late arrival, even if you expect to be on time.

If you're doing hourly consulting work on the road, track your time carefully in a daily agenda. Use it to plan meetings and note your daily work activities and time spent on each one. That makes it easier to bill clients promptly when you return to the office. Make sure you communicate new scheduling with your office so it doesn't double-book you. Remember: You are an extension of your office while you're on the road.

Some last words of advice: Don't push yourself to the brink of exhaustion. Try to fit in some enjoyable activity, even if it's just changing to comfy shoes and talking a walk. When you arrive at your hotel room, add a personal touch with family photos or a scented candle. I know a man who brings pliers to boost the typical weak flow of standard hotel showers. He also travels with his favorite brand of coffee and filters.

It's best to watch your diet and to exercise while you're on the road. Accord-

ing to a Johns Hopkins study, traveling salespeople put on an average of 15 pounds during three years of working on the road. You can walk, run, use the hotel pool or gym, or just do sit-ups in your room. Some people pack a jump rope.

To combat the effects of jet lag on sleep patterns, digestion, and circulation, try to eat meals at your regular time. When flying overseas overnight, try to nap on the plane. When you arrive, stay up and do some sightseeing—then go to bed at a reasonable hour that night. Avoid alcohol and caffeine while flying; they can dehydrate you (you'll already be dehydrated by the pressurized cabin). Drink lots of water. When you make your flight reservation, you can request a special meal—vegetarian, kosher, low-calorie, or low-salt. If you're gaining time across zones, eat carbohydrates (bread, pasta, fruits, and vegetables) before and after boarding the flight; they'll help you sleep. If you're losing time, eat protein-rich foods before and during the flight. In this case, you might want to drink some coffee. When you arrive, eat high-carbohydrate foods, unless you're giving a presentation. Before meetings, avoid alcohol, coffee, milk, and salty foods.

Newscaster Jane Pauley calls ahead to hotels, and has them stock the mini bar in her room with nutritious snacks such as fruit and yogurt for her children. Not a bad idea for adults. Or when you check in, ask whether there are any grocery stores nearby. Sometimes, room service and a hot bath hit the spot. Do a little shopping. Indulge yourself. Just don't buy anything you can't fit into your luggage, or mail the items home.

Above all, ask whether you need to make the trip at all. Perhaps your business can be conducted successfully through teleconferencing or videoconferencing. The other day when I was at home between business trips, my bedroom phone rang at 7 a.m. and I answered, "Thank you." I thought it was a hotel wakeup call. That's when I knew I should cut down on road time. □

---

Marjorie Brody is president of *Brody Communications*, Box 8868, Elkins Park, PA 19027; 215.886.1688; [brodycomm@brodycomm.com](mailto:brodycomm@brodycomm.com).

### Survival Tips At-a-Glance

- Confirm all reservations before leaving.
- When flying, try to take only carry-on luggage. If you have to check a bag, pack medications and presentation materials in the carry-on.
- Carry plenty of \$1 bills for tips.
- Be flexible and have a sense of humor; that will make hassles easier to deal with.
- Allow extra time for unexpected snafus and have a backup plan.
- Keep up your energy with nutritious snacks, small restaurant portions, limited alcohol, and exercise.
- Treat yourself to a massage, hot bath, good book, or night off.

### The Mobile Millennium

By Haidee E. Allerton, managing editor of *Training & Development*

The car is fast becoming both home and office for some workers. Here are some new extras you'll find in vehicles that are just around the bend:

- a multimedia system that lets riders access the Internet and dozens of video and audio channels (a joint venture of Toyota, Toshiba, and Fujitsu)
- a dashboard-mounted computer that features a radio and CD player, accepts voice commands, and translates text messages to a synthetic voice—letting users listen to email or navigational directions (Microsoft)
- displays showing real-time stock prices, travel information, and global navigation aids (the Network Vehicle, a collaborative effort by IBM, Netscape, and Delphi Automotive Systems).

Automakers are also making cars more comfortable for mobile dining (one in 10 restaurant meals in the United States are eaten in a car) with such features as cup holders that accommodate different shapes and sizes, dashboards with up to three power plugs for portable stoves or fridges, and shallower pleats in seat stitching to reduce crumb collection.

(Sources: Brand Futures Group, YRBFG@aol.com, and *USA Today*)