

Have new technologies improved solo business travels?

In the last 10 to 20 years, advance in technology has transformed many aspects of business travel; from the way we book our hotel rooms to staying in touch with relatives left at home.

However it seems that it has not changed one aspect of it: the feeling of loneliness faced by a majority of business people while traveling and in particular, while dining and drinking in the evening at hotels.

The latest Barclaycard Business Travel Survey (www.barclaycard.co.uk) shows that, whereas 95% of businessmen and women travel solo, 45% of them have felt lonely during their business trips.

Technology has only help to reduce the time spent traveling. The survey tells us that nights way from home have decreased to 4.1 nights per month from 4.4 last year. Technology such as video-conferencing has reduced the need for face-to-face meetings. It has not made it easier staying alone in far away cities.

Women seem to be even more affected by the negative aspects of solo travel. Up to 61% of women have said feeling uncomfortable drinking at bars on their own and 34% didn't like dining on their own.

So is business travelers doomed to feel lonely, depressed or uncomfortable when away from home? Well, there are some tips one can follow to try improve this situation:

Try to talk to people who are waiting to be seated at the restaurant. If they are alone, they will probably be very happy to share their table with you, and enjoy a much more relaxed evening.

Try to arrange to meet with somebody you know in town, or somebody you have met the same day at work or elsewhere.

Ask for a table near a people-watching window. If you eat alone, at least you can look at what is going on outside.

Go to the restaurant early. Very often, restaurants have a more romantic setting at later times, something you want to avoid if you are alone!

Finally use networking clubs to contact other people who live locally. You may then meet with them (important: always do so in a public place)

New technologies have improved the way we can plan and organize business travels. However, when it comes to it, only old-fashioned tips will make your solo journeys a better experience.

About the Author

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