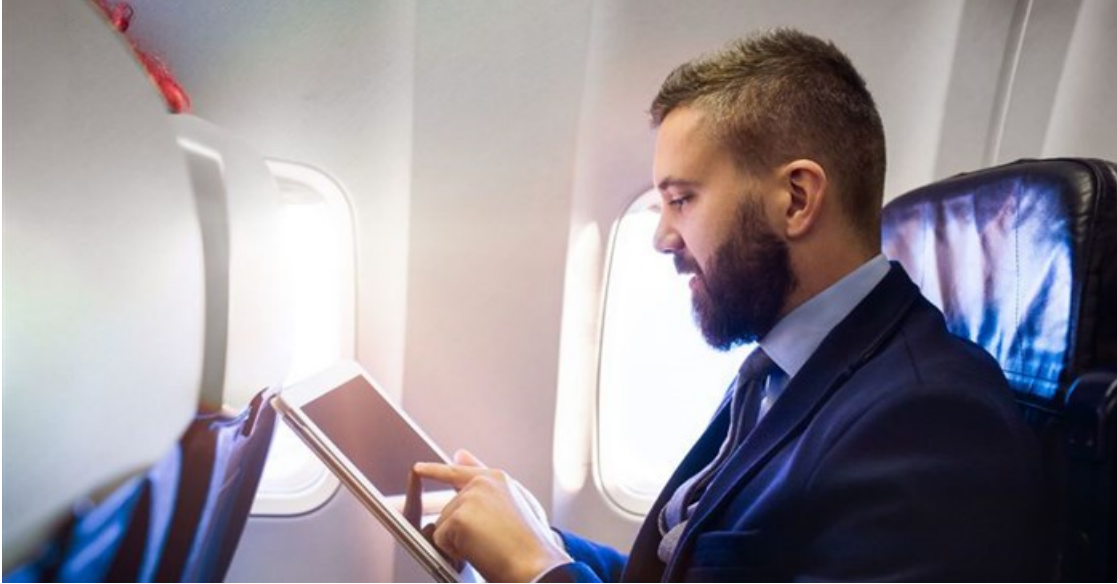


How devices can improve business travel

By [Dawn Weir](#)

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Technology has made business communication and business travel easier than ever, but it's still possible to have a minor disaster involving your indispensable devices. Here are some tech-savvy tips for road warriors:



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Stay on track: Activity trackers can help you stick to your fitness regime by recording step-counts, distances covered, sleep and nutrition. If you don't fancy wearing one that looks like it's from the flight deck of the starship USS Enterprise, others are available which clip onto your ankle or clothing. Many are water-resistant and rugged, but if you prefer to not buy one, apps like Samsung Health will record and analyse your daily activity.

Power naps: A few bad nights' sleep while travelling can leave one feeling unfocused and tetchy. Some of us sleep better in hotel-rooms than others, and some can be downright noisy. You can try using earbuds, but we don't all like having wads of foam stuck into our skulls when trying to slip into the arms of Morpheus. One alternative is to load a white-noise generator on one of your devices. A site like [myNoise](#) has hundreds of soothing sounds, including waves, rain, crackling fireplaces, trickling streams and even Tibetan monasteries. It might not drown out the sound of the guys returning to the hotel from their "team-building dinner" at 2am, but it'll help to smooth out the noise of traffic and air-conditioning.

Cancel the chatter and clatter: Many business travellers now swear by noise-cancelling headphones, which block out distractions and racket and can subtly let fellow travellers know that you'd prefer to not engage in lively conversation. Researchers disagree on the effectiveness of binaural beats for everything from creativity to concentration, but many students, academics and entrepreneurs find that they help to focus the mind.

Stay juiced: Most mobile devices have decent battery-life nowadays, but the size and brightness of their screens and the plethora of apps running on them can drain that very quickly. Save your battery by switching off anything you don't need: Bluetooth, location, mobile data and so on, as well as apps you're not using. Switching your phone to Flight mode will also save battery power. Travellers increasingly use power-banks to boost battery-life, but Weir suggests reading users' product reviews before buying one, as some are far more efficient than others.

Back up and go: Save your important documents – scans of your passport if you're travelling internationally – as well as hotel reservations and travel itineraries, and take pictures and screenshots of them on your phone. That all-important PowerPoint presentation? Use a file-hosting service like Dropbox to put it in the cloud so you can access it wherever you need to.

Declutter: If you're a regular business traveller make a point of emptying all your luggage every few weeks. You'll probably find you've accumulated flash-drives, USB adaptors and stationery and other stuff that takes up space and adds weight.

Downsize: Everyone from business travellers to backpackers loves the portability of laptops, but while they're lighter than ever, those with bigger screens can be bulky. One option is to travel with a tablet, which offers the efficiency of a laptop while taking up less space. If you need to do a lot of inputting while you're on the road, get a flexible keyboard that can be rolled up until needed, or pair your tablet or smartphone with a laser projection keyboard. It's a clever gizmo that projects a full-sized Qwerty keyboard onto any flat surface, allowing you to type pretty much anywhere.

Converge: We've all seen the infographics showing how smartphones combine all the devices we once owned separately, like cameras, DVD- and CD-players, and that innovation continues. The Belkin Travel Rockstar combines a battery pack, surge protector and charger. It has three plug-ports (you may need an adaptor, depending on which plug configuration you use) and two USB ports.

Still not high-tech enough? Try Pluggage, a smart suitcase produced by luggage brand Delsey that has its own app. It's available in three sizes and its features include fingerprint ID to lock and unlock it (you can also lock and unlock it using the app), interior lighting and speakers. It weighs itself, has integrated USB chargers for your devices, and GPS tracking notifies you when it's on a luggage carousel at the airport or being loaded onto or off a flight.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dawn Weir, Head of Kulula work has more than 28 years corporate travel experience. Her career has included work for blue-chip companies such as HRG Rennies Travel, Carlson Wagonlit and Medtronic where she implemented tailor-made corporate travel solutions for their customers including Barclays, Pfizer, Sasol and Barloworld. Throughout her career, Weir has worked to make corporate travel more effective and efficient through cost-saving mechanisms, enhancing process-efficient travel solutions and best-of-breed customer service. As a specialist in corporate travel management, Dawn connects with corporates for seamless business travel.

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