



# **2017 Global Benchmark Survey: Business Travel Satisfaction**

## Introduction

Chrome River conducted an in-depth study among business travelers to uncover business travel satisfaction trends. Chrome River surveyed almost 1,500 moderate to very frequent business travelers across the U.S., Canada, UK and Australia in Spring 2017. The goal of this research was to identify how happy business travelers are, what they like and dislike about business travel, and also what some of the key factors are that impact their level of satisfaction with business travel.

This document provides detailed breakdown and analysis of key questions within the survey, along with highlights for each section. Responses are broken down by nationality, generation (Millennial, Generation X and Baby Boomer), as well as by frequency of business travel (3-10 times per year, 11+ times per year).

In addition to this breakdown are several infographics which may be freely downloaded and used, with attribution to Chrome River.

## Executive Summary

Among the key findings of Chrome River's 2017 Global Benchmark Survey for Business Travel Satisfaction:

- The top “perk” of business travel among all groups is the ability to see new places, and the top detractor among all groups is spending time away from the family. Aside from these two commonalities, U.S. business travelers have significantly different perspectives: while Australian, British and Canadian travelers cite enjoyment of the overall business travel experience as a top benefit, for Americans, its earning travel loyalty points. On the negative side, jet-lag is the second-most-frequently cited detractor for all nationalities except Americans, whose experience with flights is a big downside.
- American travelers like spending time with their coworkers. Almost 15% say that spending time with colleagues the like is their favorite part of business travel, almost five times as high as any other nationality. At the other end of the spectrum, nearly 11% of British travelers cite needing to spend time with coworkers that they *don't* like as the worst part of business travel – almost double that of any other country.
- Happiness with an employer's expense policy correlates closely with overall business traveler satisfaction – 97% of those who are very satisfied with expense policy are very with travel overall. Conversely, 70% of those who say their travel expense policy is very poor will have a negative overall view of business travel.
- Choice is a key driver of satisfaction those view themselves as happiest with business travel. Those who are able to choose the travel provider (airline, hotel, car rental provider) are significantly more likely to be satisfied than those who are required to use the employer's preferred vendor.

## What Makes Business Travelers Happy?

Looking at travelers worldwide who identify themselves as “very satisfied” or “very unsatisfied” with their overall business travel, there are several areas where the different groups have strongly different experiences, ranging from the flexibility of their employer’s travel policy to the expense submission and reimbursement process.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Choice is a key feature of very satisfied travelers. They are 94% more likely to be able to choose their preferred airline, 72% more likely to be able to choose their preferred hotel chain and more than twice as likely to be able to choose their preferred car rental firm than very unsatisfied travelers
- Very satisfied travelers are 24% more likely to use be allowed to keep air miles earned on business travel than very unsatisfied travelers
- Very unsatisfied travelers spend 39% more time submitting expense after each trip than very satisfied travelers
- Very satisfied travelers are 55% more likely to use expense automation solutions than very unsatisfied travelers

Very satisfied travelers	Travel criteria	Very unsatisfied travelers
70%	Can select airline of choice	36%
62%	Can select hotel chain of choice	36%
62%	Can select car rental firm of choice	27%
45%	Can fly business class for domestic / <5hr flights	9%
45%	Can fly business class for international / >5hr flights	18%
89%	Can keep air miles for personal use	72%
31 minutes	Mean time taken to submit post-trip expenses	43 minutes
42%	Use expense automation solutions	27%
70% very satisfied*	Satisfaction with expense reimbursement process	55% very unsatisfied*
43% say no problems**	Worst thing about expense process	27% say everything**
56% say very good*	Opinion of employer’s travel and expense policy	41% say very poor*
43% say seeing new places**	Best thing about business travel	32% say earning loyalty points**
36% say being away from family**	Worst thing about business travel	18% say too frequent** 18% say submitting expenses**

\* Most common answer submitted on a sliding scale

\*\* Most common answer submitted from a range of different options

### How Often Do People Travel on Business Each Year?

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Canadians travel significantly less frequently than other nationalities – under 90% travel ten or fewer times per year.
- Americans have far greater numbers of road warriors (i.e. those who travel 21+ times per year), especially compared to Canadians and Britons
- Twenty-two percent of Generation X business travelers are frequent travelers, compared to less than 15% of Millennials and 17% of Baby Boomers

	U.S.	Canada	UK	Australia
3-5 times per year	57.5%	73.3%	51.2%	58.7%
6-10 times per year	21.5%	18%	32.1%	23.4%
11-20 times per year	9.8%	7.3%	12.6%	10%
21+ times per year	11.2%	1.5%	4.2%	8%

	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers
3-5 times per year	59.9%	51.4%	62.8%
6-10 times per year	25.5%	26.2%	19.3%
11-20 times per year	9.5%	11.2%	9.5%
21+ times per year	5.1%	11.2%	8.5%

*Note: Those who travel 3-10 times per year (for a minimum of one night) are defined as “Medium Travelers” for this research. Those who travel more than 11 times per are defined as “Frequent Travelers” for this research*



## Are Travelers Happy with the Frequency of Business Travel?

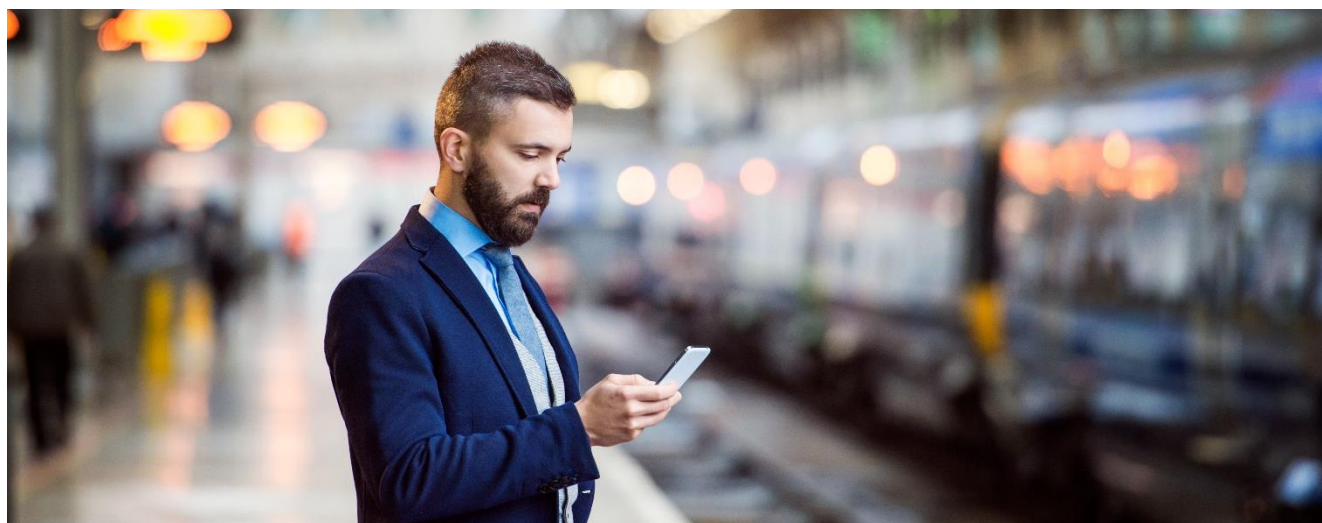
### HIGHLIGHTS

- Americans' views on travel frequency are significantly different to those of other nationalities. Britons and Australians are both more than twice as likely to say that they travel too frequently
- Similarly, Americans are more than twice as likely as other groups to want to travel more than they do (even though more Americans are frequent travelers than other groups)
- Unsurprisingly, a quarter of frequent travelers would rather travel less

	U.S.	Canada	UK	Australia
I travel too much	9.9%	13.1%	20.6%	23.9%
I'm happy with the volume of travel	75.5%	80.1%	72.9%	69.6%
I would rather travel more	14.6%	6.8%	6.5%	6.5%

	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers
I travel too much	17.6%	16%	10.3%
I'm happy with the volume of travel	71.8%	72.8%	78.7%
I would rather travel more	10.6%	11.2%	11%

	Medium Travelers	Frequent Travelers
I travel too much	11.8%	25.1%
I'm happy with the volume of travel	76.1%	69.6%
I would rather travel more	12.1%	5.3%



## What is the Best Aspect of Business Travel?

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Australians, British and Canadians tend to enjoy the overall “travel experience” far more than Americans
- All groups except Americans and frequent travelers cite the ability to see new places as the best benefit of business travel
- Americans are only a quarter as likely to view “traveling in style” as a benefit as other nationalities
- Americans, Baby Boomers and frequent travelers have the strongest affinity for collecting loyalty points for personal travel
- Almost no Canadians relish spending time with their colleagues, especially when compared to Americans
- Millennials lack of interest in earning air miles and hotel points suggests lower brand loyalty than Generation X and Baby Boomer travelers

	U.S.	Canada	UK	Australia
Getting to see new places	32.5%	35%	32.1%	31.8%
Traveling in style (nice airline seats, good hotels, etc.)	5.1%	21.8%	19.9%	21.4%
Ability to add leisure days onto a trip	13.6%	19.4%	19.1%	15.9%
Earning loyalty points to use for personal travel	18.2%	8.3%	8%	11.9%
Spending time with colleagues that I like	14.5%	0.5%	3.1%	3%

	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers
Getting to see new places	34%	36.4%	29.2%
Traveling in style (nice airline seats, good hotels, etc.)	16.8%	14%	7.8%
Ability to add leisure days onto a trip	17.8%	14.8%	14.7%
Earning loyalty points to use for personal travel	8.5%	13.2%	19.1%
Spending time with colleagues that I like	5.5%	7.1%	12.7%

	Medium Travelers	Frequent Travelers
Getting to see new places	34.8%	22.8%
Traveling in style (nice airline seats, good hotels, etc.)	12.7%	10.7%
Ability to add leisure days onto a trip	16.6%	11.8%
Earning loyalty points to use for personal travel	10.9%	28.5%
Spending time with colleagues that I like	9%	8.3%

Note – only top five answers listed. Answers will not add up to 100%

## What is the Worst Aspect of Business Travel?

### HIGHLIGHTS

- All groups cite spending time away from their families as the worst aspect of business travel
- Americans' view of flying is significantly worse than other nationalities
- Canadians are far more impacted than Americans by jet lag, with Australians second
- Only those who travel more than 11 times per year view the frequency of travel as one of the three biggest drawbacks
- Britons are more than twice as likely to resent spending time with their colleagues than Australians and Canadians, and more than 50% more likely than Americans

	U.S.	Canada	UK	Australia
Too frequent	3.8%	5.3%	8%	9.4%
Jet lag	9.2%	24.3%	15.3%	19.9%
Spending time away from the family	35.7%	34%	35.6%	31.8%
Flights (inconvenient timing / routes; cramped seats, etc.)	18.5%	10.7%	13.4%	14.9%
Having to submit expenses at the end	11.2%	15.1%	6.5%	12.4%
Having to spend time with colleagues I don't like	6.4%	4.4%	10.7%	4%

	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers
Too frequent	6.1%	7.1%	4.1%
Jet lag	20.1%	13%	9.5%
Spending time away from the family	30.2%	39.5%	36.2%
Flights (inconvenient timing / routes; cramped seats, etc.)	13.4%	12.7%	20.3%
Having to submit expenses at the end	12.3%	10.2%	10.6%
Having to spend time with colleagues I don't like	6.6%	8.1%	5.4%

	Medium Travelers	Frequent Travelers
Too frequent	3.9%	12.9%
Jet lag	14.5%	11%
Spending time away from the family	35.1%	35%
Flights (inconvenient timing / routes; cramped seats, etc.)	16.5%	13.7%
Having to submit expenses at the end	11.3%	9.9%
Having to spend time with colleagues I don't like	6.7%	5.7%

## What is the Overall Level of Business Travel Satisfaction?

Respondents were asked about their overall level of satisfaction with business travel with their current employer, factoring in elements such as traveler well-being, travel expense policy, and comfort levels.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Britons, Canadians and Australians overall happiness with business travel with their employer is each above 80%, and on average is almost 10% higher than Americans
- Americans are almost four times as likely as Canadians to be unsatisfied with business travel overall, and almost 75% more likely to be unhappy with business travel than Britons
- Australians are almost 25% more likely than Americans to be “very satisfied” with their overall business travel program

	U.S.	Canada	UK	Australia
Very satisfied with travel overall	30.4%	30.6%	32.4%	37.8%
Satisfied with travel overall	42.2%	54.4%	50.8%	43.2%
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied with travel overall	20.1%	13.1%	12.6%	13.4%
Unsatisfied with travel overall	5.6%	1.9%	1.9%	4.5%
Very unsatisfied with travel overall	1.8%	0%	2.3%	1%

	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers
Very satisfied with travel overall	30.8%	34.6%	30.7%
Satisfied with travel overall	49.2%	42.5%	44.8%
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied with travel overall	15.1%	15.8%	18.9%
Unsatisfied with travel overall	3.6%	6.4%	3.4%
Very unsatisfied with travel overall	1.3%	0.8%	2.2%

	Medium Travelers	Frequent Travelers
Very satisfied with travel overall	30.8%	36.5%
Satisfied with travel overall	46.7%	40%
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied with travel overall	17%	16%
Unsatisfied with travel overall	4.1%	4.9%
Very unsatisfied with travel overall	1.3%	2.7%



## What Factors Would Make Travelers Move to A New Employer?

Travelers were asked about the factors that would be most likely to move to a new employer – more, the same, or less travel, and whether a more generous expense policy would have an impact on their decision.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- While every nationality has “Same amount of travel, and a better travel expense policy” as their top preference, the only group that had “Less travel” as one of their top three answers were frequent travelers (although only 30% of that group wanted to reduce travel).
- Significantly fewer Americans would be more enticed by more travel (25%) than Canadians (35%), Australians or Britons (both 40%).
- Baby Boomers were barely half as likely (23%) to want to travel more in a new role as Millennials (42%)

	U.S.	Canada	UK	Australia
More travel, and a better travel expense policy	15.5%	17.5%	17.2%	20.9%
More travel, but the travel expense policy isn't as important	9.7%	17%	22.9%	18.9%
Same amount of travel, and a better travel expense policy	32.9%	40.8%	36.3%	31.8%
Same amount of travel, but the travel expense policy isn't as important	22.5%	12.1%	10.6%	16.9%
Less travel, and a better travel expense policy	10%	9.2%	8.4%	9%
Less travel, but the travel expense policy isn't as important	9.4%	3.4%	4.6%	2.5%

	Millennials	Generation X	Baby Boomers
More travel, and a better travel expense policy	21.5%	15.8%	13.9%
More travel, but the travel expense policy isn't as important	20.7%	14.8%	9.5%
Same amount of travel, and a better travel expense policy	34.2%	34.6%	34.6%
Same amount of travel, but the travel expense policy isn't as important	13%	18.3%	22.1%
Less travel, and a better travel expense policy	7.6%	10.4%	10.3%
Less travel, but the travel expense policy isn't as important	3.6%	6.1%	9.6%

	Medium Travelers	Frequent Travelers
More travel, and a better travel expense policy	16.5%	18.3%
More travel, but the travel expense policy isn't as important	15.2%	10.7%
Same amount of travel, and a better travel expense policy	34.8%	33.1%
Same amount of travel, but the travel expense policy isn't as important	19.5%	12.2%
Less travel, and a better travel expense policy	8.8%	12.6%
Less travel, but the travel expense policy isn't as important	5.3%	13.1%

## What is the Impact of Travel Policy on Overall Traveler Satisfaction?

### HIGHLIGHTS

An employee's perception of their employer's travel policy has an almost perfect correlation with their overall level of satisfaction with business travel. Those who viewed their companies' travel policies as providing the highest quality travel services and the most traveler flexibility had almost universal (97.2%) satisfaction with business travel. At the other end, those who viewed their policies as the least generous and flexible had an almost 70% negative view of their business travel experience.

One caveat is that only 6.3% of respondents viewed their employer's policy as poor or very poor, so these figures may have greater variance. However, it's likely safe to assume that organizations with such poor travel expense policies may have difficulty retaining frequent travelers.

	Very good policy	Good policy	Neither good nor bad	Poor policy	Very poor policy
Very satisfied with travel overall	79.5%	26.2%	11.3%	5.9%	4.4%
Satisfied with travel overall	17.7%	65.9%	47.5%	17.7%	13%
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied with travel overall	1.9%	6.9%	35.2%	33.8%	13%
Unsatisfied with travel overall	0.6%	0.9%	5.1%	33.8%	30.4%
Very unsatisfied with travel overall	0.3%	0.2%	1%	8.8%	39.1%



## What is the Impact of Travel Policy Flexibility on Traveler Satisfaction?

Employees whose organizations had travel policies regarding preferred vendors (air, hotel and car rental) as well as class of hotel were asked what kind of flexibility they had when purchasing travel: if their policy had flexibility (either they could choose any vendor, or they could as long as it's within a certain level of the preferred vendor's rate), if they could choose to pay the difference in order to select a business class flight or non-preferred travel vendor, or if there was no flexibility from corporate policy.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Travelers are more swayed by comfort than loyalty – those whose companies allow for business class flights are approximately 20% more likely to be very satisfied with their overall travel program than those who are allowed to select their preferred travel provider
- Flexibility is also an important factor in maintaining traveler satisfaction. While travelers certainly aren't nearly as "very satisfied" with their policy if they are allowed to pay the difference, they still tend to have high levels of satisfaction
- Travelers' ability to select their preferred car rental provider is just as important for their level of satisfaction as hotel provider or airline

#### Fly business class on domestic / short-haul flights (<5 hours)

	Yes	Yes, if I pay difference	No
Very satisfied	42.1%	20.7%	22.1%
Satisfied	44.9%	52.8%	43.7%
Neither	10%	20.7%	24.6%
Unsatisfied	2.4%	5.3%	6.4%
Very unsatisfied	0.6%	0.5%	2.5%

#### Fly business class on international / long-haul flights (>5 hours)

	Yes	Yes, if I pay difference	No
Very satisfied	40.4%	23.7%	21.8%
Satisfied	44.3%	52.7%	44.7%
Neither	12.1%	17.9%	23.9%
Unsatisfied	2.5%	4.8%	6.8%
Very unsatisfied	0.8%	1%	3%

### Select the airline of my choice

	Yes	Yes, if I pay difference	No
Very satisfied	34.9%	16.4%	18.8%
Satisfied	46.1%	44.3%	43.1%
Neither	15.1%	29.8%	25.6%
Unsatisfied	3.4%	5.8%	10%
Very unsatisfied	1.2%	3.9%	2.5%

### Select the hotel of my choice

	Yes	Yes, if I pay difference	No
Very satisfied	34.6%	20.7%	21.2%
Satisfied	46.2%	46.2%	40.4%
Neither	13.9%	26%	27.6%
Unsatisfied	3.6%	5.9%	7.1%
Very unsatisfied	1.2%	1.2%	3.9%

### Select the car rental company of my choice

	Yes	Yes, if I pay difference	No
Very satisfied	35.2%	20.5%	21.7%
Satisfied	46.1%	45%	43.4%
Neither	13.7%	25.8%	26.4%
Unsatisfied	3.7%	7.3%	5.2%
Very unsatisfied	1.2%	1.3%	3.3%

## Demographic Breakdown

The survey was conducted online through SurveyMonkey in April 2017. There were 1,456 respondents based in four countries who self-identified as traveling a minimum of three times per year for business. The breakdown of respondents is shown below:

### LOCATION

- U.S.: 787
- Canada: 206
- UK: 262
- Australia: 201

### AGE

- 18-34: 471
- 35-44: 393
- 45-65: 592

### FREQUENCY OF TRAVEL

- Moderate / Medium (3-10 times per year): 1193
- Frequent / Very Frequent: (11+ times per year): 263

## About Chrome River

Chrome River Technologies, Inc. lets business flow for some of the world's largest and most respected global organizations. Our highly-configurable cloud-based expense reporting and supplier invoice automation solutions deliver an elegant and intuitive user interface, which offer the same high quality experience on a smartphone, tablet or laptop. Our SaaS products provide a world-class business rules engine and technology infrastructure, combined with a completely agile solution that supports today's changing business climate, and that the CFO, AP and travel managers, and business travelers will all love.

To find out why Chrome River is trusted by more than 1 million users at 600 organizations worldwide, contact us at +1 888 781 0088 or visit us at [www.chromeriver.com](http://www.chromeriver.com), or on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

## Press contacts

Tim Wheatcroft  
Chrome River  
[tim.wheatcroft@chromeriver.com](mailto:tim.wheatcroft@chromeriver.com)  
888 781 0088 x 468

Susan Lewis  
PAIRELATIONS  
[slewis@pairelations.com](mailto:slewis@pairelations.com)  
303 766 4343