

MAKE THE MOST OF BUSINESS TRAVEL



According to Merriam-Webster, the verb *to travel* means to go on a trip or journey, which sounds accurate if you are referring to vacation plans. Business travel, on the other hand, usually invites a less exciting connotation.

But that does not have to be the case. Sometimes you just have to adjust your perspective. In the words of the late philosopher and self-help author Wayne Dyer, "Change the way you look at things and the things you look at change."

As retina specialists, our schedules are jam-packed—with seeing patients, tending to administrative duties, keeping up on the latest developments in our subspecialty, and traveling, among other things, such as spending time with our families. Consequently, it behooves us to be as efficient as possible with our responsibilities. Business travel is a good example of a responsibility that we can make the most of by changing or adjusting our perspective.

TRAVEL TIPS AND REMINDERS

As we travel to various retina-related meetings and conferences throughout the year, it is easy to slip into autopilot and go about business as usual in meeting mode. We challenge you to shake the cobwebs from your routine and take a new look at the myriad opportunities that await you on these journeys.

Exercise Your Zygomaticus Major

Fight the urge to become one with the blank-faced horde bustling by in the airport or the conference hall. Smile like you mean it. It will do wonders for your mood, and it will positively influence those around you. Case in point: A study by a Michigan State University business scholar suggests that customer service workers who fake-smile during the day worsen their mood and withdraw from work, affecting their productivity.¹ Conversely, those who smile as a result of positive thoughts—such as delivering a well-received

lecture—improve their mood and withdraw less.¹ Retina surgeons may not strictly be in customer service, but every day we aim to please the patients we serve. So go ahead, smile.

Step Outside Your Comfort Zone

We all have a comfort zone, which changes depending on the situation in which we find ourselves. As scary as it may seem, stepping outside that comfort zone can be quite rewarding. When was the last time you struck up a conversation with an unfamiliar colleague? Sure, it is easier to gravitate to the people you already know, but making a connection with one new person at each meeting could open doors to opportunities or collaborations you have never dreamed of.

Feed Your Mind

This may sound like a bit of a no-brainer, but how much thought do you put into the reading material you take with you on planes and trains and in taxis? Pack a book or magazine that entertains you and makes you happy, and don't be afraid to read it! It may be just what the doctor ordered during or after a day of listening to lectures. And don't forget to bring along the latest issue of *Retina Today* so you can bone up on the latest clinical approaches to disease diagnosis and management before mingling with colleagues. (Shameless plug over.)

TAKE 'EM OR LEAVE 'EM

The points brought up here are merely for your consideration, and are shared with the intent of offering ways to potentially improve your experiences while traveling for business. Take from them what you will, but at the very least it cannot hurt to put on a happy face. You just might start a chain reaction. ■

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1. Scott BA, Barnes CM. A multilevel field investigation of emotional labor, affect, work withdrawal, and gender. *Acad Manage J.* 2011;54(1):116-136.