



**THE**

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**EXECUTIVE'S GUIDE**

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*To Planning  
Long-Term Corporate Travel*

[www.mastersuites.net](http://www.mastersuites.net)

# INTRODUCTION

Your next big business trip is coming up. Are you dreading all the planning, organizing, booking, phone calls, emails, and double-checking that comes along with making travel arrangements?

Perhaps you are a busy CEO of a small business who doesn't have a dedicated staff member to make travel arrangements for you. Or maybe you are an executive assistant or HR Director in charge of travel booking and scheduling for your staff. This guide is for anyone who wants to take control of their corporate travel planning process and plan with confidence.

**We take you step-by-step through the following sections:**

- How to create a reliable planning process
- Best practices for safe and secure travel
- Packing essentials
- Best travel apps and websites
- Health and wellness advice for long-term travelers
- International travel tips
- How to hire help on a budget
- Best loyalty programs for car rental, hotel, and airline

*So let's get started planning that next big trip!*

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## CREATE A PLANNING PROCESS

Do you have a tried-and-true process for planning your business trips? Developing a process will make your trip planning more productive and worry-free. So what is a proven method for travel planning?

Here's a step-by-step outline from **travel blogger Nomadic Matt**, that we've modified for business travelers. It's a great place to start creating a planning process that works for you because it puts all of your planning steps in logical order.

- Decide your destination
- Decide the length of the trip
- Research your costs
- Make sure you are within budget
- Secure your business travel credit cards
- Check for last minute deals
- Book your flight
- Book your accommodation**
- Book your car rental
- Plan your activities
- Automate your bills (if you're going away on an extended trip)
- Notify banks and card companies that you're traveling
- Pack
- Buy travel insurance



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# BEST PRACTICES FOR SAFE AND SECURE TRAVEL

## Photocopy all documents

Make paper and scanned copies of all your important identification documents. Keep the scanned copies on your mobile devices and your paper copies in a small folder or passport bag. What kinds of documents should you have copies of when you travel?



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- passport
- driver's license
- credit cards
- hotel reservations
- boarding passes

## Have an emergency credit card

There's nothing worse than losing your wallet or having it stolen while traveling on business. Always keep an emergency credit card on hand. Don't just travel with your business credit or debit card. Having a backup card will save you time and worry in case your

main card is declined for any reason or your wallet is lost or stolen. It's also a good idea to keep the emergency card in a hidden location of your laptop bag or carry-on. Make sure you have at least a few hundred dollars in your emergency credit card maximum limit, to pay for hotels, food, and transportation expenses.

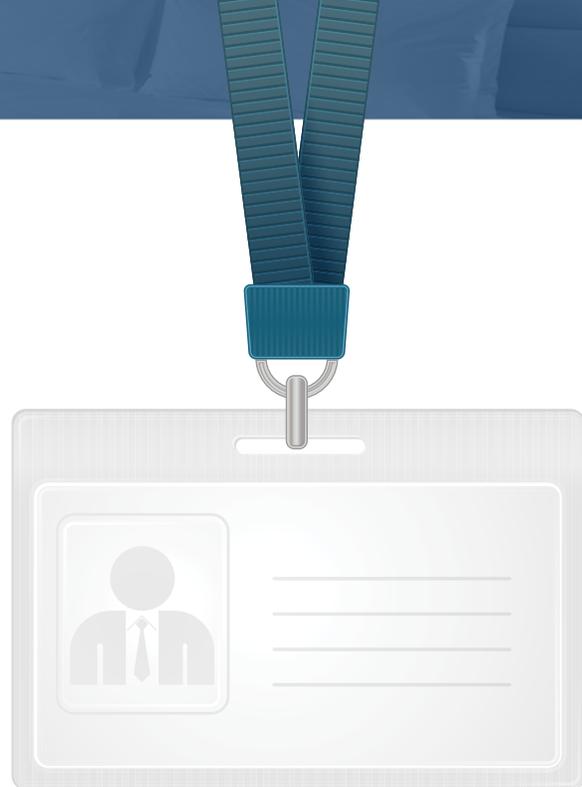
## Second ID

This goes back to the first point about keeping extra paper and digital copies of your documents, but let's expand on why it's important to have at least two forms of ID. You should have at least two forms of picture ID. In the US, the standard IDs are a passport and driver's license, but you can also purchase a photo ID if you don't have a driver's license.

## Stolen credit card

A few notes about a stolen credit card.

- Report a stolen credit card immediately. It doesn't take long for a thief to rack up thousands of dollars in purchases.



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- Keep your bank numbers on hand, on your smartphone, and in paper copy with your important documents.
- Your emergency credit card that you keep in your bag in case of a stolen or lost wallet... it's a good idea that this card be with a separate financial institution. Some banks will cancel ALL cards if one is reported stolen.



## Public transportation

Always research your transportation options before you go to an unfamiliar city or country. Depending on where you are going, public transportation may be the safest and preferred option, or car rental or cab may be a better choice. Unless you are very familiar with the areas public transportation, a cab or car rental could be a safer bet when it comes to making sure you get to your meetings and destinations on time. However, when parking or traffic is particularly bad and public transportation is easy to navigate, catching a bus or train may be the best option. If you do feel comfortable riding the train or bus, be sure to completely familiarize yourself with routes, fees, tickets, and safety, and give yourself plenty of time as well.

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## PACKING ESSENTIALS

Pack non-business items like workout clothes, pajamas, t-shirts, jeans, and tennis shoes on the bottom of your suitcase. Items at the bottom of the bag are more likely to be crushed, creased, and crumpled, so pack your business clothes on top to keep them tidy and wrinkle-free.

And don't forget the most important packing rule: Roll, don't fold. Rolling your clothes, rather than folding them helps you avoid wrinkling and gives you more space.

Always keep enough local currency cash in your wallet to pay for incidental expenses such as tolls, tips, coffee, and other small items where cards may not be accepted or convenient.

Stash cash all over the place: in your suitcase, carry on, toiletries bag, wallet, documents folder, etc. The worst thing you could do is to keep all of your documents, cash, and credit cards in a single location.

Make a packing list before you head out and get an early start. Many travelers wait until the last minute to pack and inevitably forget essential items or have vague anxiety about forgetting something important. If you have a reliable packing list and methods for your frequent trips, in addition to beginning your packing early, you will feel more at ease when it's time to go.



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# BEST TRAVEL APPS AND WEBSITES

## **Kayak -**

*This super slick website lets you compare hundreds of travel sites at once so you can find the best deals faster. Of all the countless websites like it, Kayak.com is one of our favorites because it's easy to use and visually appealing.*

## **Master Suites -**

*We offer a turnkey alternative for business travelers who need long-term accommodations. Each full size apartment is tastefully decorated, for style and convenience, and comes complete with everything from towels to blankets, cookware to wine opener, and telephone service to high speed internet. Master Suites takes care of all the details so you can stay on track and focus on your priorities. Simply make your reservation, pick up the key, and move in. Call us at (866) 792-1783 to get started.*

## **TripCase -**

*This handy app goes on your phone and keeps all your trip details in one place. You can seamlessly link your reservations into one master itinerary in TripCase thanks to their relationships with thousands of travel providers. Reservations with these connected travel providers seamlessly stay up-to-date and you even get alerts if your flight gets canceled.*

## **Quickbooks -**

*If you use QuickBooks at work, you may want to check out QuickBooks Online. Mobile apps are included free with your subscription to QuickBooks Online so you can access information from your tablet or smartphone. Business travelers can view their information, send invoices, add photos and notes so you don't forget anything while you're on the road. You can also accept electronic signatures on the spot.*

## **Shoboxed -**

*If you have to keep track of receipts and bills while you're traveling, Shoboxed makes it easy to go paperless. You can submit receipts anytime, from anywhere, and they all flow right into Shoboxed... hassle-free. There are several ways you can keep track of receipts with this app. You can use the free mobile app, forward documents to your Shoboxed email address, use prepaid envelopes to stuff paper and clutter into, and clip and submit receipts from your browser.*

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## **TripIt -**

*This app is a must-have for any business traveler, and is similar to TripCase. TripIt organizes all your travel plans into an itinerary that has all of your trip details in one place...your phone! It's as easy as forwarding your confirmation emails to TripIt and the app will automatically build an itinerary for your trip that you can access online or via your smartphone. Get maps, travel warnings and notices, boarding information, mobile alerts, share plans with co-workers and travel mates, and much more all in one place.*

## **Genius Scan -**

*Forget about adding another gadget to your list of travel essentials. Genius Scan is a scanner in your pocket! If you need to scan documents while you travel, this handy app is for you. It lets you quickly scan documents and export them as a JPEG or PDF. Another plus, you can send files directly to Dropbox or Evernote from your phone.*

## **Level Money -**

*Level Money can be a great tool for personal financial tracking, but you could also use it for your business spending if you're a frequent business traveler. Level Money automatically updates spendable cash as you make purchases each day, providing a simple, real-time picture of how you're doing in order to stay in the black. You can see at a glance your monthly income, bills, and savings and helps you make a modern budget.*

## **Dropbox -**

*Perfectly easy syncing, backup, and cloud file management can be found at Dropbox. Dropbox keeps all your files and folders, documents, and photos right where you need them. Access files anytime and don't worry about losing that laptop or hard drive with all your data. Set up auto-syncing on your laptop and use Dropbox like your hard drive. Then access your files from any computer or your phone. Dropbox is perfect for the business traveler who needs to share information with his or her team seamlessly and securely.*

## **iReconcile -**

*iReconcile is a useful app for tracking expenditures. It comes packed with a ton of great features including a built-in check register, extensive reporting, and an online backup and sync service (\$1.99/mo or \$19.99/yr). The app comes with a sophisticated budget tracker, allowing you to drill down to yearly, monthly, weekly, or even a daily budgeting.*

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## **The Converted -**

*If you are an international traveler you'll want to add this app to your list. The Converted is an all-in-one currency conversion app. It includes Imperial-metric (think Fahrenheit/Celsius and mile/kilometer) conversions as well.*

## **Uber -**

*When you're traveling and in unfamiliar territory, it's nice to have an easy way to get a ride that you can count on. Uber is a slick car service that lets you call an Uber Cab from any location, pick your driver and car, and track the location and ETA of your driver. You'll feel like a celebrity with Uber.*

## **Evernote -**

*Keep lists, notebooks, maps, and more in Evernote. It's the ultimate organization tool for a busy traveler. You can share notebooks with colleagues, too. Keep your personal notes and business notes separate, but all in one place. Best of all, Evernote syncs with all your devices so you can easily update your notes anywhere, anytime.*

## **Google Maps -**

*You don't need to pay for a fancy GPS when Google Maps gets the job done for free. Voice navigation is just one of the main perks of this powerhouse app, not to mention the high-level of reliability.*

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## HEALTH & WELLNESS FOR THE LONG-TERM TRAVELER

It's very easy to neglect your health while you're traveling for long stretches or even frequent short trips. Long flights and long car trips can be exhausting. Then, you're mentally "on" all day with clients and colleagues.

Sometimes a client or friend will be ready to take you out on the town in the evening. By the time you've eaten out all day and had a few drinks late into the evening, you make your way back to an unfamiliar room and collapse into bed. Then, after a restless (and short) night's sleep, you wake up to do it all over again. Sound familiar?

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## Allow us to offer a few tips for staying healthy and sharp while you're on the road:

- Avoid greasy airport fare
- Avoid soda and alcohol on the airplane
- Limit evenings out to once a week
- Meet friends for breakfast or coffee during the day, instead of at night
- Invite friends over to your luxury apartment instead of going out
- Exercise, go for walk, or take a swim in the evening
- Eat a balanced diet and get plenty of sleep

## INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL TIPS

### Stay in the time zone

For overseas travel, jet lag can be a concern. The best thing to do is to force yourself to stay awake or go to sleep, whatever the destination time zone requires. It will help you recover more quickly from the effects of jet lag.

### Set your watch to destination time

As you're waiting for your flight to take off, set your watch to your destination time zone. You can start getting used to the new time and mentally adjusting. By the time you land, you'll have had a more gradual transition to the new time zone.

### Notify your bank of travel plans

Many financial institutions (banks, credit unions, and credit card companies) have security measures in place to prevent credit card fraud or to prevent purchases on a card that may be stolen. Check with your bank to see what kinds of security measures they have in place for your bank cards or credit cards. For instance, some banks will put a hold on your card if there are out-of-country purchases that show up. Some foreign ATMs may swallow

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up your credit or debit card if it gets flagged stolen, or you may get outrageous fees for using a card in a foreign country. Many times a simple phone call to your bank letting them know you will be traveling is all it takes to lift any restrictions on your card.

**One frequent traveler described an experience he had one time on a long trip to Paris:**

*“I had already notified my bank of my travel plans, and still two of my cards were not working by the time I got to my hotel. I had only one card left, my backup backup card, and it was American Express which the hotel didn’t take. I finally found a hotel with an American Express ATM where I could withdraw enough cash to pay for a hotel.”*

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## SET UP YOUR PHONE FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

It’s hard to imagine how we survived traveling to unknown places in the days before smartphones. These days you can almost hop on a plane and go without much planning at all. But when you travel overseas you have to be careful about using your phone in the way you normally would.

Your mobile phone can start to rack up a huge bill if you’re not careful. Here are some tips for managing your phone settings while you’re out of the country.

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## 1. Turn off data roaming

With data roaming turned off, you won't have to worry about charges for every Facebook update, email notification, and voicemail alert that you normally wouldn't give a second thought to. Data charges can really add up if you don't turn off data roaming.

You can still make and receive phone calls, however check with your carrier on the cost per minute.

## 2. Turn off email

For iPhone users, you would do this by selecting Settings > Mail, Contacts, Calendars > Toggle off "Fetch New Data".

## 3. Turn on international roaming

International roaming service allows you to use your mobile number to make and receive calls while you are overseas or even just across the border. Remember, even if you just travel into Canada for a few hours you will want to set up your phone with international roaming.



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An AT&T iPhone is locked from all international roaming. In order to turn it on call 1-800-331-0500. For other kinds of phones, check with your service provider to find out how to turn on international roaming.

#### 4. Check for international text packages

With AT&T, you can get a package like \$10 for 100 international texts per month.

#### 5. Buy a cheap unlocked phone and local SIM card

If you are a frequent international traveler and you are at your destination country (or countries) for more than a few days at a time, it may be worth it to buy a cheap unlocked phone and purchase local SIM cards wherever you go.

**For more information about rates and traveling with your iPhone visit:**

[Traveling with iPhone4s on Verizon / Sprint International Service / Verizon International Service](#)

*Get more travel tips like these from international traveler and author, Kelsey Timmerman.*

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# HOW TO HIRE HELP ON A BUDGET

If you don't think you have the budget to hire help for your travel planning, consider the following two ways that hiring help can increase your productivity and make your travel planning more efficient.

## Hire a virtual assistant

If you need extra help planning travel and schedules but don't have the need to hire a full-time assistant, you might want to consider hiring a virtual assistant. Your VA can handle a myriad of administrative tasks, including your calendar, data entry, proofreading, prospecting, client on boarding, billing management, and of course, travel arrangements and planning.

## Work with a travel agency

The truth is that a good travel agent can save you time and save you money by finding great deals on airfare and hotel rooms. No matter what your budget, you can benefit from the many perks of using a quality travel agent.

Forbes contributor **Larry Olmsteads** writes:

*“Travel search engines and airline comparison sites have given the average traveler the illusion that they can beat the market. They cannot. There is no fare or routing you will find that a good travel agent cannot also get, but the opposite is far from true. Good travel agents routinely perform airfare “miracles,” and can even redeem your award miles when you can’t.”*

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## What else can a travel agent do for you?

- Let you choose aisle or window seat (non-frequent travelers don't get these upgrades)
- Find hotel upgrades that you couldn't get
- Make "impossible" reservations
- Easily assist with canceled flights or last-minute changes (avoid the headache of calling the airline!)



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## LOYALTY PROGRAMS

If you're a frequent business traveler, you should definitely check out loyalty programs on car rental, hotels, and airlines. Loyalty programs give you access to member discounts, rewards, and upgrades to make your travel more comfortable.

**MasterSuites uses the StayPoints rewards program.** StayPoints is a nationwide guest reward program with participating lodging providers all over the country. Providers include: independent vacation rentals, bed & breakfasts, boutique hotels, and corporate housing providers who have joined together to award guests for their stays.

The following companies won the 2014 Flyertalk Awards for best loyalty programs.

### **Hertz Gold Plus Rewards -**

Gold service is a package of upgrades including faster reservations, a speedy process to pick up your rental vehicle, and VIP treatment — all treated as a single benefit.

### **Marriott Rewards -**

Benefits for Marriott Rewards members include its concierge lounges, which offer complimentary food and drink, as well as a dedicated concierge.

### **American Airlines AAdvantage -**

this frequent flier loyalty program benefit features eight free one-way systemwide upgrades for its Executive Platinum elite level members.

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## CONCLUSION

We hope this guide makes your travel planning easier, from creating a planning process that works for you to finding the best mobile apps that make your trip more fun.

May your next extended business trip be safe, productive, and enjoyable!

## ABOUT MASTER SUITES

Master Suites offers a turnkey alternative for temporary housing. Each full size apartment is tastefully decorated for style and convenience, and comes complete with everything from towels, blankets, cookware and wine opener to telephone service and high speed internet.

All of our luxuriously furnished apartment homes are unlike anything a hotel can provide. We offer furnished and fabulous accommodations, covered parking, friendly management and all located within a geographical area that fits your needs.

Visit [www.mastersuites.net](http://www.mastersuites.net) or call us at (866) 792-1783.



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