

Title:

Travelers Get Showered With Added Comforts

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With U.S. companies spending an estimated \$179 billion on business travel this year, millions of road warriors have found themselves longing for some of the comforts of home while on the road.

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Article Body:

With U.S. companies spending an estimated \$179 billion on business travel this year, millions of road warriors have found themselves longing for some of the comforts of home while on the road.

According to Trendwatching.com, an Amsterdam-based independent trend agency, the desire for a more comfortable and better-equipped hotel is becoming a very real global trend.

"Consumers spare no expense to have the best of the best in their homes, from home movie theaters to home gyms," said Reinier Evers, founder of Trendwatching.com. "When consumers are forced to leave their homes, they tend to demand an even nicer environment from their hotels, with a touch of luxury one would normally not find at home."

Because of this, a second trend also is at play, said Evers. As hotels try to keep up and put nicer amenities in guest rooms, travelers often find themselves enjoying the comforts of their new environment so much that they want to purchase the products to replicate the experience at home.

"Hotels are obviously already capitalizing on this by selling customers the luxurious appointments formerly found exclusively in their hotels," Evers said.

In fact, guests can purchase just about anything they find in a hotel room these days, from beds and towels to showerheads and soaps. Upscale hotels jumped on the trend early, some even offering catalogs. However, mid-market hotels have recently found their own niche. Holiday Inn Express, the fastest-growing hotel

chain in its segment, is rolling out a \$20 million bathroom makeover in its more than 1,300 properties in the United States and Canada.

The focus of the upgrade, called the SimplySmart guest bath experience, is a Stay Smart showerhead by Kohler that was tested by more than 7,000 guests at 28 hotels across the country before being installed in late 2004.