

## Never Completely Out of Touch

The problem with business travel, to put it bluntly, is that you are not in your office. If you are a manager or a project leader, your need to stay in touch with your team and what is going on at all times is crucial. It would seem that this need is at cross-purposes with the idea of business travel. But with modern technology and a bit of coordination on your part, you can maintain a reasonable level of connectivity to your important projects and team activities even while driving in the rental car or waiting out a flight at the airport.

The actual technology you use to stay connected may change over time. Whereas in the past we could only use pay phones at airports, we have evolved technologically so you can travel and access your network via your cell phone, wireless PC or an assortment of other devices. So the first step is to identify the type of technology that satisfies your need for connectivity as well as enabling you to work productively in diverse locations such as the airport, your airplane seat or your hotel room.

As you conduct a technical review of the available technology, be careful to research the durability of the equipment you are taking on the road. You may be able to afford the most sophisticated equipment on the market today. But if that equipment cannot survive the rigors of travel including being banged around in your luggage, exposure to heat, cold and moisture or just about any other harsh condition you might throw it into, it isn't going to be the kind of equipment you want by your side on a long business trip.

Once you settle on the equipment, you should configure it or have it configured for internet access as well as the ability to tap into your corporate intranet and network. It is crucial that you can communicate with your team and access corporate files so you can stay on top of what is going on with your projects at home. For example, if you have your project team file status reports each Friday morning, you must be able to review those and give directions for action items to take that come from those reports quickly and efficiently, even if you are on a ten hour flight from Europe.

To manage your phone contacts, the idea of just putting the "out of office" auto-answer on your office message service is so last decade. Instead, you can forward your office phone to your cell phone and receive your phone calls in remote so you can conduct your business as though you were on site throughout your trip.

There is adequate technology available currently for you to be able to access and operate your desktop computer back on your desk at the office even while

traveling. One such service is gotomypc.com. But there are many such services or your IT department may have a methodology to enable that access that you can use if you get them involved in your trip planning. By accessing your PC daily or several times daily, you can activate your instance of Microsoft Outlook or whatever your email software is and read and respond to important business emails as you relax in your hotel room after your business meetings out of town. These are just a few of the technologies that make it possible to perform virtually any function from remote that you could have done only in the office in the past. So don't accept the limitations of the road. Investigate how to be fully connected as you go about your business travel and the outcome will be that you can keep all of your important business projects moving forward simultaneously.

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