

Title:

20 Tips for Being Productive While Traveling

Word Count:

1003

Summary:

For many mortgage professionals, frequent travel is a way of life. A big concern of frequent travelers is how to remain productive without access to the normal resources.

Keywords:

travel, business travel, business trip, mortgage seminar

Article Body:

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For many mortgage professionals, frequent travel is a way of life. A big concern of frequent travelers is how to remain productive without access to the normal resources. Sometimes, that first trip leaves you feeling like a fish out of water. Especially if you didn't anticipate your customer's needs. But with each new journey, you will learn more ways to function efficiently. With a little planning, you can make your time away transparent to those you communicate with daily. Here are a few tips to make it happen:

1. Make a list of the things that need to be accomplished before your departure. Rate locks, file submissions, or any other critical appointments should be handled before you leave.
2. Contact processors, loan officers, underwriters, and other individuals to let them know you'll have limited availability from _____ to _____.
3. Sign-up for an e-fax or other electronic fax service that will allow you to view, send, and receive faxes over the Internet. This will allow you to function just as if you were in the office.
4. Make a resource list for the things you will need to do while away. Include phone and fax numbers, website addresses, access codes, and passwords. Store this data on your pc, phone, or both.
5. Make a copy or scan an image of documents you may wish to reference while away. This will allow you to stay on top of the most important issues.
6. Save important letters, forms, and files to a jump drive, a CD, or e-mail

them to yourself so that you can access them as needed. Convert documents that you would normally fax to a PDF format so they can be e-mailed but not altered.

7. Check the quality of your cell and laptop batteries. Get new ones if you will be without access to electricity to recharge for long periods of time. Be sure to pack your chargers as well.

8. Add a wireless card to your laptop if it does not have one already. Although your hotel may have their own Internet café, these rooms are sometimes crowded or have limited hours of availability. If the hotel charges for linking to their wireless network, it may be cheaper to purchase a wireless connection card through your cellular service provider.

9. Pack an Ethernet cord and a phone cord. This will allow you to get online no matter what type of connectivity your hotel has. You can log on to AOL or some other network.

10. Take a phone card as a backup. It may come in handy in areas where your cell phone signal drops. Used in conjunction with a cell phone, you can eliminate hotel phone charges altogether.

11. Pack pain reliever, antacid, and cold medicine just in case. If you have to buy these things on the road, they'll cost double what they normally do.

12. Download audio files to an Ipod, mp3, or CD. Music or motivational audios may be just what you need to balance your day. You can also listen to a replay of a training session.

13. During your trip, incorporate as many of your normal activities as possible. Continue to exercise. Drink plenty of water and eat right. Take your vitamins. Keep in contact with family and friends. Let them know what time to call you.

14. Plan your day before going to your daily meeting, training, or appointment. This will allow you to make the most of breaks, lunches, or other dead time.

15. Make use of the special features on your phone. Text messaging and Internet access can be a lifesaver when you're on the road.

16. Get the scoop on your hotel's amenities in advance. The last thing you want is to have trouble connecting with your customers and your team because of limited resources. Go online to the hotel's corporate website for a virtual tour. You might also check out ratings and feedback on Hotels.com. Ask lots of questions.

17. Take along a healthy snack and a bottle of water or two. If you experience a flight delay or get stuck in rush hour traffic, you won't be bothered by hunger or thirst.

18. Pack as light as possible. Pulling heavy luggage plus a laptop through the airport is no joke. Choose a jacket that will get you through the week. Bring a pair of dress shoes that go with everything and a pair of sneakers or sandals for down time. Your feet will thank you. Switch up your shirt/blouse with a basic pair of pants/skirt. Take travel size toiletries instead of full size ones to make more room in your luggage. And for the ladies: leave some of your hair artillery, fragrances, and makeup at home. This stuff alone can take up a full piece of luggage. You'll look just as good with the bare essentials.

19. Initiate contact with your customers and team members early in the day while you're away. This will allow you to deal with challenges or concerns at a time when it is convenient for you. Otherwise, you may find yourself bombarded with phone calls and emergencies that could have been avoided had you made contact earlier.

20. Be realistic. There is no way that everything is going to be perfect when you're away. If it were, then no one would need you in the first place. Take care of the biggest priorities. Give training and guidance before you leave and then delegate as many projects as you can. Make a plan to take care of other things within the first few days of your return.

When you plan your business trip well, you will feel far less pressure and frustration. It allows you to focus on the real purpose of your trip. You might even have the opportunity to get the rest and relaxation you find difficult to squeeze in at home. So, don't fret about your next trip. Think more about how it will enhance your business and rejuvenate your mind and body. Happy traveling!