

Take the Family With You

Business travel can be rewarding, interesting, profitable and broadening for the business traveler. But there are some downsides to the life on the road especially if you must travel for business often. Besides the occasional airport delay or layover and the ever present issue of how weather affects your business trips, it is always hard to say goodbye to your family as you go out of town to accomplish the mission of your business trip.

For many business people, one solution is to take their family with them on business trips if the nature of the trip will accommodate such arrangements. Few would deny the road weary business traveler the joys of having family with them on a challenging trip. And for your family, not only does this mean more time with you, it can be a big adventure for everybody involved.

Taking your spouse on a business trip is entirely different scenario than if you are planning a trip to include the spouse and children. In that your spouse is an adult, can rent a car and plan a day without help and mold his or her schedule around yours, a spouse can be a huge plus to you because you have that familiar face to greet you in the hotel room when you return from your business affairs of the day. And there is a strange vicarious enjoyment to be had as you are working hard to know your spouse is taking in the pleasures of the local area which you will hear about that night.

Taking the kids on a business trips gets to be more of a logistical challenge and there are some real limitations to the kind of trip that will work as a full family outing. One of the big factors in determining if this trip is a good one for the whole family to enjoy is location. If the trip is to a popular destination such as Orlando or California where your spouse and children can find plenty to do each day, then it's a good situation for bringing the family along.

Other locations that make great choices to include the family are historic and memorable cites such as New York, New Orleans, San Francisco or some of the great overseas destinations like London, Paris or Rome. If the children have your spouse to guide their tours, those trips with you can be events to remember and tremendous learning experiences that they will be talking about to their grandkids decades from now.

Obviously, the time of year for your business travel is a determining factor on whether the children can tag along. Summer business trips work well for such plans but if your travel will interrupt the children's school schedule, it usually is not feasible to include them. Now in a case where there is

significant educational benefit to the trip, there may be some concessions to be made to the children out of school if they will gain valuable experiences from the trip.

But all of these factors, including just including your spouse on the trip will hinge on one important factor that only you can determine. And that is how much time you will be able to spend with the family when you are working and traveling. It is well known that business travel also frequently means long yours and then business dinners and negotiations that can go into the night. If you are going on a trip that such dedication to the task is necessary, it's best not to bring the family. It does them no good to come along on an exciting business outing only to find themselves never seeing you until the flight home. They will feel frustrated and you will wonder what value there was to the expense and trouble of bringing them if you could not enjoy them except to kiss them good night in their hotel beds and good-bye in the morning.

But if all of the factors fall into place, taking the family along on an occasional business trip can take a humdrum trip and put some real fun into it. So keep your eye on that business travel agenda you have. There may be a few junkets where the family would fit in nicely.

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