

Tipping as a Business Strategy

Tipping is an odd practice primarily because it is common and expected in some professions and not at all in others. As adults, we become accustomed to tipping in the normal day in day out activity of our business and private lives.

But when it comes to tipping on a business trips, its best to think about the use of tipping as a common courtesy in light of your business trip and how it can be used to benefit you during the trip. To do that, think about the tip as a practice and why we tip. For the most part we do it because it is expected. If we think about how we tip at all, it is in the context that the tip is part of the server's income and we want to help someone who did a good job for us.

But one of the best justifications for tipping comes down to nothing more than building a low level business relationship with the server so you can expect good service the next time you need it. On a business trip, you develop a lot of very short lasting relationships. But you want the best from those who can make your trip and your accommodations enjoyable and uneventful.

So if there is a hotel restaurant that you will be eating in each day, you know you will see that waiter and the staff of that restaurant again. A good tip policy can go a long way to assure that your service will be top notch every time you dine in that restaurant. This same principle applies to leaving a little tip for the cleaning crew who takes care of your room.

I had a situation in a fine hotel where I wanted the staff to leave me more than one package to make coffee in my in room coffee maker each day. Sure, I could have gone out and bought my own coffee. But on a business trip, you depend on being served so you can focus on your mission. So I left a note to the cleaning crew along with a nice tip. Each day I had more than the number of coffee packages left for me. Everybody wins in that situation.

Tipping is not a difficult skill to master. When tipping for a meal, you can write the tip directly onto your bill. Now when you order room service, there may be a question as to whether you should give the delivery person a tip for bringing the food. Often room service charges a fee for the service already. So in theory, you don't need to tip that person. But remember, you may want good service in subsequent nights or in future stays. So slipping a tip to that delivery service person just to make sure they know that you appreciate good service makes sense.

When tipping taxi drivers or the hotel doorman, it's appropriate to fold the money in the palm of your hand and hand it to him or her in the form of a

handshake. If they are holding the door for you, they will look down to see you are giving a tip when your hand moves out. That moment of contact is important so they look at you and know you recognize their good service and remember you for future reference.

The amount of tips is pretty much standard. 15% is a standard tip for most meals or for the taxi drive. \$1 per bag is standard for a doorman or bellhop who is helping you with your bags. Now if you only have one bag, it might be a good idea to bump that up a bit. Never tip with change, always with folded bills.

Preparing for tipping as you travel is part o your preparations. You should assure you have plenty of small denomination bills even before you leave for the airport, as it is common to need to tip shuttle drivers and waiters at the airport or even the stewardess on board the airplane if you buy a drink from her (or him). As your business trip progresses, keep an eye on your cash levels so you have plenty of spare cash for additional tipping. Business travel is a tipping intensive experience and you should be prepared so you don't find yourself embarrassed and unable to reward those who make your trip more enjoyable along the way.