

Travel to Foreign Shores

International business travel is rapidly becoming common to work out deals and to organize international partnerships. The economy is becoming more global as the world becomes "flat" due to increased communications and the rise of the economies around the world. No longer are businesses deals assumed to occur only on a national scale. To look at the business community as an international neighborhood is in step with the markets of this century. And that means that you could easily find yourself flying overseas to conduct the business of your company. And international travel takes some preparation.

Long before you book your flights to travel overseas, you will need to get your documentation in order so you can pass through customs and get on your way. Due to increased security, an up to date passport has become essential to even travel to adjacent countries. Due to the increased requirement of passports, it takes longer to get that documentation together so plan early to secure your passport so you don't come up short when it is time to conduct your overseas business.

Also, keep in mind that a visa is required to travel to some countries. So when you set up the business meetings, find out from your contact at your destination country what is required. To get a visa, you will need to have had your passport for at least six months. In addition, you will need an original copy of an invitation from your host in the destination country. Those documents will be taken to the local embassy of your destination country to get your visa issued to you. So plan these steps if a visa is necessary for your trip.

Next to the legal documents, health issues are second in priority to attend to for a successful business trip. You may need to get your vaccinations up to date for certain destinations of your trip. Consult your doctor so you are ready. Do some preparation for the unlikely chance that you will have a health emergency overseas. This is a place where travel insurance is a good idea. If you are hurt or have a severe illness overseas, you will need that kind of assistance to get medical care and to get moved back home for long-term care.

Also be sure your medical documents are available and copied in several places should you become separated from them. You want to be able to access insurance information, emergency contacts, information about medication you need and emergency contacts even if you lose everything overseas. One way to do that is to scan critical documents and store them on the internet in a folder that you can get to from anywhere in the world.

Use much of the same travel savvy that keeps you safe traveling domestically

when preparing to go to a foreign country. You probably do not have knowledge of the town you are going to and where the safe places are to stay and dine and what neighborhoods to avoid. You can use very current travel books and internet information to learn that kind of "street knowledge" before you leave. But nothing replaces a local contact. Use your business contacts on the other end of your travel plans to advise you on not only where to go but where to avoid when coming into town.

Your contact in the foreign country you are traveling to can also give you insights about how to handle transportation and security in his or her country. Hailing a taxi may not work the same over there as it does here. And you want to avoid getting into a vehicle that is not a legitimate carrier who may not take you where you want to go or should go once they pick you up at the airport.

Also, spend some time learning local customs and methods of communication. Be aware of how you act, stand and use your hands as you could without knowing set off a dangerous situation. For example, the thumbs up sign in western cultures means affirmation and success. But in the Middle East, a thumbs up is the same as showing the middle finger is to us. You don't want to flip off a policeman in Saudi Arabia just because you didn't know that.

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