



Planning the  
**perfect**  
business trip

**What does successful business travel  
look like for the modern worker?**

Premier Inn   
*Rest easy*

# All change in business travel

The business world is busy with thinkers and analysts trying to get to grips with the future of work. From the need for flexibility, to the tools everyone requires to make the next generation of work a success.

A lot of this conversation focuses on technology and the workplace. However, it's equally important to explore other vital areas of business life that have experienced a lot of change in a short space of time, and are now adjusting – like travel.

Prior to 2020, most businesses had a fairly good understanding of who would travel for work, why, and what their primary needs would be. Today, that understanding is not quite as firm as it once was.

The diversification of hybrid and mobile workers has led to new reasons to travel for work, and different priorities when on the road. Whether that's people staying overnight between their two days in the office, taking advantage of increased remote working by moving to a job far from home, or simply boosting the amount of bleisure trips they make. Meanwhile, those travelling for site visits, conferences or because their job necessarily entails travel (such as construction, hospitality and healthcare) are still on the go.

This means a change (and even a potential increase) in the frequency and purpose of business travel.

With a 2021 Department for Transport study with [Ipsos Mori](#) reporting that the proportion of people travelling for business, and the frequency of travel, will return to 'just below' pre-pandemic levels. And that over a quarter (27%) of businesses expect to make more trips than before.

Naturally, this is important to business stayers. However, the primary groups feeling this are travel managers and bookers, responsible for arranging and planning business travel in their organisations. And they face a common set of challenges, including:



**Stayer happiness with their hotel choice (a concern that increases with frequency of booking)**



**Losing company money due to cancellations and inflexible booking policies**



**Failing to meet the needs of stayers around facilities, comfort and room features**



**Booking in an inappropriate location for the needs of the business or the stayer**

We at Premier Inn want to understand more about these challenges, how to overcome them, and how to contribute to a 'perfect' business trip in changeable circumstances. So, we asked a group of travel managers and stayers about their experiences with business travel, and what they look for when booking.

## Here's what they told us...





## Our research respondents

We spoke to two core groups to understand more about business trips and travel, and what makes their experience perfect.



### The travel managers

- We surveyed **500 travel managers** and bookers responsible for arranging business travel in their organisations
- **Over a third (37%)** of travel manager respondents book travel weekly (**20% monthly, 20% fortnightly** and just **12% daily**)
- They tend to look for **simple booking tools (98%), free Wi-Fi (73%)** and **safe locations (61%)**



### The stayers

- We surveyed **1,000 UK employees** who regularly travel for business
- Respondents were sourced from companies of all sizes, and from a range of industries
- The most common reasons for travel are **external meetings (55%)** and **conferences (53%)**
- Location is everything – **94% want amenities close by**, and **60% prioritise location**



# Trends for travel managers

The first thing to note about travel managers is how important they are to the rest of their businesses – and how their involvement raises the likelihood of a successful business trip.

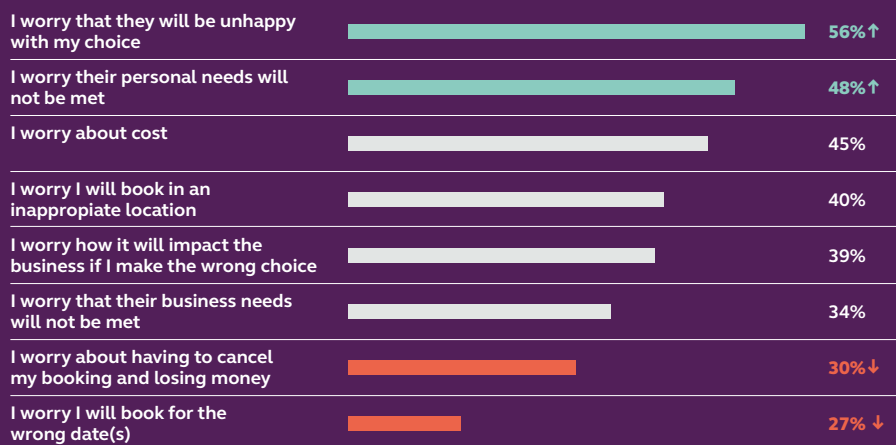
When talking to stayers, our research found that negative experiences with business travel are less likely when a third party (such as a travel manager or PA) books the trip (25%) than when an individual does (37%). Put simply, the experience, diligence and knowledge of travel managers is invaluable – and getting more so.

And those same travel managers are acutely aware of their importance to successful business travel, which translates to a series of pressures and challenges they feel when booking.

Almost three-quarters (71%) say they are either somewhat or very worried about ensuring they book the right travel and accommodation for people. With Fig.1 unpacking that finding, showing that overall unhappiness, failure to meet personal needs, cost and location are all on the mind of the travel manager.

The travel manager's ability to contribute to a perfect business trip depends on getting a thorough understanding of how to avoid these pitfalls that come with booking business travel, and exploring where their choices can make a big difference.

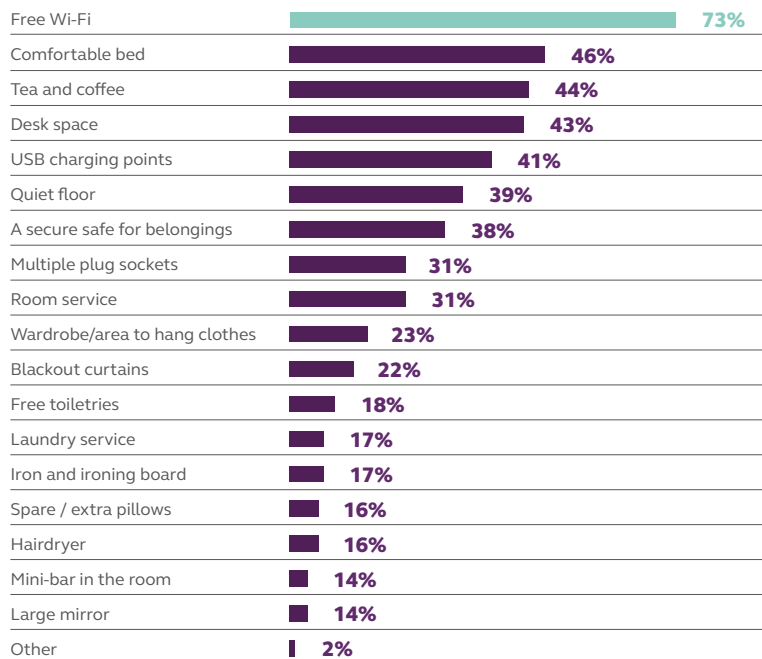
**Fig.1**  
**Why are you worried about getting travel/accommodation wrong when booking for other members of staff?**



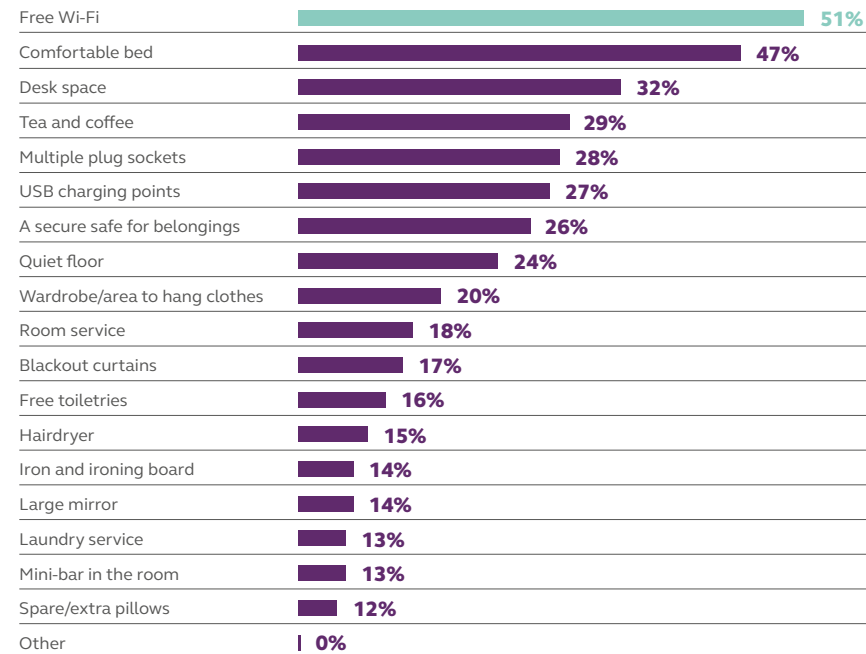
## From passable to perfect

Every stayer a travel manager books for will be a little bit different in their priorities and preferences. But there are still some requirements that every trip has to offer. Fig.2 and Fig.3 show exactly what's on the list, according to what travel managers are asked for and what stayers themselves see as top priority. In both cases, free Wi-Fi, comfort, working facilities like desks and plug sockets, and in-room tea and coffee come first.

**Fig.2**  
What are you asked for the most by people for whom you are booking travel / accommodation?



**Fig.3**  
What are the most important in-room facilities for you when staying at a hotel/accommodation for business purposes?



The best way to see these findings is as a baseline for good – hygiene factors necessary for any trip. We're interested in perfect. And that's where the priorities of the business stayer, the needs of the travel manager, and the profound shifts we've seen in the working world all come together.

## Here are three focus areas where we see that happening:

### 1. Focus on flexibility

It's well accepted that flexibility is increasingly vital in every area of business life. As employees want more choice around where and when they work.

In travel, this translates to offering truly flexible booking and cancellation policies that are built for business as it is today. Indeed, analysts [McKinsey](#) have recommended that businesses embed agility into their business travel plans. And that suppliers consider **'offering radically transparent flexibility policies and allow customers a greater range of options with different associated fees for cancellations and changes'**.

The groups we surveyed would all agree and appreciate these sort developments. **Almost all travel managers (93%) cite flexibility around cancellations as important to them when booking hotels.** And Fig.4 shows the need for indeed

simple booking tools among travel managers (increasing with booking frequency). **While most stayers (56%) want flexibility around check-in and check-out, and speedy service (50%).**

To thrive as work changes, travel must explore ways to give businesses ultimate flexibility and choice, both at booking and throughout the experience.

For some, this may mean a greater role for apps that streamline and improve the travel manager and stayer experience. For others, it's simply ensuring that changes can be made easily and quickly through intuitive, business-specific tools. Whatever it is, it's a move towards perfect for both the travel manager and the stayer.

### 2. Focus on values

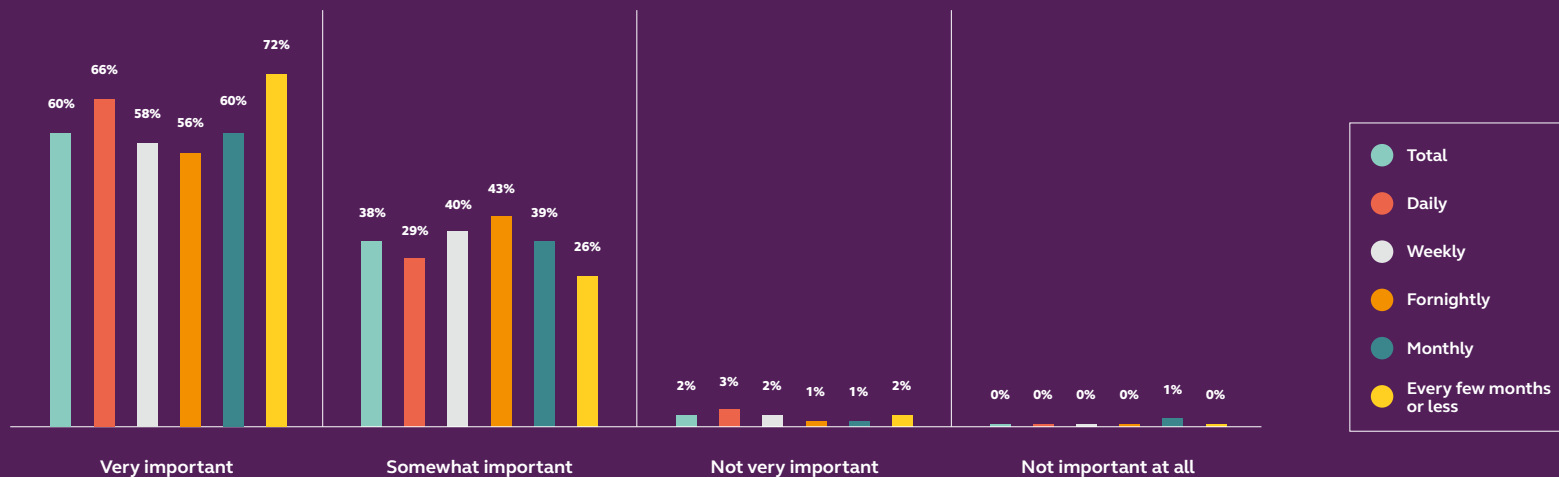
Moving beyond hotel and travel essentials, and innovations that can improve the experience, our research also surfaced several surprising findings that give us a new perspective on what perfect is in business travel.

First among them, it's the need for shared values between a business and the hotel it's booking with for business trips. Almost all of our respondents (93%) say that it's important for their organisation to work with **like-minded, environmentally responsible companies** for business travel.

Part of this is perhaps due to the requirement of all businesses to report on progress towards ESG targets, including the role of partnerships. But it also points to the increasingly influential role of brand purpose today, and the need to align with businesses that share the same views, objectives and goals.

Environmental and social credentials may not be something that makes a perfect trip for the stayer, but it certainly is for the business overall.

**Fig.4**  
How important is it that you are able to book travel/accommodation using a simple booking tool?



### 3. Focus on youth

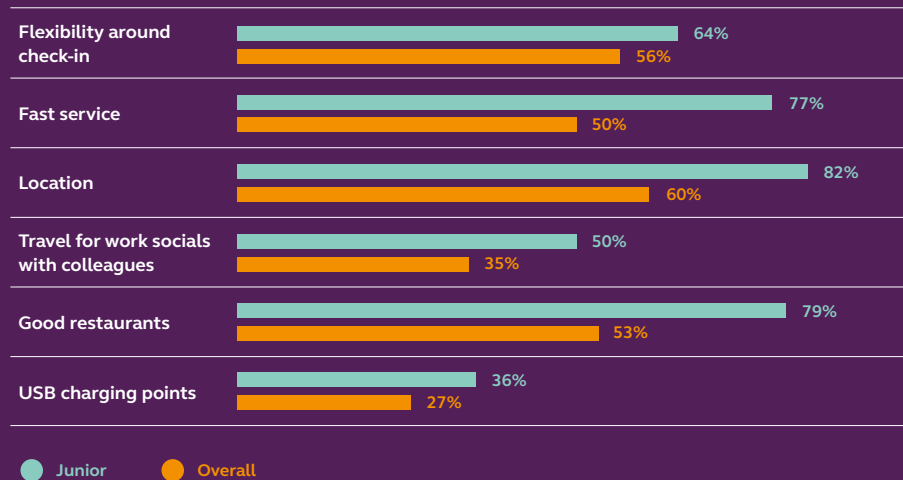
It's well established that Gen Z is more likely than previous generations to demand that their employers and the brands they favour demonstrate values and behaviours they align with. And that extends to travel too, with the [World Tourism Forum Institute](#) suggesting that Gen Z 'incorporates its sustainability focus into its journey habits'.

As such, it's worth taking note of the needs and wants of Gen Z. Not only are they future business leaders and decision-makers, the World Tourism Forum Institute predicts that they will be the most willing generation yet for business travel – even perhaps moving jobs for more travel opportunities.

Our own research backs this up, finding that **32% of junior staff travel more for business now than pre-pandemic**, versus 23% overall. And that they over index in a number of areas, each of which points to an observable trend, including their **greater need for flexibility and speed, their affinity for bleisure trips** (again, cited by the World Tourism Forum Institute), and **demand for the technology they use in their personal lives at work** (see Fig.5).

By providing these things now, travel managers can set up perfect stays over the long term as more Gen Z workers enter their businesses.

**Fig.5**  
How junior staff differ from overall findings.



### Key takeaways from trends for travel managers



Environmental credentials matter to businesses when they are booking travel arrangements



When a travel manager is involved, the likelihood of a negative experience decreases



Simple booking tools matter more with frequency of use

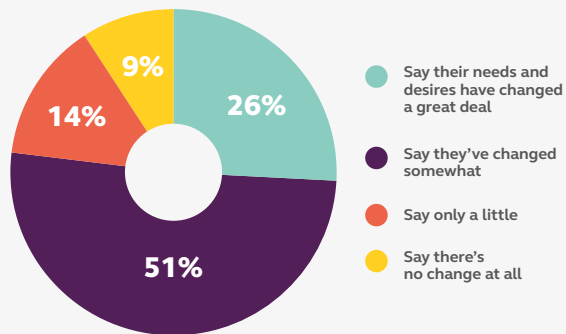


Junior or younger staff are changing the game for business travel

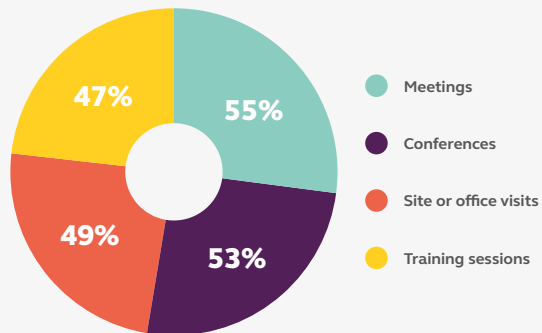


## Spotlight on stayers

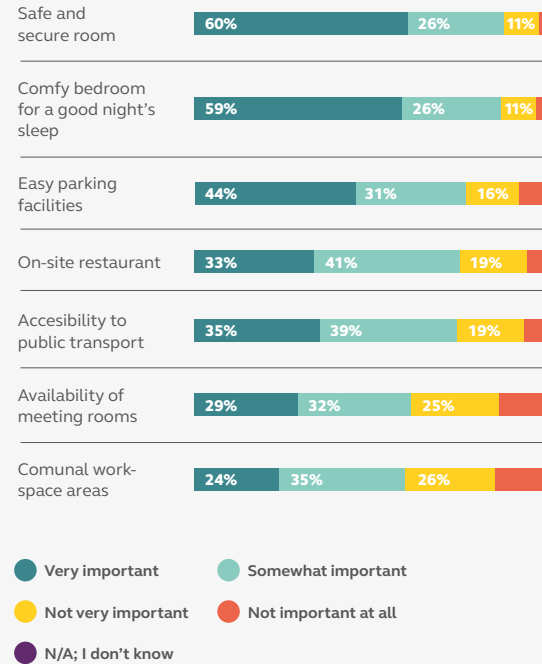
Stayers note a change in priorities since the pandemic, aligning with the shifts we're seeing in work and how they relate to business travel. From a greater requirement for flexibility to the need for speed. As well as the emergence of a younger generation of travellers, with different priorities and needs.



Our respondents' reasons for travelling for business are unlikely to have changed from pre-pandemic levels.



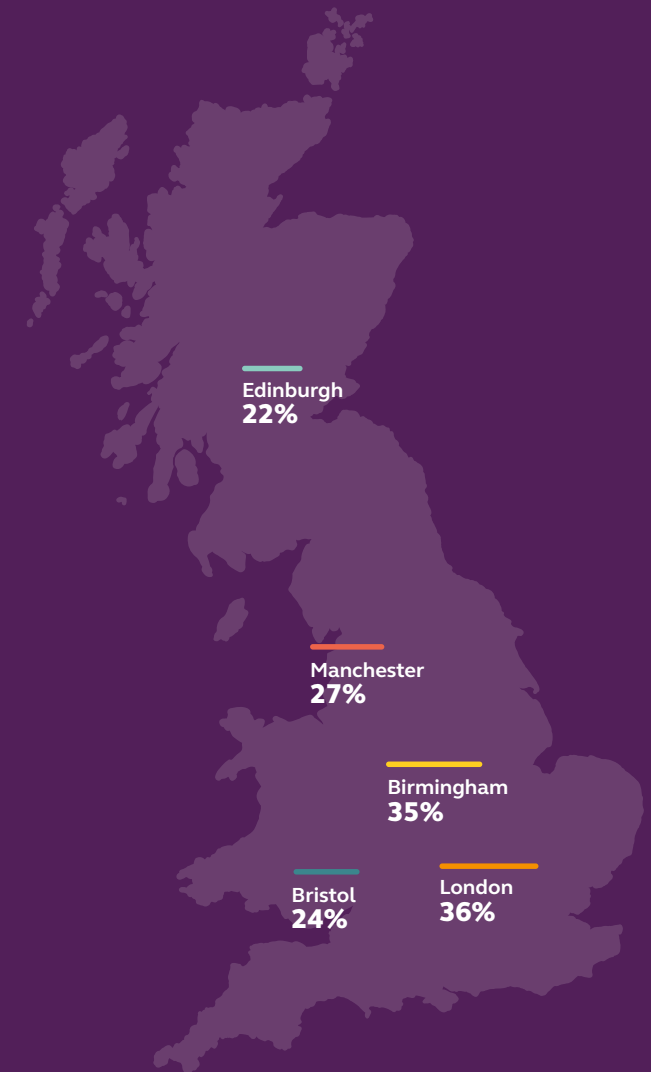
### How important are the following hotel facilities for you when staying away on business?



Showing again that comfort, connectivity and business-ready facilities are absolute table stakes, before any important extras can be considered.

## Location matters

These are the most popular locations for our respondents.





# Time to travel?

Changes in business mean changes in business travel, and today 'perfect' will mean a different thing depending on role, age and even impact on corporate reputation and ESG. Think of the hybrid workers using hotels for a diverse range of reasons, the growing importance of shared environmental and social values, or an emerging generation that's keen to travel for business – but is also moving the dial on what's expected after they pack their bags.

For travel managers, this naturally means a lot more to consider when they're going about their day. But complex requirements needn't keep them up at night.

By choosing the right travel business partners, they'll ensure they get flexibility that stayers want, and that keeps costs due to change and cancellations down. Alongside the stayer-centred innovation and service that makes trips great, and even the shared environmental goals that maximise their business' positive impact on the world, as they travel around it. Importantly, they'll also make their own lives simpler by reducing their reliance on reviews and research for every business booking.

With all that in place, travel managers will be doing their bit to plan the perfect business trip every time – whatever perfect might mean.

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