

Emergency Exits and Other Road Warrior Hints

Brooks Hull
Director of Development
University of Oklahoma, College of Engineering

Molly Ann Mroczynski
Executive Director, External Affairs
Henry Samueli School of Engineering and Applied Science

Colleen Zimmerman
Associate Director – Major Gifts Program
University of Michigan, College of Engineering

Travel

- Sign up for rewards programs and be as loyal as possible. Double Dip!
 - Hotels, airlines, rental cars, airport parking
- If attending a conference, visit alums in that region. Partner with your Alumni Association and serve as a speaker for an alumni club event.
- Pack clothes that do not wrinkle and of the same color to mix and match; Ladies, take just one bag and pair of shoes.....

Parking

- Find the fastest, safest and least expensive parking facility at the airport.
 - Does your university have a discount agreement with one
 - Parking Spot - earn free parking the more you park there

Airlines

- Find a routine that works for you to quickly get through the security line. Use the same routine every time and you will be less stressed.
- Avoid wearing a lot of metal objects (jewelry, belts) through security so you will not have to undress in front of everyone, and hold up the line.
- Fly into smaller regional airports like Burbank, Orange County, Oakland (CA), Houston Hobby, Fort Myers; it is easier to get in and out.
- Wear headphones to block out irritating people at the airport, travelers who want to talk to you during the entire flight, crying babies and out-of-control children.
- Most airline headphone jacks are now universal so you can watch the in-flight movie for free.
- Always carry change. Don't give the flight attendant a \$20 to pay for your drink! Bring about \$20 in \$1's to tips at the airport, bellman and valets.

Airlines Cont'd

- Southwest Airlines - online check-in at 24 hours before boarding will guarantee an "A" seat (hence an exit or aisle seat); can be done from a Palm or Blackberry.
- When flying Southwest Airlines, notice the flight attendant standing in the exit row when you enter the plane. The exit row is a convenient place for attendants to stand during the open seating boarding process so don't hesitate to ask for the seat where they are standing. It is amazing how many people walk right past the good seats because an attendant is standing in the row.
- Southwest Airlines? Cough as folks board the plane and you will likely have an empty seat next to you! (Ask Leigh Ann Hartman of Kansas)
- If you fly Northwest Airlines, \$15 will buy a premium seat if you check-in online at 24 hours before boarding and use the "choose your seat" option.

Airlines Cont'd

- Learn off peak flight times, fly standby, and carry on your luggage.
- Ask if there is a space to hang your jacket.
- Always wear long sleeves and pants! You never know who will be sharing the airline seat next to you.
- Most carry-on bags will fit vertically into an overhead bin if slid in with the wheels facing out. Use this method to rearrange other traveler's bags and fit your bag into a crowded overhead bin.
- Don't be THAT GUY!!!
- Never sit in First Class, unless it's the last seat. You will encounter a donor...OK, well, maybe....
- Give the flight attendants gifts from your University.
- Be nice to the flight attendants. You WILL get free drinks!

Rental Cars

- Rent a reasonable car - your donor will wonder if you pull up in a rented Porsche.
- Carefully consider renting convertibles. You never know when you might take the wrong exit with the top down (unless it's San Diego).
- Decline the insurance option - you are likely covered under the policy of your university, your own policy or you may be covered under one of your credit cards.
- Sign up for preferred services, curbside pickup, etc. - saves time and does not cost anything extra.
- Book early and online.
- Ask for a government rate or special rate for institutional organizations.
- Get a four-door, you'll need it somewhere down the road.
- Pack an extra hanger and hang your jacket in the car when driving (the hotel hangers are perfect for this).
- Learn what to do if you wreck the rental car.

Hotels

- Try to stay in decent hotels—not the cheapest and not the most expensive; book early, online, and ask for a government or special rate.
- Marriott Gold Members receive concierge level services without paying higher costs; just book a regular room and members receive an upgrade. Services include free breakfast and light dinner/snack/dessert at night in the lounge. Marriott will also cash a personal check for Gold level, and higher, members. Hilton Hotels provide the same service.
- Utilize and update www.Tripadvisor.com - an online hotel reference site.
- Don't stay in a room next to an elevator or ice machine!
- Once you find a hotel you like, stay with them often and you will get perks. A clerk/valet/maid/bartender who remembers you will go a long way to a comfortable stay.

Hotels Cont'd

- If female, don't hesitate to ask a hotel staff member to walk you to your room or car
- Don't look under the mattress. You really don't want to know what has been put under there.
- When you get to town go to a grocery store and buy several bottled waters - they are cheaper than the ones in the hotel room.
- When making hotel reservations - make sure the hotel has an internet connection.
- Take Febreze with you. It does wonders for stale clothing and a musty hotel room.
- Take a couple of door stops with you to put under the hotel door as well as under the adjoining room door.

Meals

- Write the name of the donor on that back of the meal receipt after your meeting - it helps with reimbursements when you get home
- Don't grab for the check to quickly with a donor - many times they will pay even though you invited them
- Order mid-level wine, choose local flavor and remember your donor's preferences.
- Change it up: brunch, breakfasts, etc.

Other tips....

- Take care of yourself while traveling. Exercise regularly and eat right on the road; work smart but don't wear yourself out.
- Find out what schedule works best for you: you might prefer to drive and start in one city while visiting alumni all the way to your next destination.
- If you are a night owl, change hotels to be close to each morning's first appointment so you don't have to get up so early.
- When traveling with colleagues, split a rental car, valet and schedule.
- Have a good sense of direction and know how to read a map or get GPS!
- Be careful about appearances - especially when traveling with members of the opposite sex.
- Book travel yourself online or have a good staff.

Other tips....Cont'd

- Never compromise safety for cost. It just isn't worth it.
- Have a list of donors you can call at the last minute to visit just in case you have a cancellation.
- Clean your house and do laundry before you leave home. It's nice to come home to a clean house.
- Sometimes the most direct route is not the fastest (construction). Ask your donor for the fastest way to your meeting place.
- Always let your staff/family know your travel plans.
- When traveling, be polite and smile. You're always representing your institution.
- Register your medical prescriptions at a national chain so if you get sick on the road, your doctor can call in a prescription with no insurance hassles.

Other tips...Cont'd

- Having a hard time sleeping on the road? Take ½ of an Excedrin PM and you will gently go to sleep without morning effects.
- If you frequent a particular extended stay hotel and shop for your own groceries, ask the local grocery store for a customer loyalty saver card, just like you use at home. You will save your school money!
- T-Mobile Wi-Fi internet access is at Starbucks but Wayport (subscription service) access is available at many McDonalds throughout the country. Think how much money you can save: large Coke vs. Grande latte.
- Rumored that Verizon Wireless has the best nationwide Broadband access.
- Be respectful; turn your phone/PDA off when you are in a restaurant or with a donor. Don't be THAT GUY or Bluetooth Boy!!!
- Put critical documents on a web-based network or attach to emails if you need to edit/print from the road.
- Use a micro storage device (USB) rather than tote your laptop.

Other tips...Cont'd

- Use your Outlook Calendar to enter information for donor profiles, etc. You will use less paper and it's easy to access.
- Ship materials to yourself at the hotel rather than lugging it along with you.
- Keep the soap, shampoo, conditioner, lotion and other freebies to take home and give to homeless shelters (or keep the good stuff for your guest bathrooms).
- It's OK to piggyback a long weekend onto a business trip.
- Be a good parent and get the free "wings" or kids packs from the airline.
- Take the on-board magazines, local hotel magazines, etc. It's good reading and one of your donors might be featured in one...
- Call your loved ones just to tell them you love them. It'll make you both feel good.

Smile, you'll be home soon!

Engineering Development Forum
June 2006