

The Y generation, the new face of business travel

Tourism Intelligence Network, Transat Chair in Tourism

During a business trip, young people like to meet new people and explore cities not yet known to them. As they advance in their career, the decision-making power increases in the company and with this a new way of business trip is born to them.



The Y generation is also more likely than their elders to use mobile devices to improve their travel experience: almost three quarters of them have travel applications on their smart phones.

Why is the Y generation interested in business trips?

Firstly because of their potential: this generation represents approximately one third of all passengers on flights in the United States and this percentage is set to rise to 50% by 2020, whilst the baby-boomers will be reduced to 11%.

Secondly, they spend more on their trip than other generations, according to a survey by the Boston Consulting Group. For their professional trips they do not skimp on extras: they frequently make last-minute reservations, choose reimbursable tickets, change their seat to ones with more leg room, change their itinerary, order a top-of-the range meal or Wi-Fi on board, which all amount to higher costs than other business travellers.

Reservation and planning modes

Spontaneity and connectivity are the order of the day for the Y generation business traveller. Mobile devices are crucial: almost one third (32%) of the Y generation use a smart phone to reserve their trip whilst this is reduced to only 12% of over 45s.

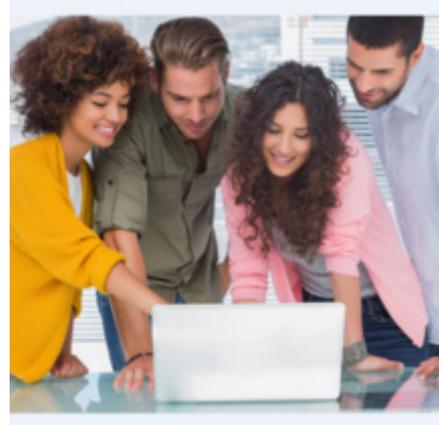
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To satisfy this exacting clientele, the Marriott chain has introduced a new concept which reinvents the way meetings are planned.

Meetings Imagined, a very visual and social site, gives advice by experts, information on the latest tendencies in the meetings world and hundreds of images designed to incite creativity.

By using the site, customers can collaborate with the hotels to design personalised experiences or study those which the participating hotels propose and post their favourite images on social media sites such as Facebook and Pinterest.

This concept is the results of studies that have shown there are seven principal reasons why the Y generation meet: celebrate, decide, educate, create, network, produce and promote.



Rather than concentrating solely on dates, tariffs and meeting room plans, Meetings Imagined adopts an approach based on the precise objective of the meeting in order to create and design a more personalised experience.

The importance of social networks

The majority (80%) of young, business travellers give much more importance to online comments when they are planning their trip. They are also more susceptible to post a negative comment online about the experience with hotels, restaurants and transportation (airline, public transport, taxi or hire car): 26% of 34 year olds and younger confirm having done so within the last year, compared with older age groups. Hotels have received more of these comments from American business travellers, followed closely by restaurants.

Bleisure travel is more popular

The fine line between pleasure and business is becoming more and more blurred, particularly for young people. According to a study the Hilton Garden Inn chain, 84% of the Y generation business travellers are willing to extend their stay to take advantage of a few days leisure which is more than older age groups. Moreover, 65% said that exploring new towns and cities constitutes the most exciting part of business trips.

Is the Y generation loyal?

Young business travellers are more likely to sign up to loyalty programmes: half of them consider them important when making a flight reservations (48%) or a hotel (51%) compared to one-third of travellers aged between 46 and 65 (31% and 30% respectively).

This said, although they are inclined to sign up to a loyalty programme, they are not loyal to any particular brand. They are less loyal than their elders and are more likely to change from one programme to another if they believe it is better than the one they are with.

Generation Y business travellers are not looking for the same advantages as their colleagues. They are more like to use air miles and point for a free trip or to reduce the cost than for an upgrade.

Youth hostels, an interesting substitute for traditional hotels

Youth hostels are increasing in popularity with young, trendy business travellers – principally with those that have a limited budget – who do not want to spend an evening alone in their room.

This is the case with the Generator Hostels chain where at certain times during the week, have 20% of young business travellers and this more so in the low season.

Another example, the Fusion in Prague which is both hotel and youth hostel offers standard, single rooms and dormitory-style rooms as well as non-traditional meeting areas such as a circular bar/salon and a games room which offers oversized foldaway beds fixed to the walls. In addition, its presence on social media allows business travellers to find, even before their arrival, clients who share similar interests.



Source: hôtel Fusion

Young business travel are still at an age where they will try various brands to determine which they like the best and which correspond best to their life and travelling style.

It is high time that hotels, restaurants and others listen to them and respond to what they are looking for because they are the travellers of today ... and tomorrow.

Source TourMag.com, 8 July 2014