

Business Travel - UK - August 2010

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What is this report about?

A third of adults have travelled on business over the past 12 months, a decline of seven percentage points since Mintel's last consumer research in April 2008. Overseas business trips were hit hardest by the recession, with 2009 volumes falling 22%. Rail business transactions however have bucked the trend, increasing by 13% in the same year. The market appears to be stabilising but economic uncertainties mean we are unlikely to see a resumption of pre-recessionary levels of business travel for a considerable time. Once recovery does take place, the landscape of business travel may also be substantially altered.

This report analyses market trends and consumer attitudes in regard to business travel, investigating the core market factors, strengths and weaknesses, consumer dynamics and key players in the industry.

What have we found out?

- Just under a third of adults travelled on business in the 12 months to May 2010, a fall from the four in ten that reported doing so in the 12 months to April 2008. Business travel remains a highly male preserve – 41% of men travelled on business over the year compared to 23% of women.
- Business travel accounts for an estimated 15% of all domestic trips and 20% of all domestic travel expenditure. Overseas business travel accounts for 12% of all journeys and 14% of all spend.
- France and Germany between them account for just over a quarter of overseas business trips, and The Netherlands is now the third-largest business travel destination. Travel to Europe accounts for almost four in five business trips abroad but just over half of expenditure.
- Three in ten overseas business travellers have extended a trip to include leisure time or have taken a partner or family along for all or part of a trip (so-called 'bleisure' travel).
- Almost three in five of those who have been on a business trip over the past 12 months have travelled in standard/economy class; a quarter have travelled first/business class. The car is still the most common form of transport used, with (again) three in five business travellers doing so over the year.
- Just under two thirds of business travellers over the past year booked online. This divides roughly two to one in favour of online self-booking versus those whose trips are booked online by their company. A third of business travellers booked directly with hotel or transport suppliers, as opposed to booking through intermediaries/agents.

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