DKC

recommend
helping travel agents sell travel

August 2017

TRAVEL*talk*

Michelle Marie Arean

The bleisure traveler is looking to mix business with a leisure vacation.

Bleisure*talk*

The line between business and leisure travel continues to blur, so much so that the term "bleisure" is now commonplace. A report by the **Global Business Travel Association's (GBTA) Foundation**—*Extending Business Travel into Leisure Time – Bleisure Study*—shows that in the past year, 37 percent of North American business travelers extended a work trip into a leisure vacation.

According to the GBTA report, on average these bleisure travelers took seven work trips in the past year, earn $79,000 annually and work at companies with 950 employees. Forty-two percent hold middle management positions, three in five have children at home, and 44 percent of these travelers brought someone along for the leisure portion of the trip. Though 90 percent extend their trips for more than one day, only 23 percent do so for more than three days, which is the length of the average trip extension.

According to **BridgeStreet Global Hospitality**, those who have taken bleisure trips report that it helps them work more effectively, takes stress out of business travel, and keeps them more relaxed while away from home. In addition, they also report the benefit of quality time with a significant other, and an increase in the amount of time frequent travelers spend with family. Most bleisure travelers fall into the 45-54 age group, with the second largest segment being 25-35 year olds.

Kelly Phillips, senior v.p. of global engagement and strategic accounts for **Hilton**, notes in a press statement that, "Business travel is a lifestyle for many of our guests and we're seeing a growing desire by these travelers to add a leisure component to their trip and experience the destination beyond the meeting room."

Giovanni Beretta, v.p. of **Swire Hotels** in USA and general manager of **EAST, Miami,** describes the bleisure guest as, "Someone who wants to...explore the local culture.... They want to be part of the local scene and time business to coincide with events like Art Basel Miami."

In fact, the BridgeStreet report points out, too, that the top three bleisure activities include sightseeing, dining, and cultural experiences—it goes without saying that these add-on services can create bonus revenues for agents targeting bleisure travelers.

Beretta has a list of his own to meet bleisure guests' needs, pointing out that, "The bleisure guest is looking for a hotel with everything in one place for morning meetings, outstanding culinary offerings and a great bar with a view to end their day in easy relaxation. They're also looking for a hotel that can introduce them to the local culture, places to see and things to do, with equal ease." He adds that, "Time is the ultimate luxury for this guest who demands an efficient, but personalized experience."

Package It

Get creative with how you present a bleisure trip. For example, let clients know that if they are already in New York City for a meeting, why not take advantage of **Thompson Hotels'** extended stay packages at two city hotels—**Gild Hall**, located on Gold Street in the Financial District, which is offering 15 percent off a 4-night stay; and **The Beekman**, in Downtown Manhattan, offering the fourth night free with a 3-night stay.

If clients are headed to Seattle, Richmond, Scottsdale or Washington, DC for a business trip they can extend their stay in these cities via **Destination Hotels'** *Stay More, Save More* promotion that features 30 percent off best available rates when booking three or more nights (max seven nights). In fact, this offer is good for any Destination Hotels property around the world.

Or recommend a package that allows your client to detox after the big meeting. **Naples Grande Beach Resort**, for instance, features the *Unplug & Recharge* package. After a few days of meetings, clients can go on a digital detox diet by keeping their phone with the front desk or in their safe; take a walk through the resort's mangrove estuary; and enjoy the spa ($259 per room per night). ■

Contact Information

BridgeStreet Global Hospitality: bridgestreet.com
Destination Hotels: destinationhotels.com
Global Business Travel Association: gbta.org/USA
Hilton Hotels & Resorts: www3.hilton.com/en/index.html
Naples Grande Beach Resort: naplesgrande.com
Swire Hotels: swirehotels.com
Thompson Hotels: thompsonhotels.com