Zen & The Art of Legal Networking

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Ask Friday! Business Travel Prep Edition

Today's Ask Friday! question comes from our very own Executive Director, Alan Griffiths, who asked me to share with you some tips for getting ready for a business trip. We've all got our own lists and prep routines, but this has been on my mind this week while we're getting ready to head over to Lisbon for our Annual Meeting.

So here are my T*op Ten Tips for Business Travel Prep* - feel free to add yours in the comments!

1. ***Check the TSA website*** - you can see what the travel conditions are, what you can and can't bring in your carry-on, how to get through the line faster, and what to do if you're traveling with a medical condition.

2. ***Check the weather at your destination*** - it always surprises me when someone shows up at a destination thinking it's a tropical one, but it's cool or rainy at the time of year they're there, and they've got all the wrong clothes in their suitcase. A quick check of the weather saves a lot of packing faux pas.

3. ***Get the necessities together*** - Make sure you have your passport or ID (don't forget that you need a passport to go back and forth to Canada from the US now!), information about your tickets, hotel confirmation, any cash you need on hand, etc.

4. ***Put any medication you'll need in your carry-on*** - you might be tempted to put this in your checked luggage, especially for a shorter flight, but don't do it. It's always when you think the airline won't lose your bag that they do, and you don't want to be without anything you might need.

5. Along these lines, ***either wear business attire to fly, or have something you can wear in your carry-on***. If the airline misplaces your bag and you've got to meet clients or colleagues, you'll feel less flustered if you're not wearing stretchy pants or jeans.

6. ***Put a photocopy of your passport in your checked luggage*** - and even in your carry-on. Leave a copy at home too. If your passport is lost or stolen during your trip, it's FAR easier to handle it if you have easy access to a copy. It may also be advisable to keep a soft copy on your laptop and smartphone so you're covered no matter what.

7. ***Check that you've got all your electronic bits and pieces*** - I forgot my mobile phone charger when traveling once, and had to scramble once I arrived to pick up a new one. It was a big pain and stressor. If you check beforehand that you have your chargers, phones, iPads, Nooks, laptops, cameras, batteries, and any power adapters (if you're traveling abroad), this will save you a lot of anxiety.

8. ***Review your itinerary*** - I like to go through what I'm scheduled to do each day of a trip, and what I might need to wear, while I'm packing. It gives me the opportunity to get my schedule straight in my mind, and helps me avoid forgetting to pack something essential.

9. ***Bring snacks*** - depending on where you're traveling to and from, you might not have easy access to the snacks you like (even at the airport), often leading you to end up with a bag of gummy worms that's just not satisfying or good for you. I find if I pack some snacks both in my carry-on and checked luggage, I've got food that I want to eat and don't have to pay for snacks on the plane if I don't want to.

10. ***Check your flight information*** - You'll want to make sure that your flight is on-time and not cancelled before leaving for the airport, and it's a good idea to see what the individual airline's policies are for checked baggage fees, carry-on restrictions and anything else that

might hold you up when you are trying to get on the plane. Keep the flight information handy as well (including the airline's phone number), so you can get in touch with them quickly if your flight is cancelled or you need to make alternate arrangements.

And I'm going to throw in one more tip, because it's rather a big pet peeve of mine...

1. Before you board the plane, but once you know they're going to start the process, *take out anything you're going to want in your seat during the time that the plane is taxiing, taking off and reaching altitude*. Please. Then, when you get on the plane, you can put that stuff on your seat, toss your bag into the overhead compartment, and any smaller items under the seat and sit down quickly without building a huge line behind you. It saves everyone so much time, and means you don't have to keep popping out of your seat during the boarding process to get one more thing, or put one more thing in your bag. This may seem like a no-brainer to some, but I was recently on a flight of almost entirely business travelers, and it was by far the longest boarding process I've ever experienced - so it applies.

Happy travels!

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