



Maiden
Voyage

women in business travel

2016 REPORT





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THE WOMEN IN BUSINESS TRAVEL REPORT 2016 IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY MAIDEN-VOYAGE IN ASSOCIATION WITH TRAVEL INTELLIGENCE NETWORK AND THE BUSINESS TRAVEL MAGAZINE (PRINT ISSN 1754-8543) AND PRODUCED BY BMI PUBLISHING

BMI PUBLISHING LTD: SUFFOLK HOUSE, GEORGE STREET, CROYDON, SURREY, CR9 1SR
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What the female traveller really wants

Carolyn Pearson, Founder and CEO of Maiden-Voyage, reveals the findings of new research into the needs and expectations of today's female business travellers



Carolyn Pearson, Founder & CEO, Maiden-Voyage.com

I launched Maiden-Voyage in 2008 because I was disenchanted with the lack of opportunities for me to engage with the locality of where I was travelling once business was done for the day.

As a woman travelling alone my options were limited to room service or dining alone in a restaurant in a strange city, with varying levels of unease depending on the location.

Originally launched as a women's business travel network, Maiden-Voyage is now recognised as the world's specialist resource for female business travellers.

With clients in over 80 countries, our services extend to corporate membership for travel-responsible employers, female traveller safety training and vetting and certification of female-friendly hotels.

The prominence of duty of care on the business travel agenda and the increase in the number of women reaching senior positions and a subsequent increase in women travelling on business means there's never been a better time to look at the issues facing female travellers.

So I've been delighted to see an awakening over the last 18 months amongst many travel management, HR and travel security communities who are

starting to hold their travel suppliers accountable for the gender-specific needs of their travellers. Likewise, travel suppliers, particularly some hotels, TMCs and travel risk management organisations, are pioneering change and responding to the needs of this fast-growing market.

This report has been made possible by the support of our partners Avis, CTI, International SOS, Priority Pass and Virgin Trains. Special thanks go to Mark Harris from TIN for encouraging me to launch this research project, for his unfaltering passion for the female business travel agenda and for being a thoroughly professional research partner.



Mark Harris,
*Travel Intelligence
Network*

This report has been 30 years in the making. That's how long the debate over whether female business travellers should be treated any differently to their male counterparts has been dragging on.

Back in the 80s, Forte Hotels launched Lady Crest – women-only floors in selected hotels. Lady Crest rooms were equipped with ironing boards, hairdryers, better mirrors and spy holes – all features taken for granted today by any business traveller, male or female.

The next milestone was reached in 1990, when hotel booking agency Expotel created Woman Aware, a campaign to make hoteliers more aware of the needs of female business travellers. It asked them to benchmark hotels against a series of criteria including the guest experience at check-in, in public areas and overall security.

Thereafter, the idea of championing the needs of female business travellers largely fell out of fashion in favour of a non-gender specific approach. Woman Aware became Lone Traveller.

Today we live in a risk-filled world where corporates must remain ever-mindful of their duty of care to travelling employees. More women are in



senior corporate positions and more are travelling on business too, often alone.

Tailoring the product

Travel management has changed too. Personalising the traveller experience is essential to maintain the policy compliance that drives maximum value from corporates' travel spend. Travel managers are therefore engaging with a more diverse range of stakeholders than ever before in a bid to create travel programmes that meet the personal needs of every business traveller.

The trend towards greater customer segmentation has also revived travel suppliers' interest in tailoring their products more effectively.

Around the turn of the millennium, almost 25 years after Forte's short-lived Lady Crest experiment, Hilton did the same, and just as briefly.

And in 2013 Hyatt launched its 'Hyatt for Her' programme. At the same time boutique hotels such as Dukes in London's St James' Place introduced Duchess rooms for female guests. Women-only rooms and floors are again being offered by hotels around the world.

On the right track

Hotels are not the only providers targeting the female market. While Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was ridiculed last year for suggesting that Tokyo's female-only train carriages concept might transfer effectively to the UK, in March 2016 German train operator Mitteldeutsche Regiobahn announced the introduction of a women-only carriage on its trains following several violent sex attacks.

It is against this background that Maiden-Voyage.com commissioned TIN to carry out the *Women in Business Travel Report*. So we teamed up with *The Business Travel Magazine* to find out exactly what female business travellers actually want, not only from their travel providers but from their own company travel programmes, and whether those needs are being met.

The results come from over 200 female travellers who shared their views with us. Those views, together with those of some leading travel managers and our travel supplier partners – Avis Budget, CTI, International SOS, Priority Pass and Virgin Trains – are summarised in this report.

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Meeting the needs

Women in business are travelling far and wide with just over half of this survey's respondents spending four nights or more a month away from home

According to Skift, women influence 85% of purchasing in the US, account for 58% of online sales and control 60% of that country's wealth. 47% of women who travel, travel on business and 80% of travel spend is managed by women.

This is the fastest growing segment of business travellers. Duty of Care legislation has demanded that employers take a more personal approach to business travel, and travel suppliers have reacted similarly.

The Cornell School of Hospitality's report, *Creating Value for Women Travellers*, concluded that hotels catering for this market see a positive impact on their bottom line.

In May 2013 Hyatt Hotels launched the 'Hyatt for Her' programme following an 18-month research study. In January 2015, Virgin Hotels opened their first boutique property in Chicago. Virgin founder Richard Branson commented: "I don't think any hotel caters to the female

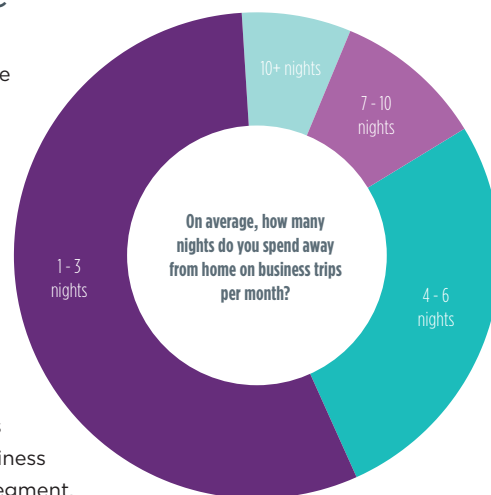
traveller. It will give Virgin an edge to make sure we look after them."

There are significant business opportunities available to smart brands who cater to the needs of this female business traveller market segment.

To help savvy travel brands capitalise on the opportunity this demographic represents, they must focus on the needs of female business travellers in the key areas of security, assistance, guides, information, dedicated services and social amenities.

Survey respondents

The seniority of female business travellers in 2016 is reflected in our survey participants. Of 205 respondents, just under half (49.68%) were managers; 29.94% were company directors; 12.74% owned their businesses and 7.64% were CEOs.



They come from a wide variety of industry sectors: healthcare, technology, retail, education and government. The best represented sector is professional services, in which 23.27% of respondents work.

Just under half of our survey respondents spend four nights or more per month away from their UK homes on business. 56.28% are away for between one and three nights; 27.64% for 4-6 nights, 10.05% for 7-10 nights and 6.03% for more than ten nights a month.

Their travel patterns are diverse. While London, Paris and Dublin are their most frequent destinations, regional UK cities such as Manchester, Preston, Southampton and Wakefield all featured prominently. Regular international destinations ranged from Brussels to Brisbane and from Singapore to San Diego.

"It is the rare corporation that takes advantage of the women business opportunity"

Tom Peters, Author
The Circle of Innovation

Survey respondents represented a wide variety of industry sectors, including healthcare, technology, retail, education and government



The female perception

Taking account of the specific needs of female business travellers is a basic requirement of travel providers. However, treating them differently is another matter

One of the primary objectives of the *Women in Business Travel Survey* was to explore female business travellers' perceptions of their own corporate travel programmes.

When asked how well, in general, travel suppliers treat female business travellers compared to their male colleagues, 60.50% agreed that the sexes are treated equally well. Only 21.94% said that women were treated less well than the men but 70.2% believed that travel suppliers should try harder to address the needs of female business travellers (23.74% 'strongly agreed' vs 46.46% 'agreed').

When questioned about their corporate travel policies, a sense of disengagement emerged: 77% agreed or

strongly agreed that their programmes should take account of their specific needs as a female business traveller.

And while 71.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed that any shortcomings in this area made them less likely to comply with policy, almost three-quarters of respondents (73.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that their experiences of preferred travel providers would affect whether or not they use that provider. In addition, 75.3% agreed or

70.02%

believed that travel suppliers should try harder to address the needs of female business travellers

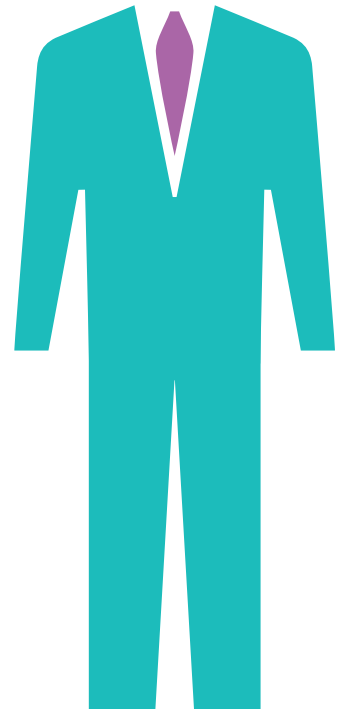
strongly agreed their companies should prioritise suppliers who pay special attention to the needs of female travellers. Meanwhile, over half of respondents felt that their TMCs were failing by not making any allowance for their needs.

But are female business travellers making their voices heard? And if not, why not?



*Alice Linley-Munro,
Travel Manager,
Oil Spill Response*

Alice Linley-Munro is Travel Manager at Oil Spill Response and says that the majority of her female travellers are adamant they shouldn't be treated differently to their male colleagues. "This may be due to the nature of our business. Our female employees don't want to be seen as weaker or 'less capable' than their male response colleagues. It's also a generational thing – a large proportion of our staff are real go-getters who are well travelled and so have a level of perceived invincibility."



75.3%

agreed or strongly agreed their companies should prioritise suppliers who pay particular attention to the needs of female travellers

Playing safe

Women business travellers have a host of support services, training courses and female forums at their finger tips to reduce concerns and share advice



“Although the majority of survey respondents know who to turn to for advice and guidance, just under a third claimed they do not”

According to our survey, almost a third (31.4%) of female business travellers have suffered sexual harassment while travelling.

In fact, sexual harassment accounts for over half (51.2%) of all incidents encountered by female business travellers. Handbag theft is the second most frequently encountered incident, followed by drink spiking and sexual assault.

Meanwhile, 63.96% of female business travellers say there are destinations they would not travel to that they would probably travel to as a man, such as the Middle East (UAE, Saudi Arabia), Africa (Nigeria), South America (Brazil) and even Japan.

The importance attached to corporate Duty of Care is such

that it would not be unreasonable to expect most corporates to provide information and support to travellers. However, the approach taken is usually non-gender specific – only 3.47% of respondents have a dedicated forum or process through which women travellers can share experiences.

Support is usually available either through HR, internal security/risk management teams or via an outsourced provider like International SOS.

Be prepared

The vast majority (79.2%) of female business travellers claim they are under-prepared to deal with the incidents they encounter. Of those who are, training is again non-gender

specific. 69.4% of travellers know who to turn to in case of emergency or incident, and it is usually HR, a specialist external provider (eg, International SOS) or, in the case of a major banking group, a Global Head of Gender Diversity.

“All of our travellers have to undergo a safety and security training course prior to undertaking travel and elements of this are gender specific,” says the bank’s Travel Manager.

Alice Linley-Munro of Oil Spill Response explains her company’s approach. “We handle security on a case by case basis and so have a baseline of approved security measures for medium or high risk destinations which can be scaled up if required for a lone female traveller.

"We appreciate that no two travellers are the same, however there is more we could be doing, particularly in giving our female travellers a forum to share tips and concerns and measures mandated in our travel policy which takes into account female travellers."

Check ahead

Kate Lynley is Procurement Category Manager at City Football Group, looking after Manchester City FC and its sister football clubs in America and Australia.

"We encourage women to join Women in Football and Maiden-Voyage," she says.

"Our travel programme does not make specific reference to women, but our hotel programme does encourage women to check the hotels they are staying in have double-lock doors and are not allocated on the ground floor."

Although the majority of survey respondents do know who to turn to for advice and guidance, just under a third (30.69%) claimed that they do not. Alice Linley-Munro acknowledges corporates' responsibilities: "With the volatile state of the world and

the way it is heading, obviously risk management is becoming ever more important and programmes need to become more stringent to keep up. This includes paying attention to the needs of lone travellers – male and female – and ensuring that any worst case scenarios cater to them," she says.

A personalised approach

Astrid Lorry is a Regional Security Information Analyst for the Europe region at International SOS, one of the market's leaders in traveller tracking and security. She points out that, while female travellers should not be treated any differently: "We need to consider that they have different needs. It's about a personalised approach rather than giving preferential treatment.

"We provide profiled, tailored advice. That means identifying who the traveller is. We look at ethnicity, the countries they are travelling to, and at factors that could make them more vulnerable in a given place.

"A lot of our female colleagues have already travelled to these countries and are able to offer lots of tips such as advice on what to do after business hours,

going out for dinner at night and returning safely back to the hotel afterwards."

Your title matters

Lorry continues, "It's important that women understand the local situation, how they might be treated and to ensure they know the environment they will be stepping into.

"In many countries, for instance in Central Asia, business folk will automatically defer to male colleagues travelling with you. They often refuse to shake hands with a woman.

"And in some countries it is very important to travel with a business card so locals realise the female traveller's seniority. Your title is important to convey your position in an organisation. In Latin America, a female manager from another continent might even get asked to make the coffee."

To mitigate risks, International SOS offers personalised training for business travellers, with a specific module for women travellers' security. Changing attitudes and growing awareness are reflected by male travel managers attending training sessions for female business travellers.

"It is important that women understand the local situation and how they might be treated and to ensure they know the environment they will be stepping into"



A step in the right direction

The *Women in Business Travel Survey* reveals where travel providers are getting it right – and not so right – when meeting the needs of female business travellers

The *Women in Business Travel Survey* looked at what travel providers do well and where they appear to be falling short in the opinion of female business travellers.

The tables and rankings found on the following pages are based on each element being scored out of 1,025 (ie, 205 respondents multiplied by a maximum score of five in each category). A ranking of five (ie, excellent) scored five points, a ranking of four scored four points and so on.



Aviation

As shown in Figure 1 below, airports and airlines fared well on the provision of flight delay and disruption information, ranked top of the most important criteria and third in rankings for delivery.

Similarly, female business travellers rank staff attitudes towards them as the second most important criterion and top of the rankings for delivery.

Key areas for improvement are the provision of onboard assistance with luggage; improved security presence at taxi and shuttle bus pick-up points and the need for staff to demonstrate their understanding of female travellers' safety and security concerns more effectively. The latter is ranked fourth most important criteria but also features in the list of top five bad experiences.

An area where travel suppliers can meet the needs of female business travellers is the provision of wellness facilities such as showers and spas within airport lounges. However, over half (52%) of female business travellers do not have airport lounge access, mainly due to their companies' travel policies.

Priority Pass is the world's largest airport lounge access programme. Claire Ward, Head of Customer Marketing, believes that every business traveller, regardless of the airline or class of ticket, should have the opportunity to escape the turmoil of the departure hall during their trip.

Priority Pass' annual Airport Lounge of the Year Award champions those lounges that provide outstanding facilities and excellent customer service. Like most travel providers, their approach is gender-neutral and they don't specifically create female-centric propositions.

"Our feedback confirms that our lounges meet the needs of

travellers who are increasingly less prepared to pay a premium to upgrade their plane seats. We provide a space to work in a place that feels like home. For business travellers, airport lounges are a sanctuary ahead of a long flight.

"Nearly two thirds of frequent business fliers consider access to a premium airport lounge to be an 'important' or 'very important' factor when selecting an airport. We create our products to meet the needs of every business traveller, male and female."

Car rental

The same methodology was applied to survey respondents' assessment of car rental providers, the results of which can be seen in Figure 2, below.

The most important criteria are the provision of well-lit collection/drop-off areas, followed by the provision of manned collection/drop-off areas and the staff demonstrating their understanding of customers' safety & security concerns.

However, the presence of each criteria in both the good and bad experiences of survey respondents suggests that delivery is inconsistent between providers and locations, especially in manned collection/drop-off and enhanced security

in these areas. Another area for improvement is the provision of safe route guidance information and sensitivity to customers' needs when selecting a vehicle.

Respondents also identified improved explanation of vehicle equipment and SatNav as standard for female drivers/car user guides as features that should be considered.

The sector has a number of challenges to overcome when compared with other modes of transport. 64% of female travellers use rail in preference to car rental because of convenience, traffic congestion and the ability to work on a train. 62.6% use private cars in preference to car rental for comfort, convenience and security reasons, while 28% prefer to car share over car rental for cost savings, lack of (car rental) availability and when travelling with colleagues.

So how does the car rental sector approach the issue of gender-specific needs? Louisa Bell is UK Commercial Director at the Avis Budget Group. "We have a long history of innovation in the car rental industry and are committed to convenience →

Does your company travel policy allow you access to airport lounges?

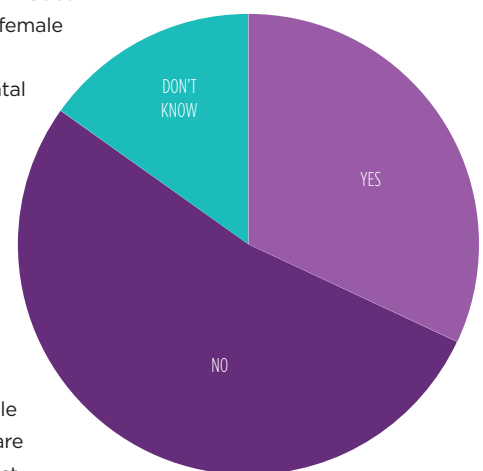


Figure 1 – Aviation

	Importance	Good experience	Bad experience
1	Provision of flight delay/disruption information	Staff attitudes towards female travellers	Little/no onboard assistance with luggage
2	Staff attitudes towards female travellers	Treat female travellers the same as men	Lack of security presence at taxi/shuttle pick-ups
3	Treat female travellers the same as men	Provision of flight delay/disruption information	No wellness facilities in departure lounges
4	Show understanding of safety concerns	Well-lit car parks monitored by CCTV	Poor quality/range of on-airport amenities
5	Well-lit car parks monitored by CCTV	Secure access to airport lounges pre-departure	Poor understanding of female travellers' concerns

Figure 2 – Car rental

	Importance	Good experience	Bad experience
1	Well-lit collection and drop-off areas	Treat female travellers the same as men	Provide safe route guidance information
2	Manned collection/drop-off areas	Staff attitudes towards female travellers	Sensitivity to customer needs in choosing vehicle
3	Show understanding of safety concerns	Well-lit collection and drop-off areas	Manned collection/drop-off areas
4	Provide safe route guidance information	Show understanding of safety concerns	Poor understanding of female travellers' concerns
5	Staff attitudes towards female travellers	Manned collection/drop-off areas	Well-lit collection and drop-off areas

“We know that the needs of both men and women are very similar when it comes to hiring a vehicle - they want a smooth transaction and dependable vehicle”

→ and outstanding service. Ultimately, all of our customers are looking for a seamless onward journey and exceptional support from our team on the ground.

“We treat all our customers in the same manner, regardless of gender. We know that the needs of both men and women are very similar when it comes to hiring a vehicle - they want a smooth transaction, convenience and a dependable vehicle. In addition, we know that for customers, the right car and the

right experience can turn a good trip into a great one, rather than simply being a functional necessity,” says Bell.

“We constantly refresh our fleet for both Avis and Budget, to give customers reassurance about the reliability and comfort of their vehicle, and provide 24-hour roadside assistance, giving additional peace of mind while out on the road. We are now offering priority spaces at Heathrow T2 and T5 which means that travellers can pick up their vehicle directly from

these terminals, and if flights are delayed, our stores will stay open late to accommodate the change in schedule.”

Hotels

In 2011, CAP Strategic Research’s paper on how the travel industry should cater to the female traveller estimated that just 27% of hotels made a special effort to understand their female guests’ needs. Then, a better appreciation of women’s security concerns was deemed the best way in which hotels

Figure 3 – Hotels

	Importance	Good experience	Bad experience
1	Hotel location	Hotel location	Well-lit car parks monitored by CCTV
2	Safety features (eg, double-locking doors)	Hotel star rating	Healthy food options
3	Discretion at reception during check-in	Well-lit corridors	Discreet dining areas
4	Well-lit corridors	Safety features (eg, double-locking doors)	Choice of room location (ie, not ground floor)
5	In-room amenities	Treat female travellers the same as men	Spa and leisure facilities

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could improve their appeal.

Five years on, we set out to obtain a closer view of hotel performance, still the focal point for female business travellers' safety concerns (see Figure 3).

According to our survey, over two-thirds (68%) of female business travellers prefer to stay in hotel chains. This reflects not only corporate travel programmes in general but also a widely held perception that branded hotels offer a more consistent standard of product and service.

Hotel location is unsurprisingly female business travellers' top priority and also tops the list of positive personal experiences.

When the Woman Aware programme began, women travellers' biggest concerns related to in-room security,

discretion shown during check-in when confirming room number, not booking lone females into ground floor rooms and the often-uninviting environment of the dining room or bar forcing many women to take room service in their rooms.

Things have moved on since then, but not that much. That all-important discretion shown by reception staff still ranks in female travellers' list of bad experiences, as does a lack of choice in room location.

Hotel room amenities and overall security are deemed to have improved, although many hotels still lack well-lit car parks monitored by CCTV, healthy food options or discrete dining areas, according to respondents.

Other comments from survey respondents related to short-

comings in general signage to lifts, stairs and hotel amenities; how dark, energy-efficient lighting has rendered some hotel rooms dull and uninviting; and the often poor quality of hotel spa facilities.

The latter point was highlighted by several respondents, demonstrating the growing importance of wellness facilities to the modern corporate traveller.



“That all-important discretion shown by reception staff still ranks in female travellers' list of bad experiences, as does lack of choice in room location”

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“The top priorities for female business travellers when travelling by rail are the provision of train delay information and the ability to select their own seat when booking”

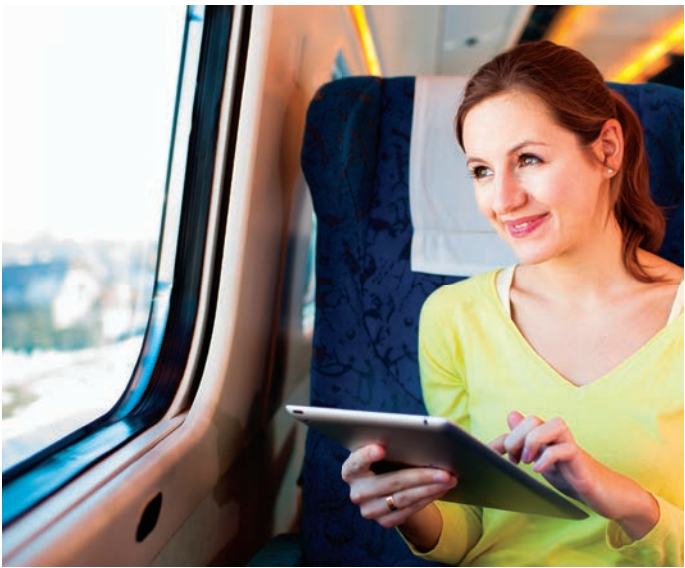
→ Trains

According to our survey, 83.24% of female business travellers use trains for UK domestic travel. This makes rail the most popular transport mode, ahead of private cars (67.03%), air (57.85%) and car sharing (35.04%), although 68% of female business travellers say the introduction of higher speed rail links in the UK will not affect the amount of business they do in the UK.

The top priorities for female business travellers (see Figure 4, below) are the provision of train delay/disruption information; the ability to select their own seat when booking tickets; for on-station and on-train staff to demonstrate understanding of female travellers’ safety concerns; well-lit car parks monitored by CCTV and that female travellers are treated the same as men.

The good news for train operators is that each of these criteria features in the list of positive experiences. The bad news is that three of them – staff understanding of travellers’ concerns; provision of disruption information; and staff attitudes towards female travellers – also feature in the list of bad experiences. As in the car rental sector, this suggests inconsistent delivery between operators and services.

Of the required areas for improvement, well-lit car parks monitored by CCTV tops the list, followed by on-station facilities and assistance. Other enhancements identified by survey respondents were better (and more) women-only toilets;



women-only carriages or private booths; better security on-train/ at the station; greater choice of seat location (ie, with other females/more single seats) and better on-station assistance, especially late at night.

When Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn floated the idea of re-introducing segregated seating in some train carriages he received a hostile reaction. National newspapers reported that women’s groups welcomed the idea of consultation on women’s safety on trains but were critical of the women-only carriages concept as this put the focus on the victim rather than tackling perpetrators.

Travel management companies

78% of survey respondents use a TMC, but while 49.5% don’t mind where their TMC is located, 23.7% prefer to deal with someone locally based.

So how do these providers fare when it comes to identifying

or meeting the needs of female travellers? (See Figure 5, right).

Of all the travel sectors surveyed, TMCs emerge as the only sector to provide a total match between most important criteria and delivery, although staff understanding of travellers’ safety concerns and high-lighting areas of travel risk also feature in the list of respondents’ negative experiences.

TMCs are constantly seeking new ways in which to add value to their services. Personalisation of travel programmes and the traveller experience are both hot topics in 2016, but should female business travellers be treated differently?

Clive Wratten is Chief Executive of leading regional travel partnership company CTI. “I don’t like the phrase ‘treated differently’. It’s about treating travellers appropriately to their needs. TMCs have to engage with all parts of a company to find out what they expect when

Figure 4 – Trains

	Importance	Good experience	Bad experience
1	Provision of train delay/disruption information	Treat female travellers the same as men	Well-lit car parks monitored by CCTV
2	Booking and ticketing – ability to select own seat	Booking and ticketing – ability to select own seat	On-station facilities and assistance
3	Show understanding of safety concerns	Staff attitudes towards female travellers	Show understanding of safety concerns
4	Well-lit car parks monitored by CCTV	Provision of train delay/disruption information	Provision of train delay/disruption information
5	Treat female travellers the same as men	Show understanding of safety concerns	Staff attitudes towards female travellers

their employees travel. Only then can you design an effective corporate travel programme that suits each and every part of the organisation.”

Wratten agrees that the needs of female travellers have become a hot topic once again, “because there are now so many more women in business, and in higher positions, than there were 35 years ago.

“In truth we’ve not made enough progress over the last 30 years, especially around

hotels, although Maiden-Voyage is doing something about it,” says Wratten.

“In the airline industry there are also gaps between traveller needs and service delivery, like better seating choices – one lone female seated next to another lone female, for example – and female-only toilets on aircraft. The multi-cultural nature of travel is an issue too. Utopia might be hard to achieve but that doesn’t mean we should stop trying.”

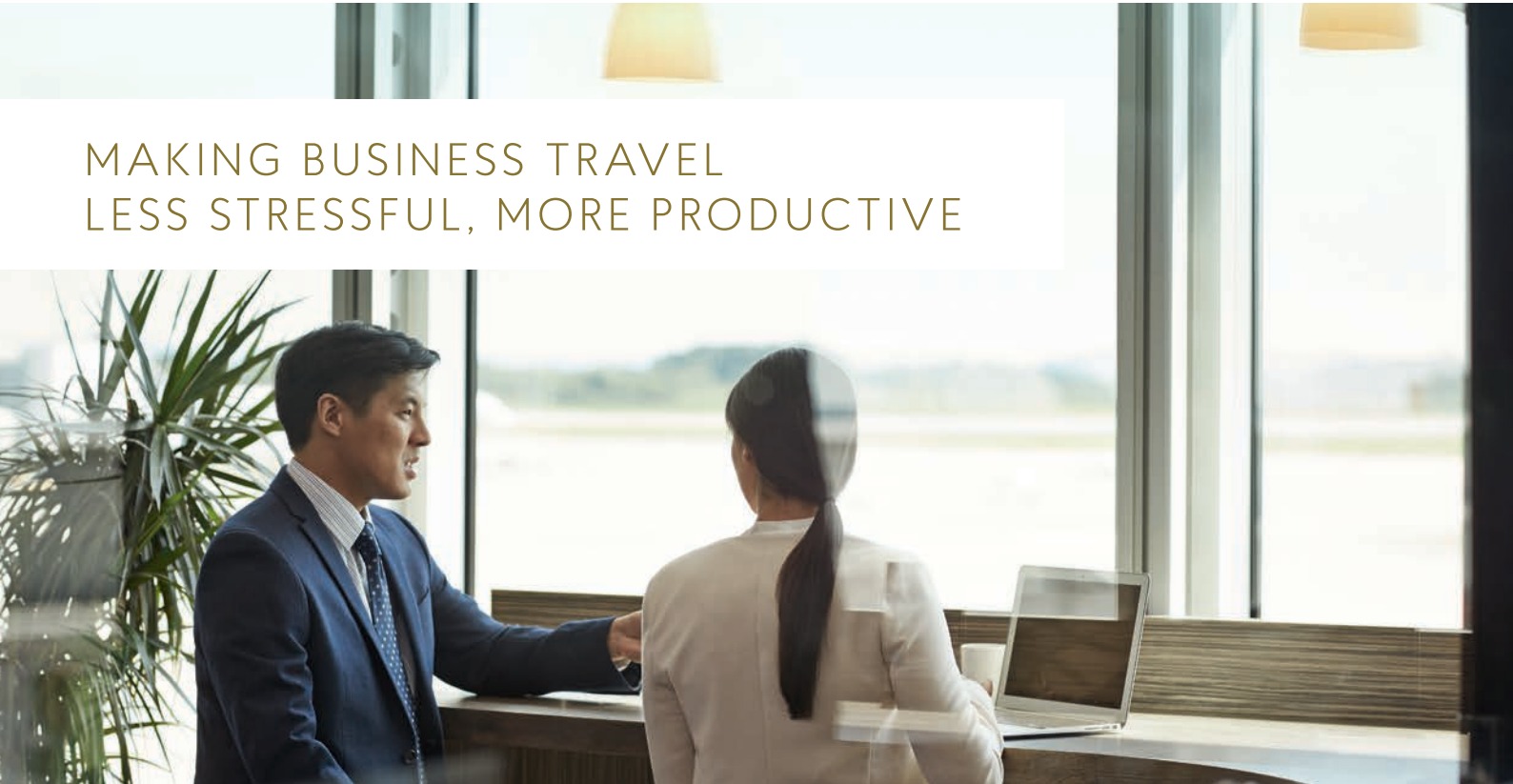
Wratten continues, “I don’t believe that procurement is as alert to this issue as it really should be, although some corporates are more receptive than others.

“Cost is an obvious barrier but we still need to be more grown up about it. People have to feel good about the service they receive. Everyone wants personalisation but travel can often be more about what the company needs rather than the individuals.”

“The needs of female travellers have become a hot topic again because there are so many more women in business and in higher positions than there were 35 years ago”

Figure 5 – Travel management companies

	Importance	Good experience	Bad experience
1	Provision of 24/7 support	Treat female travellers the same as men	Staff understanding of female-friendly options
2	Highlighting areas of travel risk	Provision of 24/7 support	Highlighting areas of travel risk
3	Show understanding of safety concerns	Staff attitudes towards female travellers	Show understanding of safety concerns
4	Staff attitudes towards female travellers	Show understanding of safety concerns	
5	Treat female travellers the same as men	Highlighting areas of travel risk	



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Women in mind

There is no question that female business travellers prefer to use suppliers who make special provision for their requirements



CTI's Clive Wratten believes that greater consultation and dialogue between corporates, TMCs and travel providers is essential if the disconnect between travel needs and service delivery, confirmed by our survey, is to be eradicated.

He also says that the results would deliver both ROI and ROO – Return on Objectives.

"There is both a need and a business case to build a greater level of dedicated service around female business travellers. CSR and Duty of Care demands that we design products and services for this important traveller group. CTI is the first TMC to partner with Maiden-Voyage, so we are taking a step in that direction."

His views are borne out by our survey. Respondents were

asked to quantify the impact of a conscious move by their companies to use suppliers who make special provision for female business travellers.

THE RESULTS:

Usage/compliance

43.11% of respondents said they would be 'very likely' to use hotel providers paying special attention to female guests' needs, and 43.40% said the same of aviation. 43.46% would be very likely to use a TMC doing the same, although this figure dropped to 34.84% for rail and 34.75% for car rental.

Brand loyalty

Similar results were obtained in relation to the impact of female-friendly travel providers and products upon brand loyalty, although figures were

lower. 32.48% felt that this would be 'very likely' to improve loyalty to aviation brands, followed by 30.06% for hotels and 21.01% for TMCs.

By comparison only 18.25% said their loyalty to car rental brands would be very likely to improve, and 17.33% for rail.

In 2011, CAP Strategic Research's paper produced similar findings, save that car rental brands came out on top of their rankings of sectors in which brand loyalty would increase most.

Traveller safety perceptions

Corporates choosing female-friendly hotels would see a significant, positive impact on women travellers' perceptions of their own safety.

Over 70% of respondents said their perceptions of hotels were 'very likely' to improve if they knew their company travel policies prioritised hotels that were able to demonstrate understanding of female guests' needs.

This compares to 69.43% for aviation, 64.71% for rail and 59.57% for car rental.

Duty of care

Impact on supplier choice for Duty of Care reasons produced the second most positive response. 63.27% of respondents would be 'very likely' to prioritise aviation providers for this reason, compared to 58.55% for hotels, 58.45% for rail, 56.92% for TMCs and 52.31% for car rental.

The Women in Business Travel Survey 2016 highlighted the following recommendations:

Hotels

- Better in-room facilities
- Generally more female-aware/friendly/empathetic to needs
- Discretion and understanding, for example, at reception

Aviation

- Luggage assistance
- More flexible seating arrangements
- Access to airport lounges included in travel policies

Rail

- Better toilets
- More on-train/on-station assistance
- Improve perceived security/safety

Car rental

- Safe check-ins
- Generally more female-aware
- Safety familiarisation

TMCs

- Better awareness of hotel locations
- Generally more female-aware/friendly/empathetic to needs
- Ask for details of personal needs as a female traveller

The gap is closing

It has been shown that suppliers who invest in products and services for female business travellers will recoup their investment

“The entire business travel community should be developing female-only environments where appropriate”



It is far from unanimous among female business travellers that they should be treated any differently to their male counterparts. The issue is more that they should be treated appropriately.

Through this survey we have established that, although travel providers are succeeding on many levels, there is still a gap between the needs of the female business traveller and delivery to meet those needs.

Our research also suggests that on the levels of usage, compliance and brand loyalty, suppliers would recoup the investment they make into products and services for female business travellers.

Meanwhile, the survey results quantifying the impact on Duty of Care and traveller safety are

such that travel managers everywhere should take note.

Appropriate measures

Another perspective is provided by International SOS' Astrid Loury: “The business case is that when companies have to send someone abroad, that they send the relevant expert, regardless of gender.

“However, if that person is female, then it must be acknowledged that she might be more vulnerable than her male colleague. This recognition could save corporates the unforeseen cost of a wasted business trip – or worse.”

So what now?

The entire business travel community should be developing female-only

environments where appropriate, regardless of cultural diversity. There are female-only train carriages in Germany and Japan, women-only taxis in London and India, and dedicated facilities for female guests in some hotels.

For this trend to gain real momentum, standards are essential. A special mark of recognition might be granted to travel providers who meet female business travellers' needs. For example, by installing CCTV or improving car park lighting.

Of course, the real issue here is that travel providers should not need to make specific arrangements for female business travellers. Perhaps that's the biggest indictment of our society so far.

Maiden Voyage



Travel Intelligence Network

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Business Travel
magazine



Women in Business Travel Report 2016

Sources and acknowledgements

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About Maiden-Voyage

Maiden-Voyage are the experts in female business travel. Through maiden-voyage.com, women can make the most of business trips through a variety of services, including:

- A secure network through which members can connect in order to explore their destinations safely or dine out together;
- A team of global ambassadors who can provide local travel information and tips on local business etiquette and dress codes;
- Female traveller safety training.

Every week hotels in the world's top business cities are inspected so that female-friendly hotels can be recommended to members. Maiden-Voyage helps organisations to meet their Duty of Care obligations while keeping female travellers secure, engaged and valued through their 'Responsible Travel Employer' corporate membership scheme.

Maiden-Voyage works closely with safety organisations, transport and emergency services to provide members with up to date travel safety tips and advice.

Launched in 2008 by founder Carolyn Pearson, maiden-voyage.com has since been widely covered by the *New York Times*, the *Guardian*, CNN, BBC and many other media outlets. Today, maiden-voyage.com has members from all walks of professional life and from over 80 countries worldwide. For more information visit: maiden-voyage.com

About the author

Mark Harris joined the business travel industry in 1990 and has been a Director of TIN since 2005. A former Marketing Director of Expotel and Head of Marketing at ITM, he was voted the Business Travel Industry's Personality of the Year in 2006. TIN's output to date has included over 30 white papers, five editions of the Meetings Industry Report and five Serviced Apartments Industry Reports. Events developed by TIN include Business Travel Market, The People Awards and, from 2016, the Serviced Apartment Awards. He is a regular moderator of industry conferences. Contact: mark.harris@the-tin.com

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Founded in 2005, Travel Intelligence Network (TIN) delivers thought leadership to travel, meetings and hospitality providers through unique written and face-to-face content. TIN works with travel management companies, accommodation, car rental, rail, aviation and technology providers, researching and writing white papers, sector reports and client magazines, and shaping educational events that deliver engagement and brand loyalty on every level. For more information visit: the-tin.com

