

Condé Nast Traveler

**BUSINESS
TRAVELERS'
TOP
AIRLINES,
HOTELS**

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

OCTOBER 2005

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CONDÉ NAST TRAVELER PRESENTS THE 8TH ANNUAL



'05

BUSINESS TRAVEL AWARDS

BY NICHOLE BERNIER

Life on the road is often hard work—but it doesn't have to be. Respondents to our business travel poll share their picks for best airlines, hotel companies, and travel strategies

The road warrior is back: After a slow and steady 14 percent slide since 1998, business travel in the United States rose 5 percent last year and is predicted to climb another 3 percent by the end of 2005, according to the Travel Industry Association

of America (TIAA), a leading trade group. And it looks like the growth is here to stay: The TIAA predicts a continued increase in business travel over the next two years.

This is our eighth year of inviting *Condé Nast Traveler* readers who travel for work to share their opin-



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ions on the business of business travel. As frequent fliers, who better to tell us if the airport security screening process has gotten any better this year (it hasn't) and how best to obtain a boarding pass (the majority get it from airport self-service kiosks or airline Web sites). These readers logged an average of 6.3 weeks on the road this year (not counting vacation days) and, in doing so, learned a thing or two about making the best use of their time away from the office. More than half (58 percent) cashed in frequent-flier miles to get an upgrade, and one-third received an automatic bump-up thanks to their elite status in an airline mileage program. This savvy

doesn't stop at air travel, though: Of the 88 percent of respondents who belong to a hotel loyalty program, 52 percent have used their membership to upgrade to a better room and 51 percent have traded in points for a free stay. What else can we learn from these shrewd travelers? The results of this year's poll offer dozens of tips on where to stay, which business-class cabins are worth springing for, and which single-class carriers get the highest praise, as well as insights into how business travel has evolved. If you're a subscriber and would like to offer your two cents in next year's poll, log on to readerschoice2005.com.



AIRLINES DOMESTIC

The big boys prove no match for the little guys

THE LOVE AFFAIR BETWEEN business travelers and smaller carriers shows no signs of abating, at least not when it comes to flying domestically. The three top-ranked single-class airlines—JetBlue, Midwest, and Song—all receive higher overall scores than the premium classes of the major U.S. carriers. Why the raves? The single-class carriers excel, according to respon-

dents, in three key areas: seats, onboard amenities, and bang for the buck. Midwest and JetBlue, for example, score 71.4 and 65.7, respectively, for Seat Comfort/Legroom. By comparison, American Airlines places first for premium-class seats among the multiclass carriers, with a score of just 45.7. As for Onboard Amenities/Technology, no other domestic airline comes close to competing with JetBlue. Rather than resting on its laurels,



the airline continues to innovate: The seatback entertainment system now offers 36 channels of television (up from 24), including a few that broadcast pay-per-view movies, and 100 channels of free XM satellite radio. JetBlue also takes first prize for Value for Cost, topping all other airlines worldwide.

When it comes to premium-class service, Alaska Airlines for the first time edges out the competition to take top honors. In past years, Alaska has run a close second—often to Continental—but this year it garners the highest scores for Cabin Service and Frequent-flier Privileges. The high marks for its mileage program may be a result of the carrier's many alliances: Though Alaska is a regional carrier, frequent fliers can earn and redeem miles on American, Cathay Pacific, and Qantas, among several others.

2005 BUSINESS TRAVEL AWARDS

More business travelers are flying in the back of the plane on domestic routes.

Readers who usually fly premium class:
1998 **25%**
2005 **14%**

Cell phone use spikes.

Readers who carry cell phones on business trips:
1998 **42%**
2005 **94%**

Low-fare carriers prove even more popular.

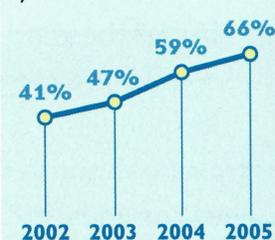
Readers who use budget airlines more often than they did the year before:
2004 **28%**
2005 **31%**

More than half of business fliers choose to bypass the ticket counter.

Readers who use the following methods to obtain boarding passes:
 Self-service kiosks **36%**
 Airline Web sites **33%**
 Ticket counters **21%**
 Curbside check-in **8%**
 Travel agencies **2%**

Upgrading to business class is tougher than ever.

Readers who say that getting bumped up to the front of the plane is more difficult than the year before:



OVERALL SCORE	Seat Comfort/Legroom	Beverages	Food	Cabin Service	Onboard Amenities/Technology	Frequent-flier Privileges	Airport Club Lounges	Value for Cost
Alaska Airlines	39.2	42.7	32.2	53.4	16.4	50.2	37.6	41.6
Continental	39.1	41.4	32.0	44.4	26.5	44.8	50.3	34.4
Hawaiian Airlines	32.8	38.0	36.9	39.6	24.7	38.3	20.0	32.4
American Airlines	31.3	45.7	17.3	29.1	16.9	46.1	42.1	21.8
Northwest	28.5	30.4	21.3	28.8	14.4	40.4	39.5	24.9
United	28.2	37.1	19.5	28.8	19.4	38.2	36.2	17.9
Delta	25.0	24.3	13.8	28.1	14.5	33.3	41.1	20.2
Aloha	24.5	25.0	25.0	37.4	10.0	25.7	15.4	33.0
AirTran	20.9	35.1	8.7	23.0	9.5	17.7	2.1	50.3
US Airways	20.3	22.4	12.6	22.2	11.4	29.5	25.4	18.8
SINGLE-CLASS SERVICE								
JetBlue	54.1	65.7	29.2	62.2	72.1	20.7	—	74.8
Midwest	52.6	71.4	58.0	64.4	37.0	37.5	—	47.1
Song	46.7	41.1	37.7	50.3	53.7	41.4	—	55.9
Frontier	30.7	29.2	13.7	37.3	28.4	32.4	—	42.9
Horizon	30.3	20.0	37.2	43.7	7.2	39.7	—	33.7
Independence Air	26.2	26.5	19.7	40.3	4.8	14.9	—	50.7
Southwest	25.7	17.7	6.2	36.8	4.6	31.7	—	57.4
Ted	23.9	25.9	11.3	21.4	11.9	44.5	—	28.3
ExpressJet	20.3	10.8	8.1	34.2	2.7	46.9	—	18.9
ATA	15.9	17.8	9.3	19.9	7.9	8.5	—	31.9

Numbers in bold reflect the highest scores for each criterion.



TICKER TAPE

Last year, the Air France-KLM Group earned more passenger revenue than any other airline group.