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Taking a Business Trip?
Travel Smarter With These Eight Insider Tips
by Christal Bemont

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Travel **Tips**

Business travelers have more options at their fingertips than ever before. This is of course a good thing, but it also means they have more decisions to make.

As my colleague John Dietz, Vice President of Concur Labs, **explains**, predictive analytics will be integrated into business travel-booking solutions that will "transform the traveler experience by anticipating, recommending, and booking optimal travel itineraries based on past experiences, calendars, user profiles, and preferred loyalty programs." These analytics will help business travelers personalize their travel bookings based on their preferences, itinerary, and needs–making their planning all the simpler.

For now, though, business travelers can take advantage of some insider tips for booking and planning better trips. Here are eight to think about before planning your next one:

1. **Check one-way flights.**
   Compare the prices and options for booking one-way flights to and from your destination. This can cost less – as you can choose different airlines for each leg of your trip – plus you may be able to time your flights more appropriately to your travel plans.

2. **Use a business-travel planning app that does the work for you.**
   Mobile applications geared specifically to business travelers' needs can save money, time, and hassle. **Concur Hipmunk** syncs with your electronic calendar and provides recommendations on flights, hotels, and car rentals based on your travel-related events, so you don't have to constantly toggle between your calendar and multiple booking sites. An added bonus: You can earn points and miles while travelling for work and also use the app for personal trip planning.
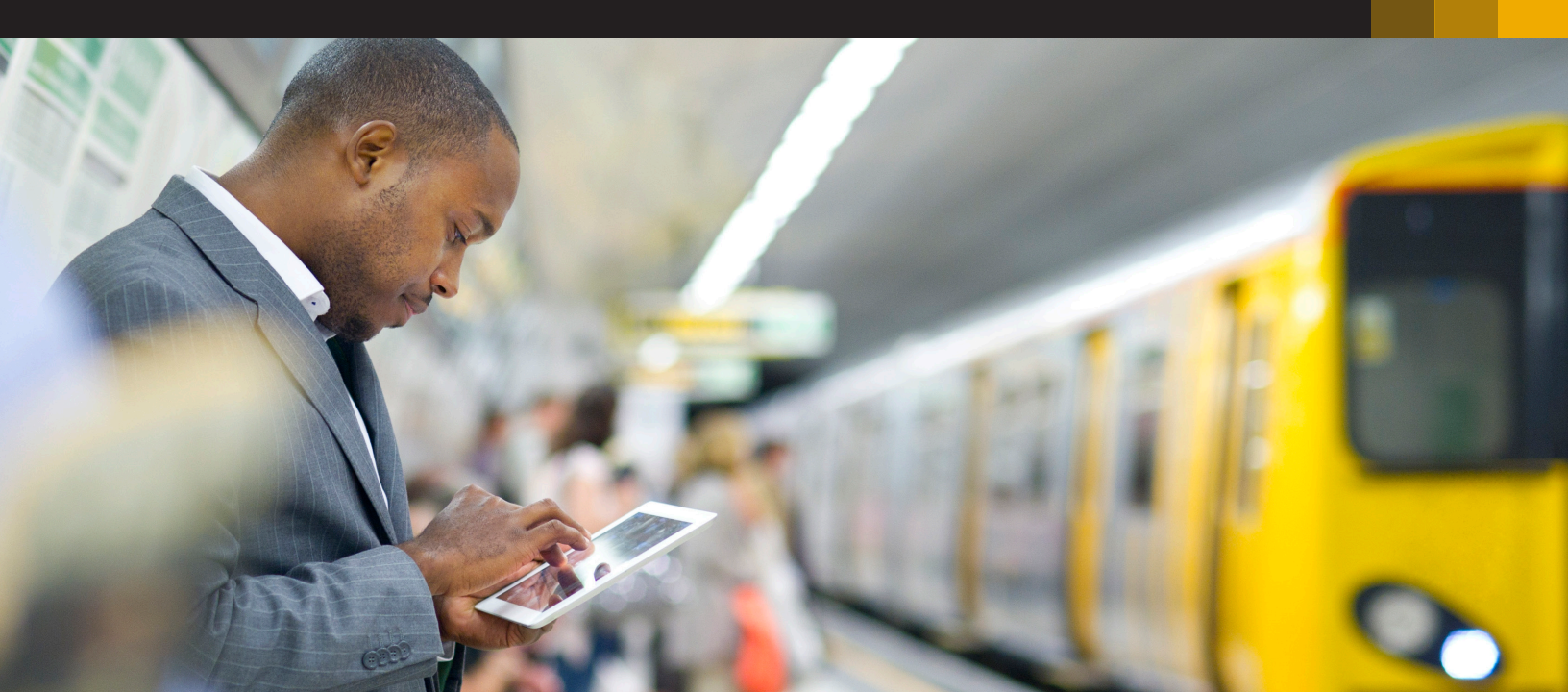
3. Cut the paper clutter — store receipts electronically.

Use apps that let you easily turn any paper receipt into an electronic one. Concur Hipmunk does that while also linking up with **Concur Expense**, so any receipts while traveling can be automatically turned into expense reports.

4. Evaluate the Real Trade-Offs Between Home Rentals Verses Hotels.

Most travelers today know that they can book short-term home and apartment rentals instead of hotels. And rentals can offer certain perks: more space and comfort, potentially for less money than a hotel room. They also can have kitchens, so you can eat in if you wish, along with other comforts of home. But don't automatically discount hotels: many hotels offer other cost-saving and convenient amenities, such as free breakfast and shuttle service to local destinations, as well as fitness centers and pools. Think about your overall needs when deciding which is the better route. Concur Travel and Concur Hipmunk now both include **Airbnb listings** so you can select the option that works best for you.

5. Consider timing to snag the best airfares.

Experienced travelers know that booking flights at the last minute usually leads to sky-high airfares. But booking too far in advance can also cost you. One **recent study** found that the average best time to book a flight is three-and-a-half months before departure, although it varies among destinations. Another **study** found that airfares tend to spike 14 days before departure – and stay inflated until the departure – so it's best to purchase flights at least two weeks in advance, when possible. Mobile apps like **Hopper** can watch airfare trends for you and notify you when it's a good time to book. (Keep in mind that your company's travel policy should encourage people to book trips sooner rather later due to the price surge airfares generally experience in the final two weeks.)

6. Think twice about buying the cheapest fare available.

Many airlines have introduced "basic" economy fares in recent years, which are essentially low fares meant to compete against no-frill carriers. But many times these fares aren't a good fit for business travel, as they may charge you extra for any carry-on bag you bring on board and not provide any refund even if you have to cancel or reschedule days or weeks in advance.

7. Join programs that dramatically speed up your airport security wait times.

Most business travelers today know about the Transportation Security Administration's **TSA Precheck** program, which allows you to skip many of the time-consuming steps involved in airport security and screening lines. But for a little more money, you can enroll in the U.S. Custom and Border Protection's **Global Entry program**, which allows you to use an automatic kiosk for passport processing and expedited clearance at many airports around the world. Plus, you automatically receive TSA Precheck once you're enrolled in the Global Entry program.

8. Use smart tools to organize your trip details in one place.

Before any business trip, put together an itinerary and packing list – this will keep you organized and help you plan effectively. Store these along with all your travel documents in an easy-to-find location, like on your phone. **TripIt** gives you on-the-go mobile access to all your travel documents and contacts in one place. You can also share those documents with other people – whether your team or friends and family members.

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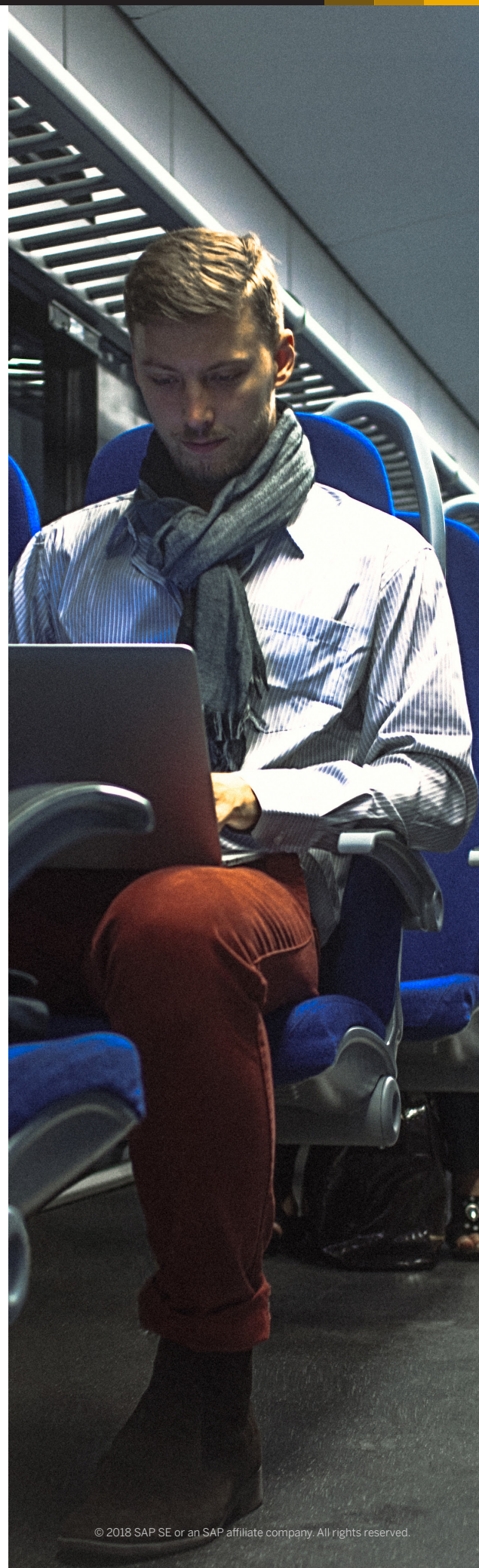
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SAP Concur provides small and midsize businesses with the travel booking solutions, such as Concur Hipmunk and Concur Travel, that serve their needs today, with the ability to evolve in the future as their business travel needs change and grow. **Learn more.**

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