

## Preparing for Your Business Trip Ends at Work

A Handy Checklist from the Manic Mommies

Whether traveling for business, pleasure or a little of both, there are things you can do to stay connected while you are away:

- Change your e-mail signature – If you are going to be away from the office for more than one or two days, change your signature ahead of time, stating your plans. (For example: Please note, I will be out of the office September 10-15 attending the ABA Marketing Network Conference.)
- Make a list of pending jobs – If you expect colleagues to cover for you while you are gone, make a list of your “hot” jobs with a short description of what may happen while you are away, and the next steps. Start your list a couple of days before you leave so you have time to make sure it is complete.
- Update your address book – There is nothing more frustrating than trying to call a client or supplier, just to realize you don’t have their information in your mobile device. Update your preferred method of communication with all your important numbers, including direct lines and cell phones of colleagues and coworkers.
- Pack your business cards – Grab a small stack. Then double it. No sense attending a networking event if you don’t have your cards.
- Pick your technology – Decide ahead of time what technology you are going to bring with you. If you have lots of documents to review or will be e-mailing heavily, you may choose to carry a laptop. Going to be on the run and in meetings most of the day? Your mobile device may be enough.
- Then, lock it down – There is nothing worse than a stolen laptop or identity. Make sure your tech is updated with the latest virus-ware and security software. [I have Undercover from Orbicule installed on my laptop](#), just in case.
- Tag your bag – You put a luggage tag on your suitcase, but what about your carry-on or computer bag? [I have a cute tag from Anne Taintor on my bag](#).
- Raid the supply closet – A two-pocket folder, notepad, a couple of pens and an envelope don’t take up much room and packing these things ensures that you have what you need.
- Catch up on your reading – Grab those back issues of *Entrepreneur* and *Working Mother* so you can catch up on your reading during the trip. See an article you like? Rip out the pages (placing it in your two-pocket folder), then

dump the rest of the mag at the next recycling bin.

- Print out three copies of everything – Tickets, agendas and other vital information should be printed out at least three times: one copy to carry with you, one in your suitcase “just in case” and one back at the office, so they know how to reach you and when you will probably be incommunicado.
- Set your vacation messages – Right before you leave, set your vacation message (e-mail AND voicemail) stating how long you’ll be gone, why you are away (vacation or business) and who they should contact if they need assistance immediately. Then leave a note on your monitor that will remind you that your vacation message is on (so you won’t forget upon your return).
- Pack a map – Business travel is a great way to visit new destinations. Pack a map or destination guide, just in case you have some downtime to explore the local sites.