

The Travel Process:

This page is designed to walk you through the travel process so you can maximize your mission's likelihood for success.

The traveler's team leader also needs abort authority with travel funding. Otherwise the travelers are stranded. It takes money and time to book flights back home or to secure other means of travel.

So here's the situation you want to avoid:

The travelers run into a mission ending problem. The finance officer decides not to fund the traveler's return trip back home (I've seen this happen!) Now most people can't afford a \$2,000 airplane ticket back home so the travelers, who are becoming emotionally compromised are stuck at an airport. Then in frustration the travelers grab their cell phones and reach out to the media. This causes a media fire storm for the organization. To include a loss of confidence in the leadership of the organization. Now the CEO may drive a fast car, but when 20 news reporters are chasing that car, how fast can that car really go now?

The following situations need to be address before traveling begins:

Severe accident, injury or death of key personnel.

Loss of mission essential equipment (like high end electronic packages).

Loss of support from an essential supporting group.

Political situation has changed for the worst.

Military situation has changed for the worst.

Terrorist or criminal activity is spiking.

Loss of confidence in the travel team or its leadership.

Political situation with management has changed for the worst.

Passports:

1. Passports are hard to get and they take weeks to process.
2. Travelers tend to drag this process out and make it even longer than needed. So set a due date and stick to it.
3. Set a deadline for the travelers and stick to it, this teaches the group discipline and helps the less motivated people to self-select out.

Emergency Medicines for Travelers:

Emergency medicines, inhalers, sting kits, and allergic reaction kits are all included in this group of medicines. If a traveler needs the medicine to stay alive then they need to have the medicine with them as there may not be a pharmacy, doctor, or hospital close enough to save the person's life.

Keep it simple: Nobody leaves home without their medicines as it is a severe drain on the travelers when they have to stop and save the life of an irresponsible person.

Packing Lists:

1. Use a simple format for the packing list.
2. Prior to departing inspect the travelers bags.
3. It sets discipline for the group and identifies potential problem travelers so you can exclude them from traveling before you leave.
4. If travelers don't pack HAVE to have items, give them one chance to get the item, then exclude them from the trip. (Imagine really cold weather but someone decides not to bring their coat? Most of the time it's a future indicator of a problem causing traveler.)
5. Make sure what they bring is allowable in the countries they are traveling to, for example military clothing is only allowed to be worn by the military in many foreign countries.
6. Check electronic devices for pornography as its illegal in some countries.
7. Plan on at least one of the travelers getting selected for enhanced screening by the TSA.
8. Hand carry all electronic devices and mission essential items, unless they are too big, if so they need to be well packed.
9. If a traveler gets bumped, suddenly gets sick or for whatever reason can't get on the airplane, the management team needs to be notified immediately.
10. If a younger member is bumped then one of the more experienced members needs to swap out with the airline and stay behind.

Traveling:

1. If a traveler has problems the team leader needs to get involved immediately.
2. No alcohol or illegal drugs.
3. Eat, drink water and sleep as you can on the flight as most of the time you will be physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted just getting on the airplane. Just don't drink alcohol as it

dehydrates you and prevents you from going into deep sleep, which is what you need to be rested.

4. This comes from all the last minute preparations, family dynamics (this alone can be very rough on anybody) and any other last minute situations that spin out of control during the preparation process.
5. With proper planning the travelers are sitting in pairs and in comfortable seats with a decent amount of leg room. (Hopefully!)
6. When the plane lands have the farthest back team scan the rest of the seats for equipment and personal effects that other team members may have left behind.
7. I have watched key leaders break legs, arms, collapse from the flu, nearly die from dehydration, get hit by a vehicle and attempt suicide and commit suicide.
8. Leadership and management also needs to be prepared for spouses, children, and parents to get hospitalized or die.
9. During the flight every hour or so get up and stretch your legs, do anything and when seated wear your seatbelt.
10. Remember you want your bladder empty before that plane lands.
11. Somewhere during the flight the airline will give you a Custom's Forms, the leader may want to collect them up as not having them is a show stopper in leaving the country.
12. The person that sits in the furthest seat needs to wait until the team is off and as they walk by the old seats look to make sure nothing is left behind.
13. You're going to get off the plane exhausted and have to get your luggage, go through customs, get transportation and get to your first stop, this will be a real leadership test.
14. Count on being tired, hungry and very dehydrated when you step off the airplane.

Getting Through Customs:

This is why you want to be rested, hydrated, and not hungry as all the moving parts suddenly come together when you get off the airplane. As the leadership and the travelers need to be fully focused.

1. Lost bags at this point could be catastrophic to your mission.
2. Problems with custom's officials mean your travelers and possibly your entire group are not allowed out of the airport or at worse case transported to a holding cell for several days at a

minimum and without their communications equipment. This happens more often than people realize.

A. Have a plan to send a May Day Call (Distress Call like 911) to management as the travelers are rounded up by customs officials, police or military, normally there is a minute or two before the group is totally under the control of these officials and May Day Calls are impossible to send out. The more information management gets the sooner the travelers will be able to get out of detention.

B. Sometimes equipment is not allowed into the country and is confiscated by customs officials; So can the mission be done without the equipment getting through customs?

C. What happens if key leaders aren't allowed into the country; Do the travelers continue on or abort the mission?

3. Space out as you go through customs with the assistant team leader in front and the team leader in the back, in case they have to assist a traveler getting through customs. (i.e. deflecting customs officials from stopping the traveler.)

Getting out of the Airport:

1. Your travelers get through customs and wait together until everybody gets through customs.

2. Then the leadership is securing transportation to the hotel, base camp or whatever. It's important to stay together as a group as the more impulsive travelers will want to wonder off in search of food or just explore. Airports are bad places to hang around and get noticed by bad guys, so stay together and get out of the airport fast.

3. Taxis are preferable, but hang around and see if someone is trying to intercept you or your group, watch for aggressive body language that's out of place with other taxi drivers. Also look and see if your taxi driver dresses like the other taxi drivers.

4. Travelers will be exhausted and disoriented from being on the airplane for hours at a time. Pictures and video conferencing beforehand can help you to be able to recognize your contacts in the destination country.