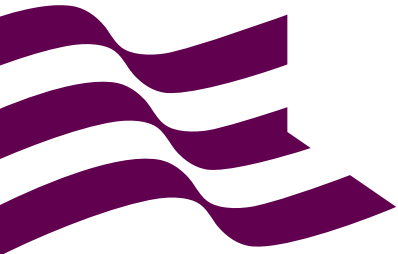


CROWNE PLAZA®

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH **STYLUS**

Leading the charge
in Blended Travel.



Between *the lines.*

For years, Crowne Plaza® has been analyzing changing trends in how people balance work, leisure and travel in multiple markets.

The findings have enabled the brand to continuously innovate the products and services offered in more than 400 hotels around the world. Crowne Plaza has been at the forefront of understanding the changing dynamics of travel behavior – particularly in the realm of **Blended Travel** – over the past decade and published its first paper on the subject in 2022.

Our **last report** solidified Crowne Plaza's thought leadership in the Blended Travel space. Since then, we've continued to track the rapid evolution of these trends, reinforcing our reputation as a brand that doesn't just respond to changes, but plans ahead to shape the future of travel.



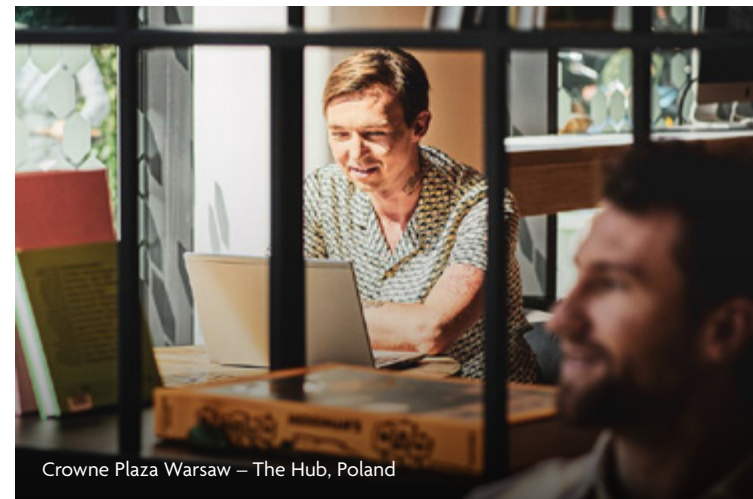


What's happened since 2022?

The world has seen a major shift in how people live and work, with an increased focus on **hybrid living** and **new options for remote working**.

Our most recent survey found a substantial **79% of US and UK travelers** now have employers that allow them to work remotely. And **66% of these travelers** are actively combining business trips with personal leisure time.¹

As companies embrace the 'return to office' more broadly, many are simultaneously emphasizing the benefits of hybrid work and **Blended Travel**. Travelers are even more eager to make the most of their time away. **56% of US and UK travelers** say the ability to travel while working is a key benefit of remote work.² And blended travel, like any travel behavior, doesn't stand still.



Crowne Plaza Warsaw – The Hub, Poland



New trends *shaping Blended Travel.*

Crowne Plaza, one of IHG® Hotels & Resort's hotel stay brands, was ahead of the curve in recognizing the growing demand for seamless integration between work and leisure.

The brand has prioritized Blended Travel for years, with spaces and services designed for the harmonious flow between business and leisure: establishing itself as a bold, inventive leader in the hospitality industry. From reimagining hotel design to incorporating **residential-style spaces** and multifunctional guest rooms, Crowne Plaza consistently surprises the market with its ability to anticipate the evolving needs of modern travelers.

As Blended Travel evolves, we are seeing four emerging trends driven by a new breed of companies and individuals who seek **far-reaching flexibility** as a means to achieve broader goals. These travelers are not only balancing work and leisure but are also focused on personal growth, wellness, and meaningful connections.

TREND ONE

Improve and grow.

Travelers are linking Blended Travel to active efforts to improve their **personal and professional skills**, recognizing the benefits of increased enjoyment and satisfaction within and beyond their careers.

TREND TWO

Mind body equity.

People are demanding that their work (and business travel) environments integrate opportunities for better **mental and physical well-being**. This shift from self-care to self-awareness is reshaping how travelers approach both work and leisure.

TREND THREE

Personal travel economy.

Travelers are more focused on **value and quality**, ensuring they get the best out of both their time and financial resources. They are balancing their needs with new considerations, such as sustainable travel and thoughtful spending.

TREND FOUR

Intentional togetherness.

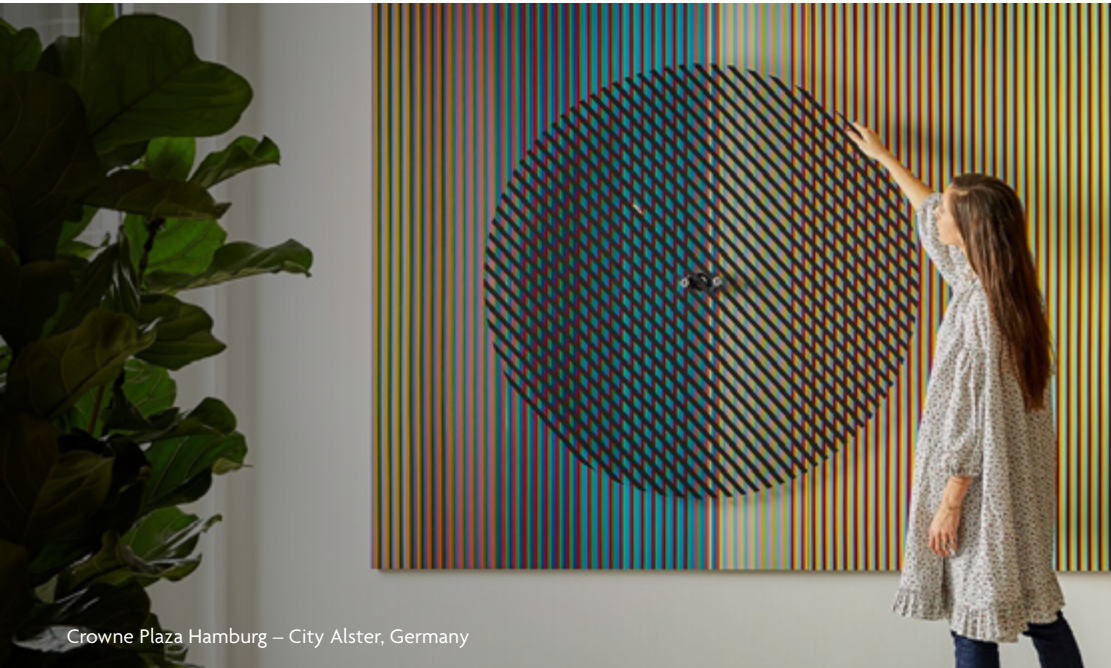
With much of life lived online, travelers are increasingly prioritizing **quality time** with loved ones. Whether it's blending business with face-to-face connections, or taking family vacations or trips with friends alongside work commitments, people are organizing activities and routines to make the most of their time together.

“As we look ahead, the demand for flexible, purpose-driven travel experiences will continue to grow, and Crowne Plaza will remain a leader in delivering the solutions that tomorrow's travelers need to thrive. Whether it's through inventive hotel designs, curated social spaces, or a commitment to fostering meaningful connections, Crowne Plaza is dedicated to supporting a more dynamic and fulfilling travel experience that blends the best of all worlds.”

GINGER TAGGART, VICE PRESIDENT
CROWNE PLAZA HOTELS AND RESORTS

The future of *Blended Travel*.

Blended Travel has evolved beyond being a trend – it's here to stay and is becoming more diverse and sophisticated. Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts continues to provide the ideal setting for travelers who seek a balance between **business and leisure**, on a global scale, with more than 400 hotels each offering versatile spaces and services designed to meet the needs of modern travelers.



Crowne Plaza Hamburg – City Alster, Germany

TREND ONE

Improve and grow.

In today's evolving travel landscape, **Blended Travel** is increasingly seen as more than just a convenience. For many travelers, it's an essential tool for personal and professional growth.

Travelers are actively linking their journeys to opportunities for **self-improvement**, skill development, and creative exploration. This trend points to a deeper shift in the way people approach personal and professional productivity.

CREATIVITY IS BECOMING MORE IMPORTANT

93% of UK consumers, now believe that having the space and freedom to be creative is essential to their well-being.

(CREATE AND JACKSONS, 2023)⁴

76% of organizations in a survey of 14,000 business leaders from around the world, now recognize the critical role of human imagination and curiosity in keeping pace with technological innovation.

(DELOITTE, 2024)⁵



The 'rest' revolution

Traditionally, we saw rest – and the way traveling for pleasure gives us time away from work or from our day-to-day responsibilities – as a straightforward exchange. We did less, and we recharged our energy reserves.

Today we see more people considering how rest, and time away while traveling, as an **active pursuit**: one that can fuel creativity and enhance overall wellbeing, rather than just simply providing physical recuperation. The concept of **creative rest** is emerging, where rest not only recharges the body but also stimulates the mind.

Take Lin-Manuel Miranda, creator of the wildly successful musical Hamilton, who says taking time off created the conditions for creativity: "It's no accident that the best idea I've ever had in my life – perhaps the best one I'll ever have – came to me on vacation. The moment my brain got a moment's rest, 'Hamilton' walked into it."³

Blended Travel: Conditions for creativity

Blended travel offers more than just a change of scenery: it can serve as a powerful catalyst for creativity, offering new perspectives and new inspiration.

By working in different locations, individuals are exposed to **diverse environments** – whether that's local culture, cuisine, cities or landscapes – which can foster fresh ideas and stimulate innovation.

Crowne Plaza offers numerous meetings and events spaces which inspire, from Victorian ballrooms at Crowne Plaza Sheffield in the UK to Crowne Plaza Atlanta SW – Peachtree City in the US, with its 38 acres of campus including an outdoor amphitheater. Crowne Plaza Budapest's CULT Terrace can be reimagined for a variety of uses, making the most of the long Hungarian summer and views over the city.

This desire to be stimulated by new surroundings has always been part of why we travel. We want to spend time in places that spark the imagination (68% of adults in the US, UK and China agree with this, according to a 2023 VML survey). And nearly 70% of travelers say they like to leave unplanned time in their trips so they can experience local culture and activities (American Express, 2024).⁷

What's new is the way this is becoming an intrinsic part of how we blend business and leisure travel. In an age of remote and hybrid working, the valuable face-to-face interactions that travel enables are a source for creative thinking: in a 2023 TravelPerk survey 51% of US employees said that meeting in person boosts both productivity and creativity.⁸

Importantly, today's blended traveler also sees that making space for creativity in their personal time has benefits for their professional development as well as their wider mental health and sense of satisfaction with life.⁹

Crowne Plaza introduced its Studio concept into new hotels back in 2018. This on-demand, multifunctional bookable space can be used for collaborative workshops, boardroom-style meetings or casual catchups by day and receptions and private dining by night, creating a more flexible – and creative-led – alternative to the traditional boardroom.

In our Crowne Plaza survey we found early evidence of this balancing of work and creative stimulus: nearly one in four travelers in the US and UK already say that one of the key benefits of remote work is the way it enables people to pursue creative hobbies.

As companies are increasingly interested in harnessing these skills to drive innovation, enabling blended travel won't just be about managing time efficiently: it'll play a key role in fostering the creative skills that organizations will be looking for in their future workforce.



IN THE FUTURE, WE'LL PLACE GROWING VALUE
ON CREATIVITY IN AND OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE

73% of organizations surveyed by the
World Economic Forum identified creative
thinking as a top priority for future talent.
(WEF, 2023)¹⁰



Inspirational learning, on-the-go

“A new set of content partnerships from Crowne Plaza really speaks to how well we understand – and have listened to – travelers looking to combine travel time and inspirational self-development and learning. Guests will be able to access expert-led master classes from BBC Maestro – in everything from how to find happiness to creating space for better productivity through to understanding wine. We are really leaning into supporting our guests’ hybrid lives by giving them a week’s complimentary access and the flexibility to access this content when and where they choose. I’ve personally been inspired by watching a BBC Maestro class on Happiness while on the train between London and our global headquarters in Windsor.”

JANE MACKIE, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,
GLOBAL MARKETING, LUXURY, LIFESTYLE & PREMIUM BRANDS AT IHG HOTELS & RESORTS

TREND IN ACTION

Work-from-abroad: Perks and prizes

As part of this shift towards supporting creativity, some companies are offering extended time away from traditional work settings: for rest, for retention and to reward and reinvigorate employees.

LinkedIn began offering ways to document ‘Travel’ as one of its career break options back in 2022, acknowledging that today’s career paths are often not linear. Enabling professionals to document sabbaticals as part of their professional experience highlights the growing acceptance of extended breaks for personal development.

Global organizations are well-placed to offer employees the opportunity to work abroad: car manufacturer Continental offers short- and long-term international job rotations, giving workers travel perks. Professional services firm EY says it receives more than 50,000 internal applications annually for cross-border positions, with numbers increasing each year. And people who have been on a mobility assignment stay with EY longer, having a 15% higher retention rate compared to peers who have not been on an assignment to work abroad.

Increasingly, organizations will offer shorter term travel opportunities as rewards, for example giving individuals or teams the chance to work from another corporate location as the prize in internal innovation competitions or hackathons. The aim will be to boost staff retention at the same time as offering opportunities for dispersed workers to connect in person.



Crowne Plaza Resort Guam

TREND TWO

Mind body equity.

As the modern workforce evolves, people are increasingly seeking to integrate **mind and body wellness** into every aspect of their lives, including their professional lives.

This shift goes beyond traditional self-care: individuals are now focused on achieving **full self-awareness**, both at work and in their personal lives. Tomorrow's hotels will cater for people who want their health, well-being, enrichment and professional ambitions to align in a more holistic way.

Wellness: A must-have, not a nice-to-have

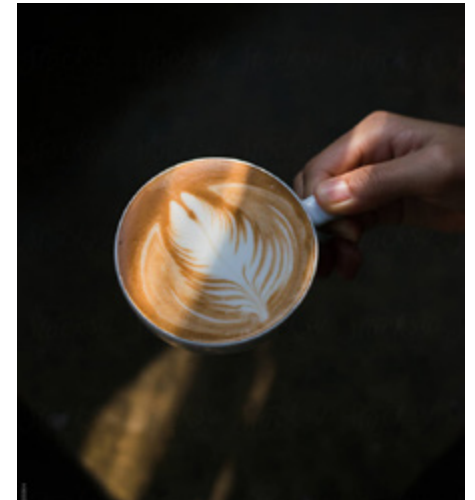
The influence of wellness is extending across all aspects of life, touching everything from **nutrition** and **sleep** to **financial wellbeing** and **spiritual health**.

Travelers, too, are part of this shift, with 56% actively seeking wellness experiences when they travel, whether through eco-friendly accommodations, outdoor activities, or wellness-focused itineraries (GWI, 2023).¹¹ This increased focus on wellness is not just a short-term trend: it represents a lasting change in how we all view our long-term health and quality of life.

What's changed is twofold: we're more proactive about managing our health, and we're more aware of how interrelated our **physical, mental, and spiritual health** is: symbiotic ecosystem essential for our overall well-being.

We're proactive in part because we are living longer. In the US and UK, 70% of consumers in the US and UK have bought products or services focused on healthy aging and longevity in the past year: that's more than in any previous year (McKinsey, 2024).¹²

And we're even more aware than ever of the importance of **mental health management** in our lives, both personally and professionally. The value of vacations and time spent away from work in



managing positive mental health has become widely acknowledged. In a survey of global travelers 85% agreed that vacations help them feel more positive and optimistic (Expedia, 2023).¹³

Organization Mental Health UK found that 91% of UK adults experienced high or extreme levels of pressure or stress in the past year, with one in five workers (20%) in the UK needing to take time off work.¹⁴ In this worrying context, businesses are increasingly focused on employee health and wellbeing.

In our Crowne Plaza survey, we're already seeing these **mind body equity** priorities emerging. Nearly half of US and UK travelers say they stay active while traveling for business to ensure their well-being, while 42% prioritize sleep to maintain their physical and mental health while traveling (IHG, 2024).¹⁵

Nature's restorative power

Whether for business or leisure, travel is increasingly seen as a tool for mental rejuvenation.

Add to this the growing awareness of the mental and physical health benefits of spending time outdoors, and it's no surprise that blended travelers are exploring ways to combine work responsibilities with restorative time spent in the outdoors. Nearly half of Europeans say their mental or physical health suffers when they spend too much time indoors (BUPA, 2023).¹⁶

Crowne Plaza address this human need through its New Modern design style, where biophilic design ensures guests feel closer to nature. And some hotels take nature to the next level. Crowne Plaza Atlanta SW – Peachtree City in Georgia, US, is a hotel and conference center campus set in 38 acres to provide a distraction-free environment, while the multi-award-winning Crowne Plaza Singapore – Changi Airport, whose design is often lauded as creating an oasis in this busy airport setting, includes an outdoor pool in a truly tropical setting.

It's something we see across travel. Global travel network Virtuoso says 97% of its advisors find clients are seeking wellness experiences that separate them from the daily stresses of life: and that 63% of clients are seeking outdoor and nature-focused retreats when they travel.¹⁷

An increase in outdoor, active lifestyles, and people's growing desire to spend time in relaxing natural environments, are driving forward-thinking hospitality spaces to create new offerings that speak to blended travel's new balanced mindset.

Event programming is increasingly incorporating mindfulness practices, gym sessions, and wellness breakouts to create more balanced and healthful experiences for attendees.



Crowne Plaza Atlanta SW – Peachtree City, United States



“Take meetings and events. Open-air spaces are increasingly important for groups to meet, celebrate and collaborate. Many of our hotels have outdoor spaces and we're increasingly designing them for conferences, events and off-sites. And when coupled with activities or amenities designed around wellbeing, fitness or great sleep – such as a guided run, you start to see how we're responding to this demand, for better mental and physical health.”

BETTY WILSON, VICE PRESIDENT,
GLOBAL ACCOUNTS AT IHG HOTELS & RESORTS



“As experts in hospitality, we’re always looking to the future. We’re passionate about meeting traveler needs on a global scale, and that includes thinking ahead to be ready for future travelers, too. From dialing up the zoning of our guest rooms, so that they fully accommodate the mixed use now required for work time and downtime, to rethinking our approach to Meetings & Events for today’s traveler, we’re constantly inspired by how much blended travel has evolved. We can’t wait to keep pushing it forward.”

GINGER TAGGART, VICE PRESIDENT
CROWNE PLAZA HOTELS AND RESORTS

TREND IN ACTION

Digital Snowmads

It’s easy to imagine blended travel adventures in some of the world’s most vibrant cities, or adding on time to a work trip to get in a few days rest and recovery at a pool with a view in a sunny climate. For some blended travelers, though, it’s all about the snow. “Digital Snowmads” are skiers and snowboarders looking to work remotely in places where they can get access to freshly-groomed pistes or crowd-free slopes and quieter, off peak skiing.

Flexible work policies enable mountain sports fans to base themselves in ski regions and blend exhilarating exercise and access to fresh mountain air with their work day, whether this is an early morning run, a quick lunchtime foray up the mountain or the chance to take advantage of night skiing: resorts are increasingly lighting up the pistes for one night a week during the winter, allowing blended travelers to fit in extra ski time after work.

ANA Crowne Plaza Resort Appi Kogen, for example, is a large mountain resort hotel located next to the best ski resort in Tohoku, Japan. And Crowne Plaza Shanghai Snow World, which opened in 2024, capitalizes on this further. Part of the world’s biggest indoor snow sports resort, the hotel caters to blended travelers looking to combine productivity, restoration and adventure.

If you’re not a skier, Crowne Plaza’s partnership with Fiit, a world-class fitness

and movement platform, gives guests a week’s complimentary access to a wide range of online training plans from cardio to strength training and recovery.

Holistic mindsets

Wellness is no longer an isolated part of travel – it’s becoming integrated into the very fabric of travel experiences. 87% agree that regular vacations are crucial for maintaining their general health and well-being (Expedia, 2023).¹⁸ This focus on wellness is inspiring new ways for people to **balance work, travel, and health** across their stay, and day.

Crowne Plaza has developed a series of daily rituals designed to promote mental and physical health during business and leisure trips. “From energizing smoothies at breakfast packed full of ingredients to kick start your morning and guided runs to access to breath work classes to end the day, these offerings ensure guests can maintain their well-being while traveling,” says Claire Chapoulet, Head of Global Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts. “As hoteliers, we’re so well-placed to do something special to start the day and end the day well for our guests. Often this is about simple but effective consideration for their wellbeing: such as signposting a ginger shot on the breakfast buffet to help guests get an energizing, vitamin-packed start to their day. Or in the evening sending them some great sleep tips and a reminder that there’s a great chamomile teabag in the drawer in their room, to help them drift off to a truly restorative sleep.”



Crowne Plaza Ankara, Turkey

TREND THREE

Personal travel economy.

As global economic challenges mount, a **new personal travel economy** is emerging, driven by a desire to maximize both time and money while also incorporating sustainability and mindful resource use. Travelers are becoming increasingly discerning, looking for ways to balance financial considerations with the richness of their travel experiences.

Making travel a priority, in tough economic times

Despite inflationary pressures and rising costs, travel remains a top priority for many. A striking **49% of US and UK travelers** are prioritizing travel over other non-essential expenses and 33% are still extremely or very likely to travel during tough economic times. (IHG, 2024).¹⁹

This trend is part of broader consumer shifts towards meaningful experiences. As many as **77% of travelers** care more about the right travel experience than the cost of the trip (American Express, 2024), reflecting a shift in values as many people prioritize memories over possessions and experiences over price. Among younger generations, it's even more pronounced: the same survey found that **84% of Gen Z and Millennials** would rather go on a dream holiday than buy a luxury item.²⁰

With inflation impacting costs worldwide – **74% of global travelers** are concerned about rising prices for everyday purchases (Deloitte, 2024) – blended travelers are becoming savvier.²¹ They're employing **travel hacks** to make the most of their trips: from traveling in off peak times to using credit card points to save money.

What's new is that they are also using hacks, tricks and tech to save time as well as money, or to spend their time more meaningfully. **AI and technology** are becoming key tools in streamlining the

travel experience, helping travelers save time and money while personalizing their journeys. For instance, **Tailbox**, an AI-driven platform, acts as a digital tour guide, helping travelers design custom itineraries based on their interests, whether that's local cuisine, architecture, or folklore.

And it's not surprising travelers are turning to technology for assistance. Nearly **72% of Americans** find booking travel stressful, mainly due to the challenge of securing the best deals (Expedia, 2023). This opens up opportunities for AI and other tech solutions to make the travel planning process more seamless and enjoyable.²²

Blended travelers are willing to invest in meaningful experiences, they are financially savvy, looking for ways to get more value from their journeys. Financial incentives, such as **loyalty rewards** and **perks**, are becoming more important, especially when enabled by technology that allows for easy **splitting of bills** or **pooling of resources**.

In our Crowne Plaza survey, we found that **86% of US and UK travelers seek free nights or room discounts to help subsidize their trips**, and 71% use bonus points to reduce costs. **69% of travelers look for free breakfast to offset expenses**, while 40% rely on bonus miles to make their trips more affordable.²³

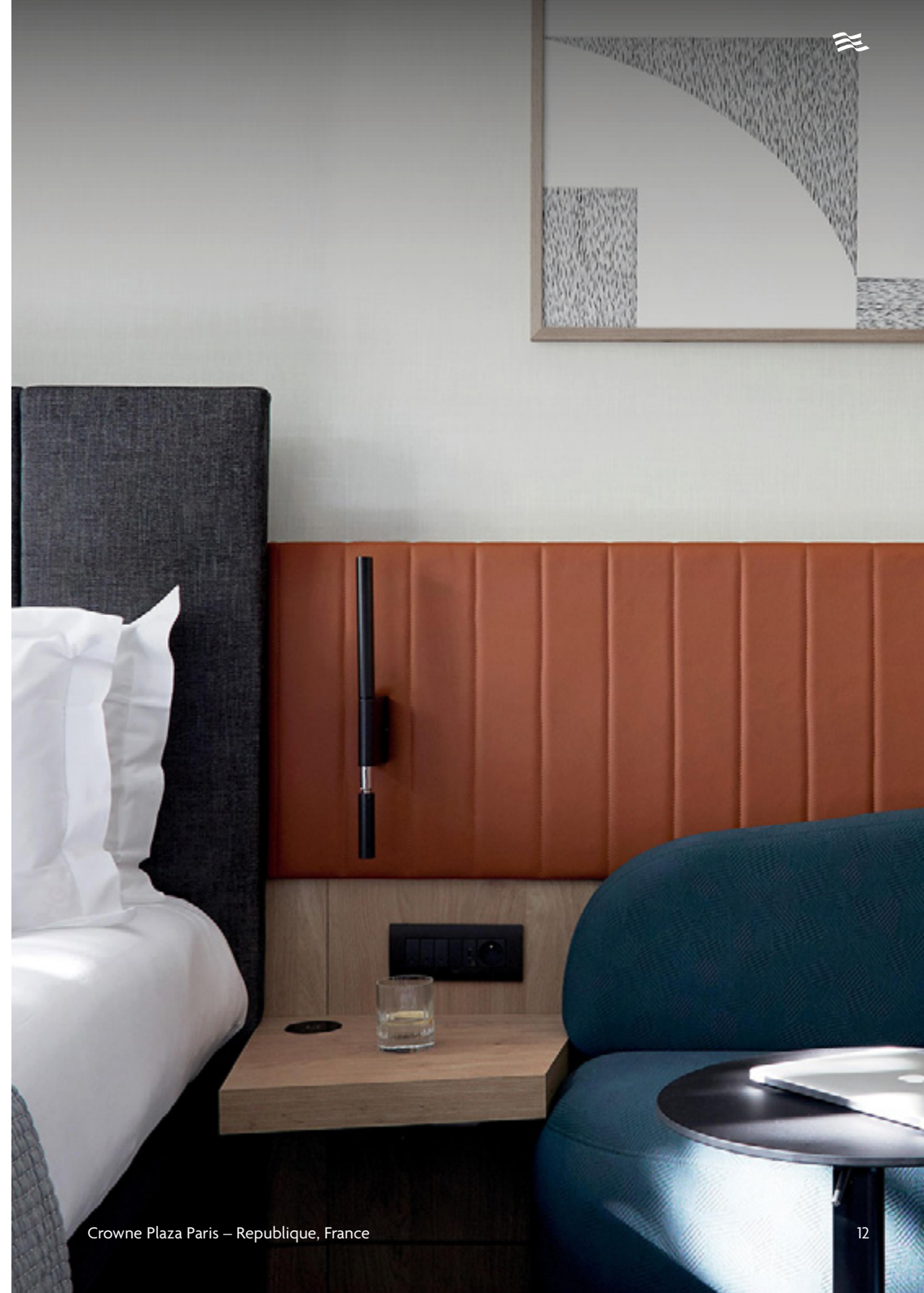
Corporate travel is also seeing a shift, with companies like **Uber** experimenting with new blended benefits. Employees can now earn personal perks, such as Uber Cash, which they can use during their leisure time.

Balanced and blended: The new time equation

The global re-evaluation of time is also leading to shifts in workplace culture, with companies and countries around the world exploring the potential of a **four-day workweek**.

Pilot studies and research into four day working weeks have shown that there are benefits: in a UK pilot study of 61 companies, some of the most extensive benefits of shorter working hours were found in employees' well-being. 'Before and after' data shows that 39% of employees were less stressed, and 71% had reduced levels of burnout at the end of the trial period.²⁴

This shift is creating new opportunities for **blended travel**, making it easier to combine short breaks with remote working or business travel. In fact, 64% of US and UK travelers are extremely open to a four-day workweek.²⁵





IHG[®]
HOTELS & RESORTS

Revamped rewards

“We know guests want to make the best use of their time and money. The IHG One Rewards program now gives members access to exclusive experiences and events. This reflects the way Crowne Plaza anticipates how travelers are looking to maximize their travel experiences. Experiences offered have included Wilderness Festival in the UK, Lollapalooza Berlin in Germany, US Open tennis and Six Nations Rugby experiences, with additional perks on offer too, depending on your membership tier. And members can now earn Milestone Rewards every ten nights they stay after the first twenty nights in a calendar year.”

PAUL PROCTOR, SVP LOYALTY & PARTNERSHIPS AT IHG HOTELS & RESORTS

TREND IN ACTION

Prioritizing positive impact

The **New Personal Travel Economy** is reshaping the way people think about their trips. New traveler demands are all about maximizing how we use our precious time and money. We want everything we ‘spend’ – time, money, energy – to be meaningful and valuable.

“We also see this in the way that travelers are increasingly conscious of making a **positive impact** on the places they visit,” says Catherine Dolton, Chief Sustainability Officer, IHG Hotels & Resorts. “This aligns with Crowne Plaza’s focus on **community-led projects**, ensuring that our hotels contribute positively to their local surroundings and local communities.” Guests and event bookers are more interested in finding out about how hotels are working with local partners on community support initiatives.

Crowne Plaza Atlanta Perimeter at Ravinia, as just one example, works with food waste management and hunger relief company Goodr to rescue its surplus food. Edible, unsold food from the location’s restaurants and corporate dining events is donated to Goodr’s local non-profit partners. This is coupled with “smarter and savvier approaches that are all about creating compelling menus that result in less waste in the first place”, says Dolton. As well as year-round programs, hotels are also supporting fundraising and skills sharing events. “Crowne Plaza Gurugram in India celebrated its 17th anniversary with a skills and creative activities event for children from Delhi-based NGO Aashagiri. And Crowne Plaza Nairobi Airport recently collected and donated 185 kilograms of food, clothes, and linen items to a local school, which positively impacted 100 families in the area.”



Crowne Plaza Warsaw – The Hub, Poland

TREND FOUR

Intentional togetherness.

There's no doubt the world is becoming increasingly digital, resulting in huge benefits across increased convenience and access to information and entertainment on the go. But because of this digital shift, people are prioritizing intentional togetherness – organizing activities and routines that help them make the most of time spent with others.

Whether it's collaborating with colleagues, reconnecting with loved ones, forging new friendships, or participating in shared passions, travelers are seeking opportunities to bond and build relationships that enrich their lives.

"This even influences how we design the public spaces in our hotels," says Brandon Pakula, Head of Brand Design, Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts. "Our focus on connection means we have seating for those who want to spend time alone or connecting digitally, spaces for groups, and space for those traveling alone but who are open to connect with others. This could be eating and drinking at the bar and swapping stories with the bartender. Or spending time in the hotel's Social Space where sharing tables are designed for everything from morning emails to evening cocktails."

Power of connection

In a world where so much of life happens online, the desire to create **meaningful, in-person connections** is stronger than ever. In fact, more than a third (35%) of **US and UK travelers** say that travel helps them feel more connected to their family and friends.²⁶

This renewed focus on togetherness reflects a shift toward **quality relationships** – valuing the people who matter most and making time to strengthen existing ties while building new bonds. We see this across family travel and a new cultural emphasis on maintaining quality friendships.

Family relationships are a central theme in today's travel landscape. Spontaneous trips with family or significant others are becoming increasingly popular, with **41% of travelers** planning spontaneous trips with family, and 35% with a significant other, compared to 27% who plan to travel alone.²⁷ In fact, in the US, 73% of adults rate spending time with family as one of the most important things.²⁸

And **friend relationships** are also becoming a focal point for travelers. New trends, such as **buddymoon**s (where newlyweds invite friends and family on their honeymoon), are emerging, driven by the desire to experience life's significant moments with loved ones. **'Divorcations'** – vacations taken with a friend or friends after a divorce – show how important friend relationships are.

Travel experts at IHG note the rise of **all-female travel groups** and **empty-nesters** taking cultural trips together: with groups of friends in their 50s and 60s booking rooms and suites to attend cultural events, reconnect and strengthen long-term friendships.

The rise of **fandoms, hobbies, and sports travel** is another way people are coming together through travel. Events like **Taylor Swift's tour** have driven up travel searches by **65%**, demonstrating the power of shared passions to bring people together in physical locations (Expedia, 2024). In our Crowne Plaza survey, 65% of US and UK travelers have traveled for a concert, with 39% attending music festivals.²⁹

Travel for togetherness

The rise of hybrid and flexible working patterns places even greater emphasis on finding efficient and effective ways to spend quality time with colleagues and business contacts.

Organizations leverage **corporate retreats** and events to foster connection among employees: **59% of US and UK travelers** say they've attended an offsite work event focused on team building and connection.³⁰

This too, is changing thanks to the blended travel trend. **"Bring Your Bestie"** travel sees people taking friends along on work trips, enabling travelers to combine business and leisure while also strengthening those all-important personal relationships.



Crowne Plaza Sanya Haitang Bay, China

"We've seen a change in attitude here," says Sharon Kilmartin, General Manager of Crowne Plaza Atlanta Perimeter at Ravinia. "This used to be an under-the-radar activity, where a business traveler would feel they had to 'sneak in' a partner or friend. Now, a lot more people are now traveling with partners, family, or friends when attending conferences. Companies are actively saying, 'bring a friend if you like. Take the weekend to explore the city. Make the most of your travel time.' This is about legitimizing that traveler and then building a guest experience which is inclusive of them. Part of Crowne Plaza's leadership in blended travel is that we're here to welcome everyone at and around an event."

Crowne Plaza's **Meetings & Events Concierge** program is designed to cater to this need, offering personalized itineraries that enable all guests to explore the locality and enjoy meaningful connections, whether they are conference delegates or their friends, family or partners.

What's more, adds Gayle Weiss, Head of Global Brand Experience, Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts, "because blended travel is influencing destination decisions, Crowne Plaza is redesigning the Meetings & Events program to consider guests' holistic needs, including how and when guests may like to extend their stay for additional leisure time. This is Meetings & Events reimagined with blended travel in mind."





“Our research found that guests want to have social interaction while traveling and often feel apprehensive going to a restaurant or bar on their own. But no one wants an over-engineered situation which feels forced and unnatural. Crowne Plaza Socials provide a structured yet organic way for guests to meet and speak with each other, by providing a talking point or learning something new.”

JANE MACKIE, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT-LUXURY, LIFESTYLE & PREMIUM BRANDS
INTERCONTINENTAL HOTELS GROUP

TREND IN ACTION

Crafting connection

To support the desire for **intentional togetherness**, many Crowne Plaza hotels offer weekly social events designed to bring guests together in a relaxed, informal setting.

This could mean beer tasting in partnership with a nearby brewery at Crowne Plaza Melbourne in Florida, local Chiba sake tasting at ANA Crowne Plaza Narita, or a family affair with fireside s'mores at Crowne Plaza Hawkesbury Valley in Australia.

These social events are always centered around great food and drink, which makes it a welcoming environment for everyone.



Warm welcome

The last piece of the puzzle in Intentional Togetherness is ensuring that hotel staff can make meaningful connections with guests.

“The brand’s service experience ‘Dare to Connect’ is based on guest insights: it’s a warm, unscripted style that sets us apart in the industry and is backed by a suite of training tools,” says Rajit Sukumaran, Senior Vice President & Managing Director, East Asia & Pacific at IHG Hotels & Resorts. “We inspire our colleagues to think and act differently, breaking down barriers between colleagues and guests, fostering deeper human connections.”

“We are strong believers that Dare to Connect service behaviors are fundamental for our success. They really empower the team to make the decisions and create moments which guests remember. We really want to create a positive environment for the team so they can really be themselves.”

MARK TASKER, GENERAL MANAGER
CROWNE PLAZA LIVERPOOL – CITY CENTRE



CONCLUSION

“As experts in hospitality, we’re always looking to the future. We’re passionate about meeting traveler needs on a global scale, and that includes thinking ahead to be ready for future travelers, too. From dialing up the zoning of our guest rooms, so that they fully accommodate the mixed use now required for work time and downtime, to rethinking our approach to Meetings & Events for today’s traveler, we’re constantly inspired by how much blended travel has evolved. We can’t wait to keep *pushing it forward*.”

GINGER TAGGART, VICE PRESIDENT
CROWNE PLAZA HOTELS AND RESORTS

Methodology

Travel trends were identified by Stylus, the expert source of trend and insights, using its proprietary six stage qualitative trend methodology, consolidating new, emerging consumer and traveler trends from its global tracking of consumer lifestyle, product, service and engagement signals.

The Crowne Plaza survey of 296 IHG business and leisure travelers from the US and UK was conducted with Material via the IHG One Rewards online community between August 28 and September 5 2024.

CROWNE PLAZA®
— BY IHG —

STYLUS