



## Getting Ready for Show Season

It doesn't matter if you travel 10 days out of the year or 100-plus days, it's hard to stay organized and stress free.

Having traveled for many years for work, I have developed a pretty good system to keep everything straight with minimal stress for me.

Every year after my budget has been approved, I pretty much take one day and get my travel folders ready for the next year. Yes, I still keep hard copies of everything, but I also have electronic folders with all the information in them for each show filed in Outlook.

Maybe one day I will say goodbye to the hard copies, but not yet.

Yes, you might be saying that there are all these great travel apps, etc. that you could use. I have tried several apps, but not all my information translates, so I have found that I do best with hard copies with some electronic/app cross over.

Let's just call it Old School/New School hybrid. I do however always use the American Airline app, which helps with updates on flight changes. Below are just some of the tips I find useful in my crazy travel life.

- Put dates of all industry shows in your Outlook calendar. If I know I am attending, they are green and show that I am out of the office; if it's a show I am not attending I make them a different color. This helps me keep track of what's going on in the industry.
- Create a travel folder for the next 12 months of shows you are budgeted to attend. I use one color for all travel folders. That makes them easy to find and they never get lost on my desk.
- At the same time, create a folder in Outlook. I keep a folder for each show and it might have a couple of years' history in it. I just keep adding the current information. This helps me with budgeting. After a couple of years, I just go back and delete or when the IT department tells me I need to do some cleaning.
- On the inside of the folder put the login and password for the show. I also tape an envelope for receipts for later and I try to do my expense reports while I am on the road.
- Go to the show website and print out the schedule of events. That way you have an idea of when you need to arrive and depart. I copy this to a



- word document and add my travel information and any other appointments I have.
- Start adding the information to the folder as you receive it.
  - Register for the show when it opens. I am one of those people who, if registration opens on a Tuesday at 10 a.m., I am signed up on Tuesday shortly after 10 a.m. That's one thing off my list of things to do.
  - If housing opens at that same time, I go ahead and make my reservations. Hotel reservations are easy to modify but are harder to get closer to show dates.
  - Add all the important deadline dates to your Outlook calendar, i.e. housing opens, appointment scheduling starts and ends, deadlines for any sponsorship information, shipping and booth orders.
  - Make all other reservations needed, such as car rental, airlines, etc. When do I purchase my airline? As soon as I know my arrival and departure dates. I find I get better flight options and seat selection.
  - Submit your travel request documents; my travel request recaps my trip with all my confirmation numbers, etc. Of course, I have a hard copy in my trusted travel folder.

For me, getting registered and making the travel arrangements for a show is easy.

It's getting my appointment book ready that is the biggest task and the most important part for me.

But that's a whole other story.

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