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## **Women Book Business Travel Earlier, Saving Companies Millions**

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# Women Book Business Travel Earlier, Saving Companies Millions

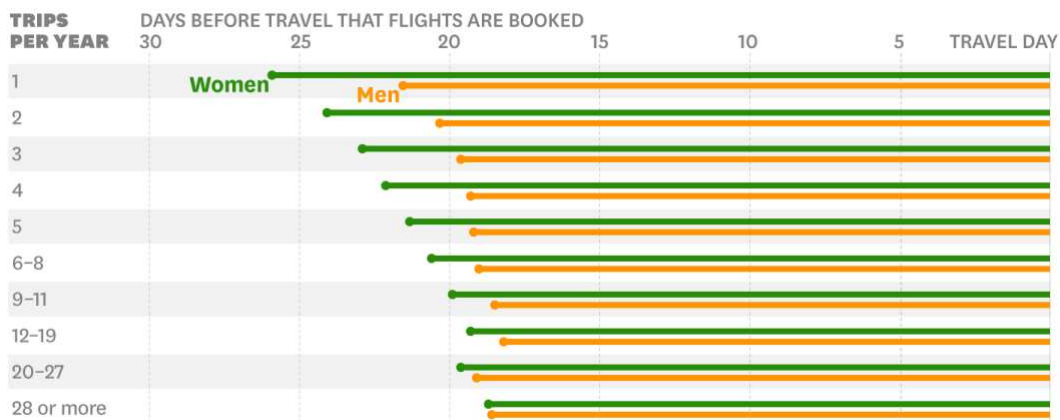
By Catalin Ciobanu, [Javier D. Donna](#), [Gheorghe Lungu](#), and [Gregory F. Veramendi](#)

The demand for business travel is gender-independent, but men and women demonstrate different travel habits that impact the bottom line.

We know from previous research that women react more strongly to unforeseen events and are more stressed than men when traveling for work. But what about when planning travel? Do gender differences show up there, and if so, how? To answer these questions, we examined a database of 6.4 million flight bookings in 2014. We isolated data on how far in advance of flight women and men book their travel.

**Figure 1**

## Women Book Business Flights Earlier than Men



SOURCE CWT SOLUTIONS GROUP

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Notes: Own elaboration.

Key takeaways from these views:

- On average, women buy two days earlier than men. Millennial women show the smallest difference in advance planning.
- More travel means less advance booking in general; gender differences erode to virtually no difference for road warriors who travel more than 20 times a year.
- The older any traveler gets, man or woman, the earlier they book, but women at every age group book earlier than men.

Some of these trends can be explained. For example, the frequent fliers tend to have less lead time to plan since they're constantly on the road, and more frequent travel correlates with a higher fraction of domestic travel — shorter trips for which planning is easier and “getting there on time” is a lesser consideration.

But other causes for the planning gap aren't as easily explained. We speculate on several possible explanations. One is that women, anticipating the higher stress they report having while traveling, tend to be more organized in an effort to offset their anticipated travel stress. Typical technology usage patterns could be another explanation. Whatever the reason, men have some catching up to do. About two days, to be exact.

And those two days add up. We calculated the average per-ticket price difference attributable to gender. The uncontrolled result — just looking at the overall average difference in ticket costs — was more than \$113 per ticket. However, that number doesn't take into account the differences between men and women in the routes they commonly take, differences in class usage or disparities in when travel happened.

When we controlled for these and other factors, we found that women save about \$17 per trip, or about 2% of the average ticket price. For a multi-national company with 21,000 travelers, those two extra booking days can yield \$1 million in savings.

And despite the small per ticket amount, this approach shows a way forward for analyzing business travel that focuses less on all-traveler averages and instead delves into traveler segments' behavior in a statistically rigorous way. We hope to extend the method to other segments, such as booking channel (online or phone), geography, or business unit.

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**References:**

Donna, Javier and Gregory F. Veramendi, "Gender Differences within the Firm: Evidence from Two Million Business Travelers," *Journal of Human Resources*, 57: 1915-1945, 2022, DOI: 10.3368/jhr.58.2.0818-9664R2.