

# FIVE WAYS TRAVELING CAN HELP YOUR CAREER

[November 17, 2014](#) by [We Must Dash](#)

In the corporate world, traveling doesn't always fit into the structure that companies lay out for their employees. We take higher salaries for less vacation time, and spend that money on material items that keep us stuck in one place. We're given a very limited set of standards to direct our career path (degrees, salaries, raises, etc.) and taking time off to move around and stretch your wings doesn't fit well into that mechanism. But traveling (especially long term) provides skills and experiences that can't be replicated next to the office water cooler. It provides time to explore and unwind, to discover and grow, and maybe even tap into parts of ourselves we have long forgotten. If you're concerned with travel disrupting your career path (as many people are) take some time to consider the benefits:

Traveling helps you become more social: When you're in a foreign country, and the only signs you see are in a foreign language, you're forced to interact with people. The beauty of it is that, after a few times reaching out, you start to crave the interaction. You want to know more about people than just their response to, "Where is the train station?" When there is a language barrier, it takes more time and care to communicate. You learn to listen harder. Some of the best experiences can lie in simply chatting with a foreigner about their daily life back home (and maybe you'll learn a new language in the process)!

In office life, being able to connect with coworkers is important and can help establish a stronger team mentality in the workplace. You may not be best friends

with everyone, but breaking the ice and developing friendly relationships will make people want to work with you. This skill is also very important in networking. Having the people skills and the confidence to connect with people you don't know will help you to build a group of contacts that can help you throughout your career.

Traveling helps you remember that you're more than your resume: In life after college, many of us still gauge our worth based on our scholarly accomplishments: class president, scholarship recipient, 3.8 GPA, college athlete, etc. As you continue in your career, you realize that although certain qualifications are important, the intrinsic traits like our personalities and work ethic, make up a great candidate.

Traveling requires motivation and hard work. Just the process of saving for an extended trip is an admirable feat. Through many ups and downs, the sacrifices and the victories, your true colors stand out. You're reminded that you're brave, confident, and you're willing to be inspired. And those are the things, when your trip is over, that you'll want to share and utilize in your job.

Traveling helps you be more open minded and spurs creativity: Being exposed to new cultures and ideas is a powerful catalyst in creativity. When you're exploring a new place, all of your senses are heightened. There is something to learn in every new moment while you're on the road, and inspiration can appear at even the strangest times. Unique sounds, smells and sights can make you look at the world very differently. You see that there are many ways to live, and that we're all more alike than we think.

Developing a fresh, open mind helps you be more accepting, understanding and empathetic. These traits are especially important in management, where employee/employer relationships can set the tone for the entire workplace. A more communal work environment also helps to foster creativity. We are more willing to put all of our ideas on the table and work the hardest for people we feel support and

understand us.

Traveling helps you deal with things that make you uncomfortable: Unless you are Beyoncé and are flying first class and staying in five star resorts, chances are you will be uncomfortable on your trip. This applies especially to backpacking and budget travel. Trains, planes and taxis are typically hot and stuffy. Cheap hotels and hostels have stiff mattresses and (God forbid) are sometimes a little dirty. Being immersed in someone else's culture with strange foods, customs and bathrooms included, can be overwhelming. The ability to deal with difficult situations is a true measure of maturity; it's a gift to be able to take a deep breath, evaluate and know that no matter what, time will pass, and so will the discomfort.

Tough times occur in every job. It's nice to know that no matter what challenges your job puts in front of you, that time you hiked that mountain in twenty degree weather, or used a roadside bathroom in the middle of nowhere, or sat on an eighteen hour train with no AC, will always be the hardest things you've been through. Ultimately, you'll also know that from any challenge or sacrifice comes rewards and opportunity, whether that means the most gorgeous sunset you've ever seen after that long train ride, or a raise because of pulling a few all-nighters.

Traveling gives you perspective: Perspective is, in my opinion, the most important thing that travel can teach you. We live in a society that does not promote self-awareness. We only pretend to, while we gloss through pages of magazines and lifestyle blogs preaching about meditation and peacefulness. Traveling puts you in a state of vulnerability that allows you to evaluate your everyday life from the outside. You see alternate ways of living and it helps you decide what is really important. Traveling has the power to humble and inspire us to be better people, for ourselves and the people we love.

In terms of your career, maybe your trip reaffirms your love for your profession. Or

oppositely, maybe you finally admit to yourself it's time to shift gears. Maybe your bravery motivates you to become your own boss! Discovering that there are many ways to make a living in this world is liberating. You find that despite the universal truth that everyone has to earn their way, the process can be simple and fulfilling when you make the right choice.

The best decisions are made after all of the options are laid out and considered equally. Only after we see what this big world has to offer can we establish our place in it.

Happy travels!