



# THE FUTURE OF BLENDED TRAVEL

2022



# INTRODUCTION

How we want to travel, live and work is changing fast. This is not just because, after two of the most tumultuous years that most of us have lived through, everything in our lives is changing. Our attitudes and desires around careers, leisure, home, and family are also in flux. We're rethinking so many things due to the impacts of social changes, technological progress and the evolving nature of work and leisure.

This is changing how, when and why we travel.

The convergence of business and leisure behaviours was once remarkable. Not any more. Bleisure is rapidly becoming a word – and a concept – from another era, as post-pandemic travellers increasingly adopt seamless blended travel behaviours and attitudes.

The pieces of our altered lives are starting to fall into new and promising shapes for brands operating in the new blended travel landscape. 'We see such opportunity in a more flexible future,' says Ginger Taggart, Vice President, Brand Management, Global Crowne Plaza.

'Our guests are looking for more flexibility to rebalance their lives and we're continuing to evolve and invest in the blended travel space to provide the lives that they now want to live as they travel.'

In collaboration with global trends and insights business Stylus, Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts has explored the major emerging lifestyle trends re-shaping the future of a blended travel landscape that includes travellers tagging leisure time on to work trips, spending longer in a holiday destination to work, or simply harnessing the benefits of advanced connectivity and a desirable destination to work from anywhere in the world.

Our research has uncovered three main factors defining how people now think about their work and travel plans, which in turn create four trends in blended travel.

They want jobs that are meaningful, with 39% of consumers saying they are more likely to be their full, authentic selves at work compared to the previous year.<sup>1</sup>

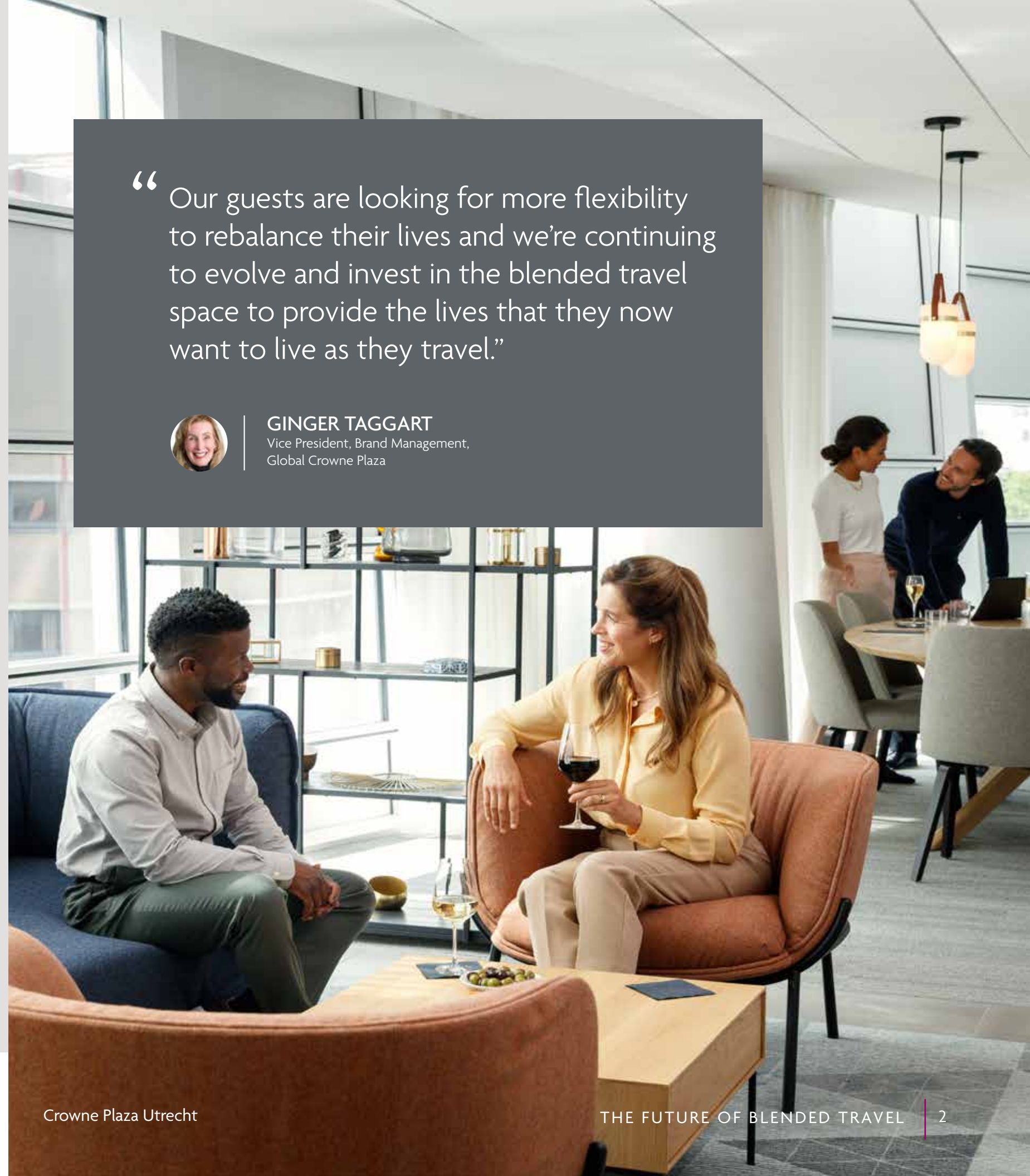
<sup>1</sup> Microsoft, 2021

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**GINGER TAGGART**

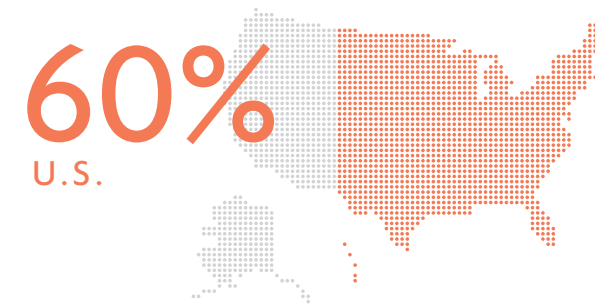
Vice President, Brand Management,  
Global Crowne Plaza



## HOW PEOPLE THINK ABOUT THEIR WORK AND TRAVEL PLANS



Travelers who plan to add leisure days to future business trips



Flexibility is at the centre of new working behaviours, with 66% of US consumers saying that remote work has encouraged them to explore new destinations.<sup>3</sup>

And travellers definitely want to travel more sustainably with 60% of people saying the pandemic has made them more socially and environmentally conscious about their impact on the world when travelling.<sup>4</sup>

This emerging set of expectations – and this deep consumer desire for flexible experiences – is giving rise to a more sophisticated blend of business and leisure travel behaviours.

In our 2022 Crowne Plaza survey of travellers, two thirds of UK respondents and 80% in the US say they love the idea of travelling while working remotely.

And there is more interest in blended travel than before the pandemic. 45% of UK respondents say they plan to add leisure days to future business trips. In the US, this is 60%.

It's clear that the next generation of blended travellers are looking to make far-reaching changes to the way in which they combine work and travel.

Equally apparent is the fact that the experience of remote working for millions of formerly office-bound staff has had a transformative effect on where and how they will expect to work in the future.

In fact, around half of respondents say they would turn down a job that did not offer flexible or remote working.

There are so many positives here.

Three quarters (75%) of people say remote work has made work-life balance more achievable, with 72% enjoying the ability to work from different locations and 66% feeling encouraged to explore new destinations.<sup>3</sup>

On top of this, there is a growing urge amongst experienced business travellers to embrace travelling regularly for work again, driven by concern that lack of face time with clients is damaging both their business and their careers.

<sup>2</sup> Microsoft, 2021

<sup>4</sup> IHG, Journey To Tomorrow, 2021

<sup>3</sup> Priceline, 2021



 80%

Business travellers worry that unless they increase business travel, their professional lives will suffer<sup>5</sup>

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Business travellers worry that unless they increase business travel, their personal lives will suffer<sup>5</sup>

In the face of these driving factors, it's clear that innovators who successfully combine flexibility and experience in the blended travel space will reap rewards.

In fact, around 75 countries are already following the early lead of Estonia and developing policies on everything from cryptocurrency e-wallets to digital health records and work-anywhere visas to ease and spur cross-border living for a new breed of blended travellers.

Increasingly, the travel and hospitality industry will be shepherding guests to blended travel locations around the world, as migration is spurred not only by the ability to work from anywhere, but also the quest for affordable housing, climate change disruptions, and digitisation, according to geopolitical strategist Parag Khanna, author of new book *Move: The Forces Uprooting Us*.

'Young people aren't necessarily sure where their next job will be, what's a climate-stable place. [...] They would rather be mobile, and that's potentially a great tailwind for the travel industry,' says Khanna.

'Instead of people moving once in their lives, they could be moving multiple times within the same year – working from anywhere.'

<sup>5</sup> Concur, 2021

In this report, Crowne Plaza and Stylus investigate and explain four powerful emerging lifestyle trends that can be harnessed by the travel and hospitality industry to deliver against these exciting new blended travel expectations: Re-Working 'Work'; Hybrid Living, Hybrid Lives; Upskilling and Side-Hustles and A New Care Economy.

'Crowne Plaza is always looking ahead, and we have been working creatively in the blended travel space for many years,' says Ginger Taggart, of Crowne Plaza.

'Now we're continuing to evolve because we know our guests are, too. We invest in continually understanding more about how people's lives are changing, because that means how they want to live while they travel is changing, too.'

Lives in flux have paved the way for flexible living: this is a new, proactive mindset which sees travellers bringing new needs – and new demands – to their time away from home.

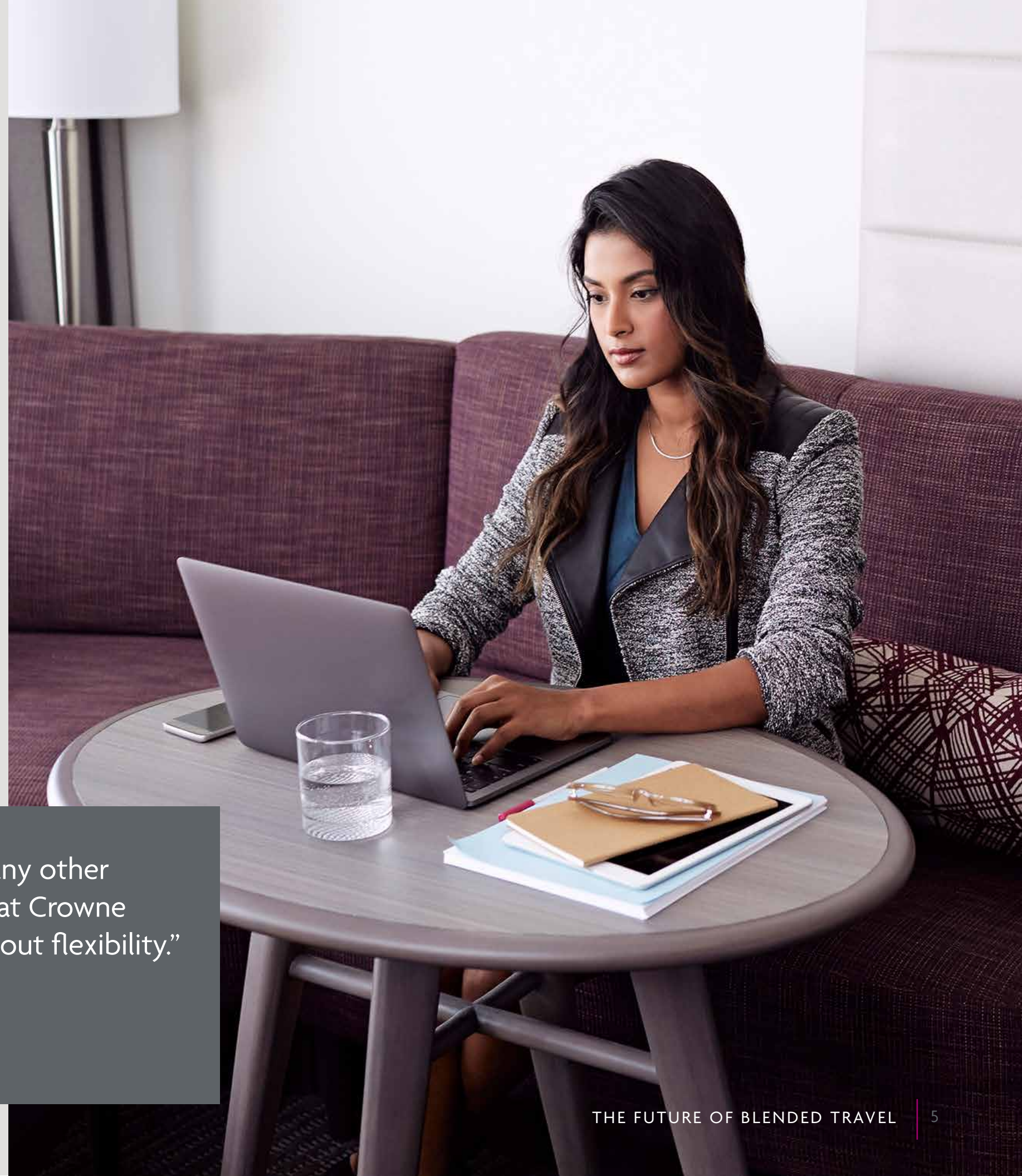
Which is why 'bleisure' doesn't cut it any more.

'It's time to level up the 'bleisure' conversation,' says Ginger Taggart, of Crowne Plaza. 'A new, agile generation doesn't want two opposing ideas awkwardly put together: they want flexible, fit-for-the-future spaces and services, from a brand that understands them. Many other hospitality brands put the bland into bleisure but at Crowne Plaza Hotels and Resorts we know the future is about flexibility.'

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# TRENDS



## TREND 1

# REWORKING 'WORK'

A far-reaching re-think of work priorities, ranging from where and how we work, to why we work at all, has been one of the major trends to emerge from the shared pandemic experience.

In 2020, amidst a rolling series of lockdowns across the world, there was an important shift in expectations as a good work-life balance (72%) overtook securing a comfortable salary (69%) as the most important job benefit.<sup>6</sup>

In 2021 and into 2022 this reassessment continues to gain momentum with the arrival of the Great Resignation. One in five employees globally say they are likely to switch to a new employer in the next 12 months.<sup>7</sup>

Dig into this extraordinary wave of change and you quickly find the probable triggers. It has become obvious that millions of people who were initially been ordered to work from home as a protective response to the pandemic are keen to retain a range of flexible working options.

Today, data scientists at careers site Ladders say 25% of all professional jobs in North America will be remote by the end of 2022.<sup>8</sup> And more than half (54%) of the global workforce say they would resign if they weren't offered remote and flexible work options.<sup>9</sup>

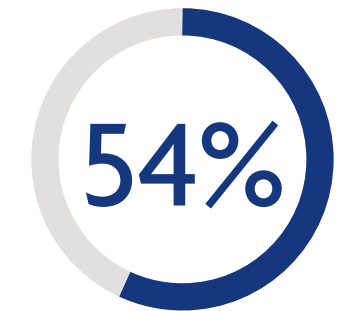
But while this unexpected revolution may have initially appeared unsettling to senior management, it has actually triggered equally unexpected benefits for staff and their employers – in the form of a happier, more productive workforce.

Two thirds (66%) of workers agree that a flexible work schedule makes them more productive.<sup>10</sup>

Key to this is the flexibility and ability to work while traveling – whether it's a long-haul trip or a weekend visiting family – that's enabled by new working practices.



Professional jobs in North America will be remote by the end of 2022



Global workforce say they would resign if they weren't offered remote and flexible work options



Workers agree that a flexible work schedule makes them more productive.

<sup>6</sup> JLL, 2020

<sup>7</sup> PWC, 2022

<sup>8</sup> Ladders, 2022

<sup>9</sup> EY, 2021

<sup>10</sup> Ipsos, 2021

More than half (52%) of all office staff would not only welcome the opportunity to ‘work from anywhere’, but also say it makes them happier and better at doing their jobs<sup>11</sup>

Employees are clear about the benefits that new forms of remote working bring to their lives. Better work-life balance (62%), more control over their schedule (49%), a less stressful work environment (48%), and saving money on commuting costs (48%) are their top three.<sup>12</sup>

Equally clear is a growing desire to use this new-found flexibility to adopt a more creative and adventurous approach to where work happens, demonstrated most obviously by the rise and rise of blended travel.

Travel to a hotel or resort in a warm and exotic overseas location, or an exciting city centre, as a base for remote, flexible working has boomed over the past two years with those who did it seeing it as way to claw back valuable work and leisure time by not having to do the household chores.

Typical of the wide variety of blended travel locations that these agile workers sought out are the remote and beautiful Crowne Plaza Phu Quoc Starbay and the far-more urban Crowne Plaza Paris – Republique.

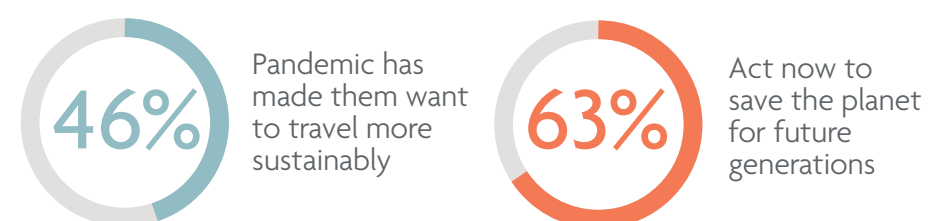
A third (33%) of blended travellers said that having food and drink provided was a top benefit of their work-from-hotel choices, while 18% loved having their bed made by staff every day.<sup>13</sup>

## REMOTE WORKING



With 83% of workers saying they will appreciate vacations more now than before the pandemic<sup>14</sup> and 31% lauding remote work/vacation combinations as a tool for boosting their productivity<sup>15</sup>, it’s not hard to see blended travel concept as a clever and cost-effective way to motivate tomorrow’s workers.

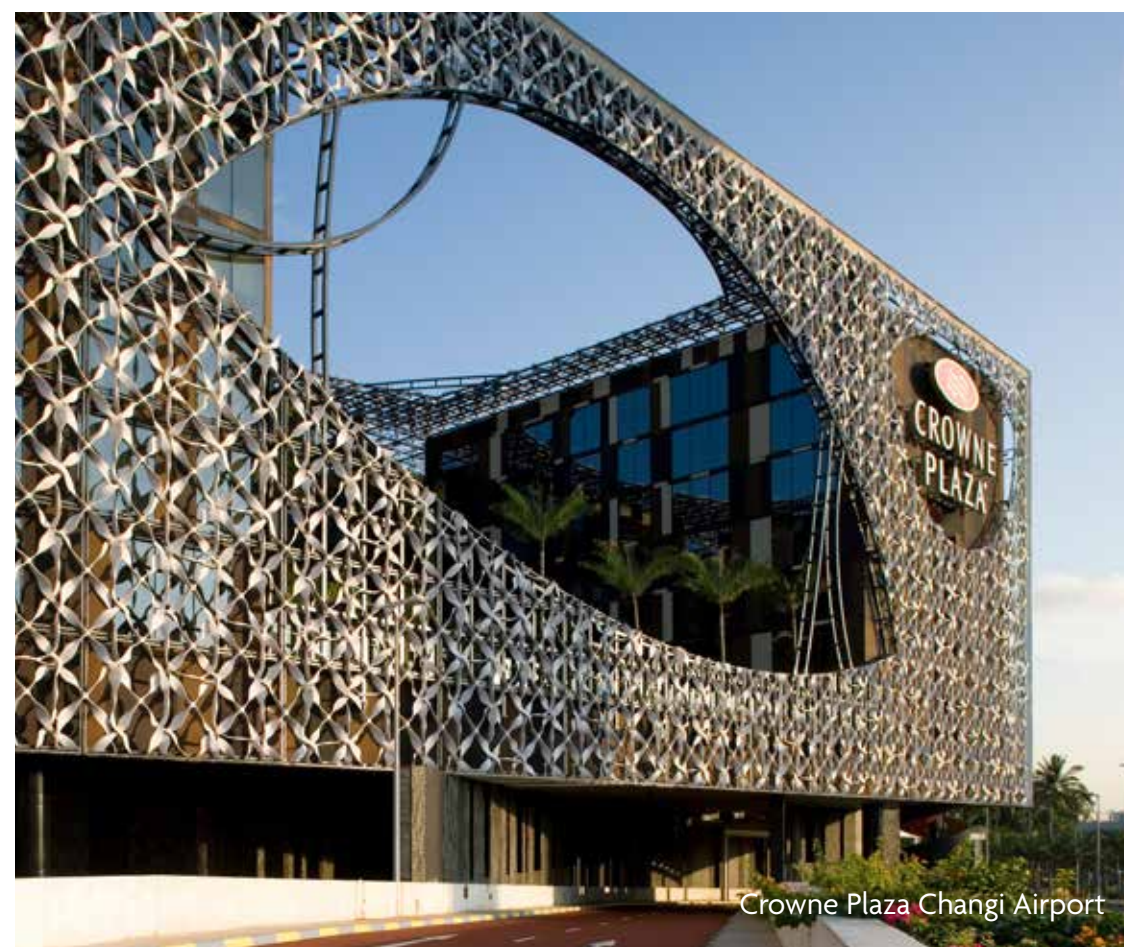
This will, however, need to include some careful consideration of how blended travellers will want to travel and their growing demand for sustainable travel options. 46% of travellers state that the pandemic has made them want to travel more sustainably in the future, while 63% believe we have to act now to save the planet for future generations.<sup>16</sup>



‘It’s a trend that our business has long recognised and been acting to address,’ says Ginger Taggart, of Crowne Plaza.

‘Our IHG Journey To Tomorrow ambitions focus on reducing energy use and carbon emissions in line with climate science, pioneering minimal waste strategies, and conserving and securing water access in those areas at greatest risk.’

Key to the growing trend of blending travel with new attitudes to work, is the desire to make the most out of time spent travelling. More than half of consumers (58%) express a willingness to take fewer trips and spend more time at a single destination.<sup>17</sup>



Crowne Plaza Changi Airport

<sup>11</sup> Tui, 2021  
<sup>12</sup> WeWork, 2021  
<sup>13</sup> Ipsos, 2021  
<sup>14</sup> Korn Ferry, 2021  
<sup>15</sup> Accenture, 2021  
<sup>16</sup> Booking.com, 2021  
<sup>17</sup> ETC, 2021





## KEY TREND THEMES

Behind the shock headlines about mass resignations, there is a new positivity emerging from the Reworking Work trend. Increasingly, many businesses are seeing it as an opportunity to improve workplaces and work practices for all.

Consequently, anxieties about the productivity and creativity of remote and hybrid working are evolving into a new way of thinking about working – finding the best way to work in a new world.

New approaches, such as ‘Punctuated Collaboration’ – with different teams going into the office on different days – focus on enabling the best environments for both focused and social, collaborative work. Productivity experts Robert C. Pozen and Alexandra Samuel explore this in their book, *Remote Inc*, which unpacks a new mindset that will enable people to thrive when they’re working remotely.

<sup>18</sup> Snap/Oxford Economics, 2021

## TREND IN ACTION

Some of our Reworking Work future will be enabled by new technology.

Humu, for example, is a US tech start-up that sends personalised behaviour nudges to staff. These nudges don’t just address company culture – they also help individuals refine their own remote work habits.

‘If you’re working on inclusion, you need to create an atmosphere of psychological safety,’ Humu’s co-founder Laszlo Bock told US news site Axios.

‘So, an employee might get a nudge that says, ‘You’ve got a meeting this afternoon – try speaking up in the first 10 minutes.’ Meanwhile, a manager might be directed to praise people in groups of three, which makes recognition seem ‘elusive but attainable’.

Humu’s focus on embedded personal development could be pivotal in helping companies retain employees, especially ambitious Gen Zers (born 1996-2009) who will make up 51 million employees in the US workforce by 2030.<sup>18</sup>

And companies are already investing in the technology to enable better hybrid meetings and virtual interactions. IHG, working with technology partners such as Encore and Weframe, offers hybrid meeting capabilities to help in-person and virtual attendees to connect. It’s one of the reasons IHG’s Meet With Confidence program won a 2021 Stella Award, a global awards scheme that honours service and innovation in meetings and events.



# BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLENDED TRAVELLERS

People have always travelled while they worked and worked while they travelled. Today's connected travellers have taken these blended travel expectations one step further by seeking inspiration, energising experiences and moments of downtime amidst new remote working opportunities.

As Ginger Taggart of Crowne Plaza, says: 'Travel for work doesn't have to be just travel for work. Our guests are already exploring new ways to extend their away-from-home time so that work travel can include all those other elements of travel that excite, inspire and restore us.'

'We see travellers rethinking how to get the best out of themselves, and that means finding the best ways to spend their time.'

There has been much speculation that workers have now permanently adjusted to Zoom-based virtual meetings as a primary tool for engagement. But Ginger Taggart suggests that a hybrid approach that incorporates travel opportunities can have clear advantages for relationship building.

'I think we've moved on from conversations about whether we've seen the end of the face-to-face meeting.'

'In fact, our hotels are increasingly curated for connection, designed to be thoughtful, people-centred spaces for positive and meaningful interactions because we know that's what our guests are focussed on when they meet or travel.'

'Technology enables us to do amazing things, but we recognise that people who have been forced apart over recent years now see even more value in face-to-face interaction. They are relying on us to provide inventive ways to gather, connect and collaborate.'

In our Crowne Plaza survey, respondents felt that some key business activities are better conducted in person: these include team building (81%), meeting clients and building connections (79%) and creating connections with colleagues (73%).

'It's clear to us that our guests are looking for opportunities to combine focused work with informal collaboration and inspiration,' says Ginger Taggart, of Crowne Plaza. 'We're very aware of this rising expectation and we aim to satisfy it across our properties.'

## BENEFITS OF WORKING IN PERSON



81%

Team building



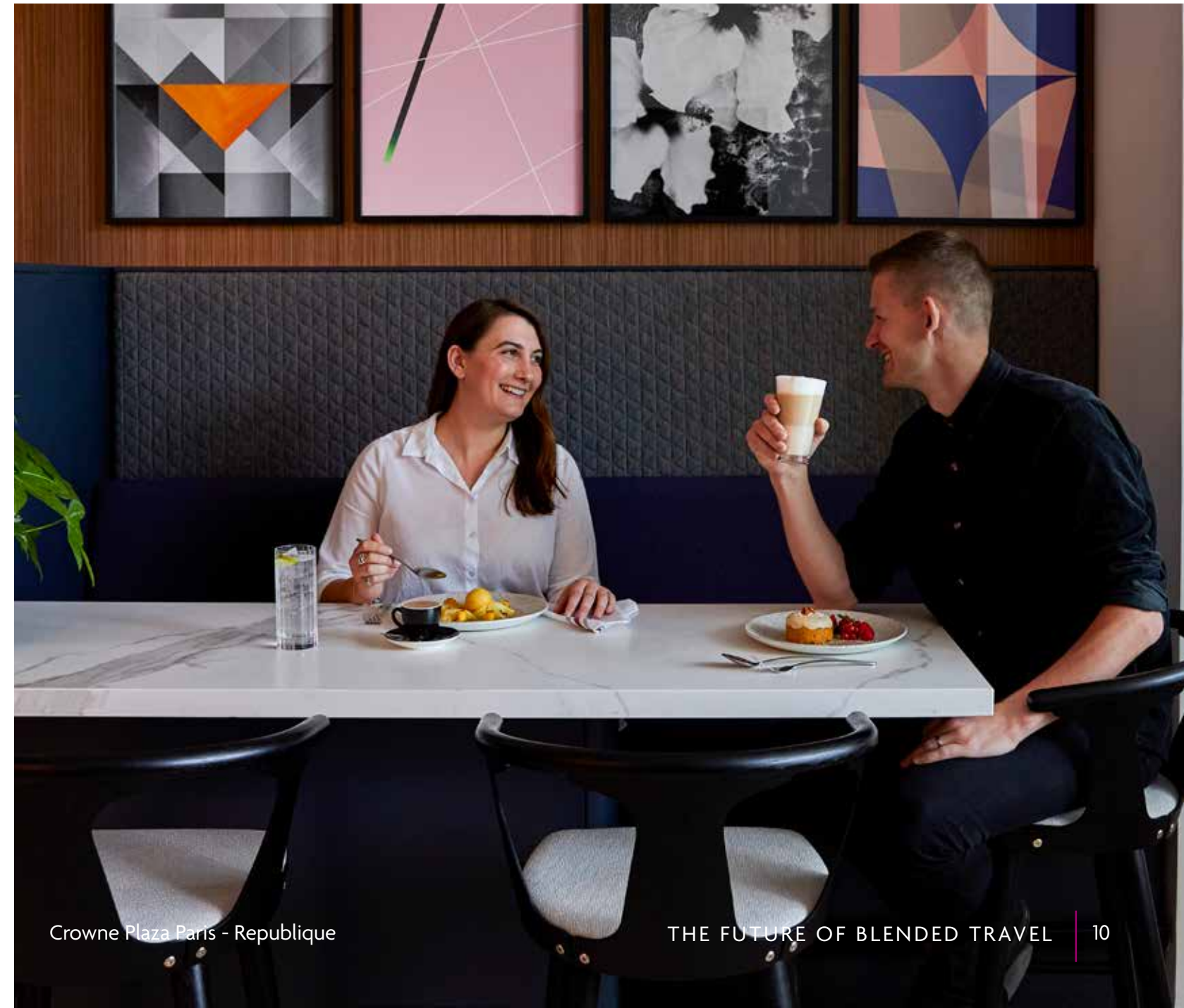
79%

Meeting clients and building connections



73%

Meeting clients and building connections



## TREND 2

# HYBRID LIVING, HYBRID LIVES

The evolution of travel has always been about a blending of business and leisure behaviours. In tomorrow's Hybrid Lives, blended travel is a choice, rather than a side-effect or necessity.

It's a rising aspiration that innovators at Crowne Plaza have been moving fast to satisfy. 'We have been fine-tuning our offer to deliver on the new blended traveller's expectations for productivity, restoration and inspiration,' says Ginger Taggart, Vice President, Brand Management, Global Crowne Plaza.

As people increasingly expect flexibility and agility in everything from stores to services and housing to hotels, they now look to brands in the blended travel space to build multi-functional lifestyle solutions that incorporate both convenience and experience.

In addition, they want those experiences to help them seamlessly switch modes and mindsets to make next generation blended travel easy, stress-free and fun. Crowne Plaza embodies this need in its WorkLife Room concept which allows guests to transition seamlessly between relaxation, focused productivity and inspiration.

We're more open to the positives of blending our work and non-work lives, provided we can create the right boundaries and have those supported by our employers. We know that spending time travelling can be inspiring as well as refreshing. In fact, 80% of people say they have had a breakthrough work idea while relaxing on vacation.<sup>19</sup>

Yet 56% in the same survey admit to having cancelled or cut short vacation plans due to work pressures.<sup>19</sup>

Tomorrow's blended traveller is placing more emphasis and importance on working smarter: we're making our vacation time work harder. In our Crowne Plaza survey, 60% of US respondents plan to add leisure days to a business trip in the next 12 months, and 50% plan to travel for leisure while they are working. In the UK, one in two respondents say they value travel more now than they did before the pandemic.

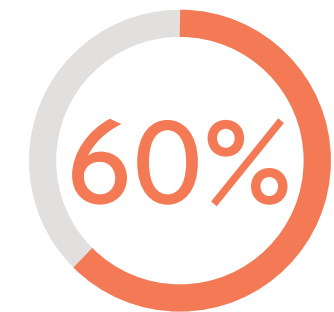
<sup>19</sup> Korn Ferry, 2021



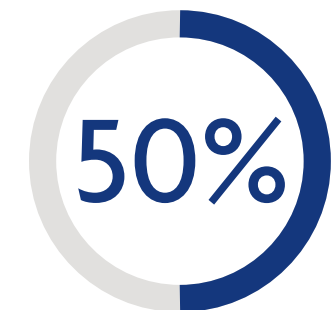
Say they have had a breakthrough work idea while relaxing on vacation.



Admit to having cancelled or cut short vacation plans due to work pressures



US respondents plan to add leisure days to a business trip in the next 12 months



Plan to travel for leisure while they are working

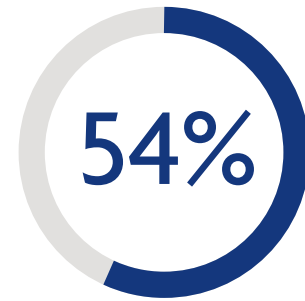
It's part of a great rebalancing which, for many people, has been driven by the sharpened focus created by those pandemic restraints. More than half (54%) of those who didn't use their days off regret not taking them, representing a significant change from the one in five (21%) who felt that way in 2019.<sup>20</sup>

Even more telling is the wide-spread wish to have used pandemic agile work opportunities more wisely by working from somewhere new. More than a third (35%) felt they had they 'wasted' their newfound flexibility and almost a third (32%) regret not working from different/new places (32%). A sense of regret about missed Hybrid Living opportunities was felt most keenly by younger workers with 49% of Gen Z and 51% of Millennials wishing they had taken more trips, compared to 37% of Gen X and 22% of Boomers.<sup>20</sup>

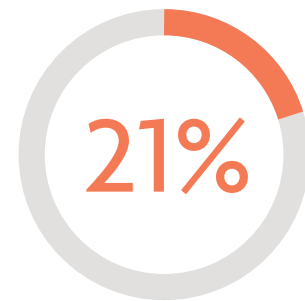
So, as the Hybrid Living trend takes a firm hold in blended travel behaviours, people will be looking for ways to achieve a more stress-free balance between the pleasure and work elements of their travel experience,

'It's vital to provide these transitional moments for the new breed of connected traveller,' says Ginger Taggart, of Crowne Plaza. 'That's why we've created fresh, convivial and flexible spaces that empower you to craft your own experience and make the most of your journey.'

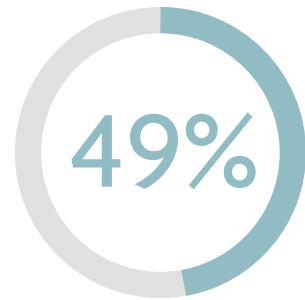
#### USING TIME OFF



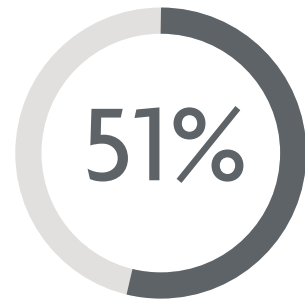
People who didn't use their days off regret not taking them, 2022



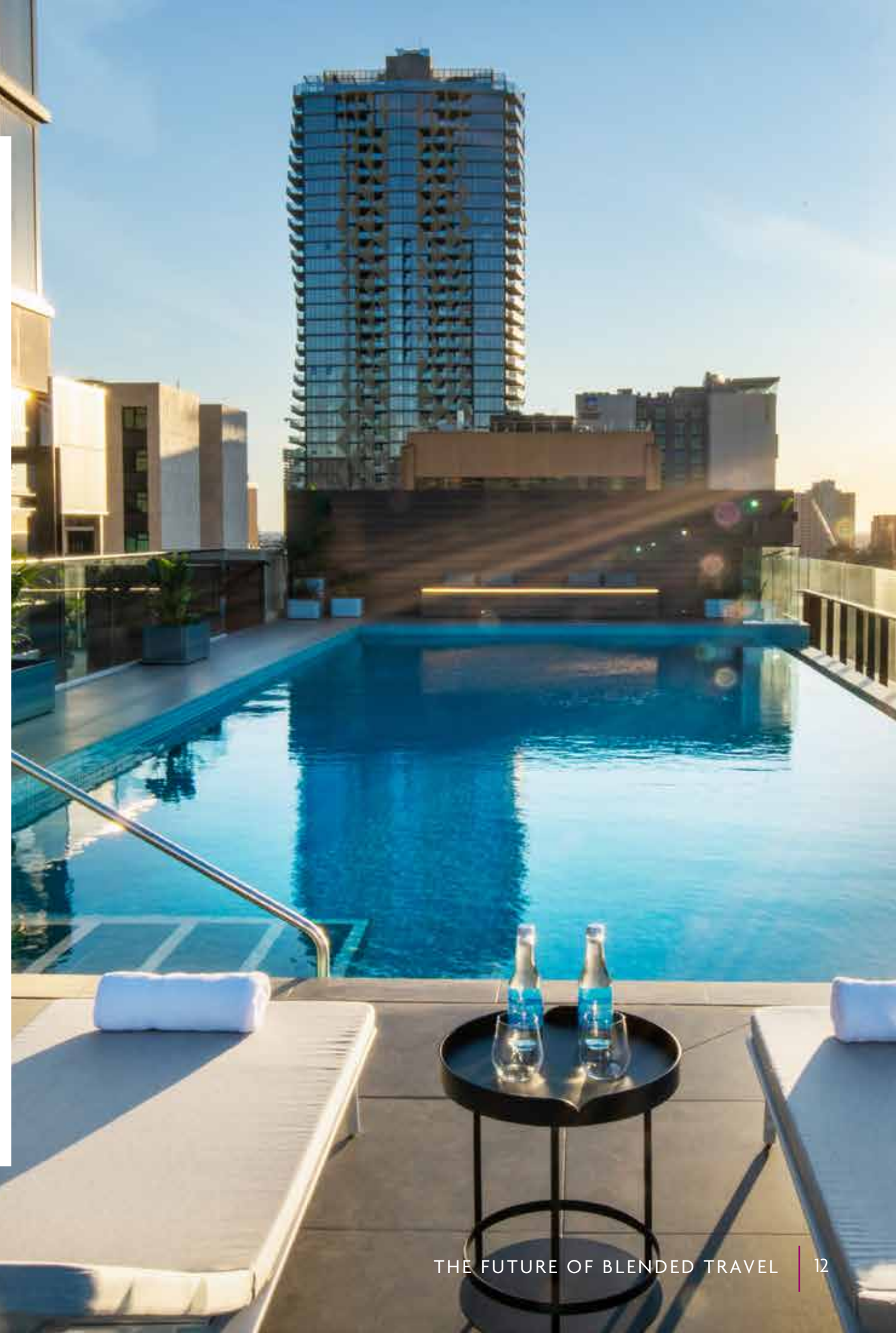
People who didn't use their days off regret not taking them, 2019



Gen Z wishing they had taken more trips



Millennials wishing they had taken more trips



<sup>20</sup> Priceline, 2021



## KEY TREND THEMES

People are emerging from the last two years having adopted new work and travel routines that will put pressure upon brands worldwide to offer flexible services and formats that are agile in response to shifting needs.

Within this new desire for agility is a growing understanding that multi-tasking – a key component of successful Hybrid Living – shouldn't be the stressful, productivity-sapping behaviour that past generations have understood it to be.

In fact, a new study from the University of North Carolina concludes that it doesn't have to be. The university's research proposes that multi-tasking around contradictory or conflicting ideas can actually increase our originality, leaving us feeling energised and alert.<sup>21</sup>

A 'spill over effect' means that the energy and excitement of hectic jobs can lead to more original idea generation, from the creation of original business plans to the culinary flourishes of expert chefs.

Shimul Melwani, a professor of organisational behaviour at University of North Carolina's Kenan-Flagler Business School, US, who co-authored the paper with her PhD student Chaitali Kapadia, says their findings indicate we'll come to see our busiest moments as a force for innovation, rather than a cause of stress.

As an extra bonus, Hybrid Living situations that mix work and other activities enable people to create and use 'weak ties' – acquaintances, infrequent contacts, and familiar near-strangers – to find new jobs or life partners and generate new ideas and perspectives.

<sup>21</sup> University of North Carolina, 2022

## TREND IN ACTION

Hospitality and travel brands have been quick to spot the potential of this emerging trend with schemes popping up around the world that enable people to work from bars. Night-time economy venues were able to become work-friendly daytime spaces, opening for flexible workers and signalling perks like strong wi-fi, tasty food or high-quality coffee and tea.

Hybrid store spaces that create opportunities for consumers to mix retail and leisure are evolving too. Norwegian writing tablet start-up reMarkable, for example, created a pop up at Oslo airport that mimics a library: a serene space offering calm reading zones. The brand also offers its own library of calming music and visuals to give workers anywhere instant access to the ambiance of a library with crackling log fire, or a pulsing night-time cityscape.



Crowne Plaza plays in this space too. Its Plaza Workspace hybrid spaces combine small and large gathering possibilities, with nooks, pods and workstations for focused productivity, shared tables for collaboration, and food and art options to fuel and inspire the body and mind.



## BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLENDED TRAVELLERS

Hybrid Living means that more and more of us are adopting multiple personalities and needs, often simultaneously, and looking for travel and hospitality third and fourth spaces. These places that are not an office, and not a home, but rather havens that offer convenience and comfort as well as conviviality and connection.

It's a desire that lends itself to the instincts of travel and hospitality brands who have long mastered the art of multi-functional spaces that need to cater for multiple audiences needs at the same time.

Crowne Plaza's informal meeting space, The Studio, located close to the lobby and bookable by the hour, as seen a boom in interest, further evidencing the blended travel opportunities on hand for brands who harness this trend effectively.

'Designing spaces around the way people want to live when they travel has become key to integrating flexibility into the most innovative hotel spaces,' says Ginger Taggart, Vice President, Brand Management, Global Crowne Plaza.

'Changing working practices with evolved ways of meeting and collaborating are here to stay. This has created a rising need for informal, flexible and welcoming working spaces in hotels,' says Simon Kincaid, Partner at internationally renowned architecture and interior design practice Conran and Partners. 'Working spaces and meeting spaces that are appropriate for creative or casual meetings, can be used just as easily for formal events and social occasions. What's common across these uses and functions is people's desire to connect and engage with each other.'

For this new breed of connected traveller, the multi-functional Plaza Workspace, with its blended ability to deliver individual focus, a working lunch with colleagues in a nook, and a restorative WhatsApp reconnection with family from the sofa, typifies the perfect hybrid blended travel space.



## TREND 3

# UPSKILLING AND SIDE-HUSTLES

The rise of the side-hustle is only going to continue and evolve, with upskilling, education and side projects offering new possibilities for blended travellers.

‘These connected travellers love to share – be that their time, skills or to treat their friends, family and colleagues,’ says Ginger Taggart, of Crowne Plaza. ‘Work and success matter to them, but not at the expense of all else – everything is connected but needs to work to remain in synch and balanced.’

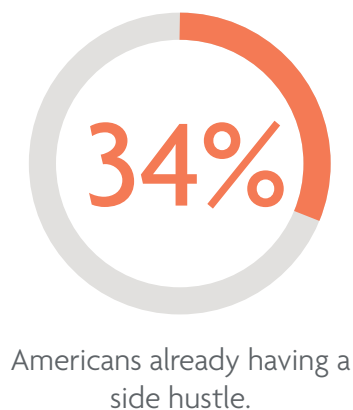
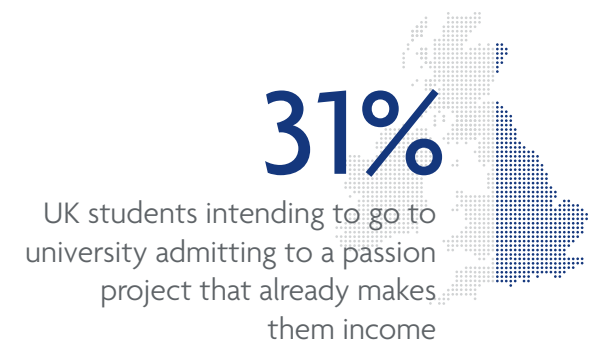
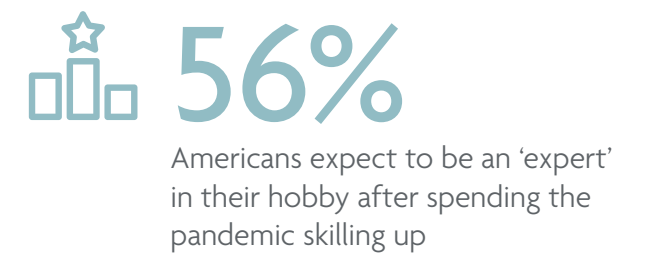
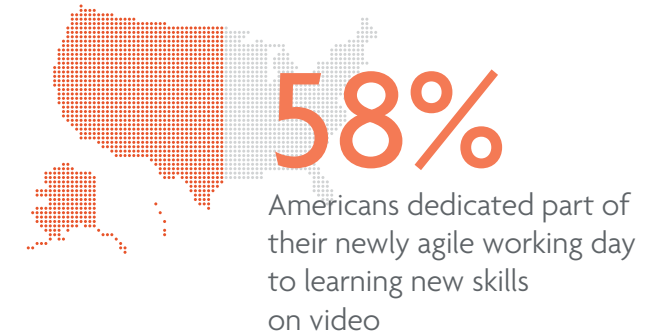
When the pandemic granted some workers new freedom to arrange the hours of their main job in a way that worked best for them, millions started finding extra hours to upskill, explore new interests or even convert hobbies into paying passion projects to supplement their income.

For them, travel also became another avenue for connecting with others, exploring new work/life opportunities, and re-thinking their sense of purpose.

More than half of Americans (58%) dedicated part of their newly agile working day to learning new skills on video<sup>22</sup>, and the hashtag #learnontiktok had 195.1 billion views on the platform.<sup>23</sup>

Six out of ten (56%) of Americans expect to be an ‘expert’ in their hobby after spending the pandemic skilling up, and 40% think they will make money from it.<sup>24</sup>

This has resulted in a third (31%) of UK students intending to go to university admitting to a passion project that already makes them income,<sup>25</sup> and one in three Americans (34%) already having a side hustle.<sup>26</sup>



<sup>22</sup> Google/Talk Shoppe, 2020

<sup>23</sup> TikTok, 2021

<sup>24</sup> Silhouette America / One Poll, 2021

<sup>25</sup> Open University, 2021

<sup>26</sup> Zapier, 2021



Crowne Plaza Hamburg - City Alster

## KEY TREND THEMES

As this pandemic shift to online learning meets consumers who are reassessing what work means for them, the adoption of always-on upskilling will gather pace. People will be looking for bite-sized ways to learn, including instructional experiences that bring fun to learning and self-development.

Closely linked to this development will be a shift away amongst businesses and business leaders from the suspicion that an employee's side-hustle or passion project is a threat.

Increasingly, employers will view the side-hustle as evidence of an entrepreneurial mindset and work to nurture the ambition, business-mindedness and talent that it represents to build productivity and help develop employees.

From readjusted life priorities to a quest for ongoing self-improvement, younger consumers are driving a new, work-in-progress mindset. Consumers see themselves in a constant process of development and growth, and will want to use the power of travel to fuel inspiration, feed curiosity and enable networking and connections.

## TREND IN ACTION

The emergence of new services to help people learn in bite-sized chunks is enabling us to take this this upskilling mindset with us when we travel. Crowne Plaza, by designing meeting and food and beverage spaces that fuel connections, focus and informal gatherings, is connecting strongly with this trend.

LinkedIn's Learning Hub is a skill-building platform intended to be offered to employees as a workplace perk, helping empower them to cultivate beneficial, in-demand skills for the workplace, from cloud computing tips to workplace advocacy to graphic design.

We've seen the rise of online edutainment, too, with subscription services like Masterclass and Skillshare bringing the expertise of celebrities and leaders to anyone, wherever they are.

As adults are making time to learn, an instruction creator economy is springing up to give them guidance, bringing influencers' skills in community engagement to learning. New York City-based platform Teachable lets users make and sell online courses.



# BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLENDED TRAVELLERS

Not everyone has just one job, or even just one dream. For travelling workers exploring side-hustles, lifelong learning or passion projects, working-while-travelling can mean multiple activities and mindsets. There's a new sense of purpose to today's blended traveller. This means a demand for even-more flexible blended spaces and services.

'The smartest businesses know that helping employees feed their curiosity and explore personal goals and interests will be a core part of professional development in the future. We see travel as a key part of that,' says Ginger Taggart, Vice President, Brand Management, Global Crowne Plaza.

And employers are finding new ways to engaging – and retain – travel-curious and entrepreneurial employees.

'Remote-only businesses are also looking at how travel fits into their new way of working, whether it's offering travel-based incentives or creating stimulating, energising in-person events,' says Ginger Taggart, of Crowne Plaza.

'We want to inspire our guests through our local hotel surroundings, by the art in our hotels, by the fellow guests they meet, and by our F&B offer, because we believe that creativity is a mindset triggered by many different sources of inspiration.'

“The smartest businesses know that helping employees feed their curiosity and explore personal goals and interests will be a core part of professional development in the future. We see travel as a key part of that...”



**GINGER TAGGART**  
Vice President, Brand Management,  
Global Crowne Plaza





## TREND 4

# A NEW CARE ECONOMY

Care in a multitude of forms – from childcare, to care for ageing parents, to self-care in a challenging post-pandemic world – is another defining trend for the next stage of the evolution of blended travel.

From adaptations for a greying society to a new understanding of the needs of pet parents, who we care for and how we connect with those closest to us will increasingly become a factor in our working and travelling lives.

With more than a quarter (26%) of US people living in a multigenerational household<sup>27</sup> and 36% of people globally saying the main reason they travel or go on vacation is to reconnect with friends and family,<sup>28</sup> travel to visit and connect with relatives is clearly one of the great blended travel opportunities.

Indeed, a survey from the US-based Family Travel Association showed that by end end of 2021, double the amount of parents wanted to travel with their children compared to 2020.

One of the drivers of this huge rise in enthusiasm for family travel is a sense of regret amongst parents that they didn't use their vacation days in the past and a belief that their mental (78%) and physical health (73%) would have benefited from doing so.<sup>29</sup>

It's all part of post-pandemic era in which people increasingly see travel as a tool for self-care as much as for discovering new places and experiences. Nine out of ten people (88%) agree that travel helps them improve their mental health.<sup>30</sup>

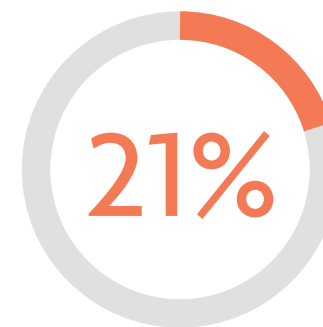
In our Crowne Plaza survey, a third of respondents (33%) say they are more focused on their physical and mental wellbeing since the pandemic. And in the US in particular, of those who value travel more than before the pandemic, 21% say it's because it offers improved mental health.

Consequently, workers are prepared to make major sacrifices in other parts of their professional life in exchange for the freedom to choose where in the world they work, Three-quarters (75%) of employees would be willing to give up at least one benefit or perk — including healthcare coverage, cash bonuses, and paid time off — for the freedom to choose their work environment.<sup>31</sup>



# 33%

Say they are more focused on their physical and mental wellbeing since the pandemic



Value travel more than before the pandemic, say it's because it offers improved mental health.



# 75%

Employees willing to give up at least one benefit or perk for the freedom to choose their work environment

<sup>27</sup> GU, 2021

<sup>28</sup> Amex, 2021

<sup>29</sup> Priceline, 2021

<sup>30</sup> Amex, 2021

<sup>31</sup> WeWork, 2021



## TREND IN ACTION

The emergence of the New Care Economy can be tracked by programmes being launched by major brands to deliver against trend expectations. Software company Cisco Systems offers paid Grandparents Leave for its employees in the US and Canada.

Similarly, Saga, the travel and insurance company for the over-50s, is to give employees a week of paid leave to celebrate the birth of a grandchild. As part of the policy the grandchildren of all Saga staff will have access to its onsite nursery at its headquarters in Folkestone, Kent.

Swiss start-up The Embassies will create spaces designed to foster intergenerational encounters, scheduled to open across the DACH region in late 2022, with plans for 30 international establishments by 2030. They will serve up learning, relaxation and social programming.

New online groups for midlife women provide practical and emotional support. Some are brand-backed: among them is Roar, a Facebook group for women hosted by New York-based women's health brand Rory.

Crowne Plaza Muscat is a prime example of a hotel designed with New Care Economy travellers in mind. It combines a calm pace to suit older visitors, ample excitement for youngsters, warm hospitality and wonderfully diverse scenery.



Crowne Plaza Muscat

## KEY TREND THEMES

It's a mistake to count out families with young children from the blended travel landscape. School days only account for about 180 days a year – leaving ample time for remote-working parents to roam. And 87% of millennial parents worldwide already enlist their child's opinion for vacation planning.<sup>32</sup>

Mid-lifers and active older consumers are also key players in the New Care Economy trend. There's a broad range of consumers who are carers, looking for support. Happiness levels among consumers are at their lowest during the late 40s: an age group often looking for help in managing the demands of multi-generational caregiving.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, later retirement ages mean more older consumers continue to mix work with pleasure when they travel.

<sup>32</sup> YouGov, 2021

<sup>33</sup> National Bureau of Economic Research, 2020



## BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR BLENDED TRAVELLERS

Employees are shifting from live-to-work to work-to-live mentalities after the pandemic forced many to re-evaluate their lifestyle priorities. Their demand for flexibility as standard and pursuit of values-led employment and working practices means that three in five US adults would rather get an extra vacation day for 'life admin' tasks than a pay raise.<sup>34</sup>

The New Care Economy trend sees not just younger people embracing blended travel as a form of self-care, but also older people in their 50s, 60s and even 70s demanding remote and flexible working opportunities as a tool for switching off and juggling family care when they travel.

For travel and hospitality brands, there is an important opportunity to be the facilitator of care-through-travel. 'Why shouldn't travel for work also be a great time to connect with family or spend time with friends?' says Ginger Taggart, Vice President, Brand Management, Global Crowne Plaza.

'We've always aimed to be a place where travellers feel at ease, and for so many people, that is as much about the company as the space you inhabit.

'With our Dare to Connect service programme, we train our staff to encourage worry-free travel that delivers the peace of mind to recharge, work when needed and connect equally with loved ones and work colleagues.'

<sup>34</sup> Trust and Will, 2021



CONCLUSION

In our Crowne Plaza survey, 96% say they look forward to travelling again for business and for leisure. Pandemic restrictions have changed how people see travel, and while many are still navigating a changing world, it's clear that for many blended travellers, there are new opportunities to take advantage of a more flexible way of living and working.

'For us, developing an ever-evolving blended traveller strategy has been part of our DNA for years and consequently we have developed an offer that allows our guest to switch between business and leisure modes at will,' says Ginger Taggart of Crowne Plaza.

It's this rich and long-term understanding of the shifting blended travel landscape that has given the brand the confidence to counter-intuitively position the Crowne Plaza Changi Airport Singapore as a blended business and leisure destination.

Whether it's combining work travel with leisure time to spend more time in a destination, or using travel time to explore new possibilities and make stronger connections, tomorrow's blended traveller will be looking to make their vacation and work travel time work harder for them. Travellers will expect hotels and travel services to understand their new-found flexibility, and evolve to match.



## UK SURVEY STATS

### FLEX AND BALANCES

Top four benefits of remote working are: no commute (62%), better work/life balance (59%), more flexible schedule (51%), more productive (42%).

A clear majority (59%) say controlling both where and when they work is more important to them than controlling only when (20%) or only where (21%).

Three quarters (75%) strongly or somewhat agree that they expect more flexibility from their employer and workplace, post-pandemic.

Six in ten (64%) say their employer has enthusiastically embraced flexible working, and a further 21% report that their employer is neutral about new agile working options.

### A REBOUND IN TRAVEL READINESS



85%

Travelled more than 6 times per year for business before the pandemic.

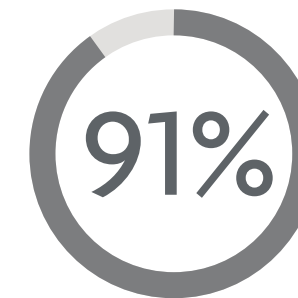


Are looking forward to travelling for business again



97%

Plan to travel for business in the next 1-2 years



Plan to travel for leisure in the next 1-2 years

### HYBRID WORKING

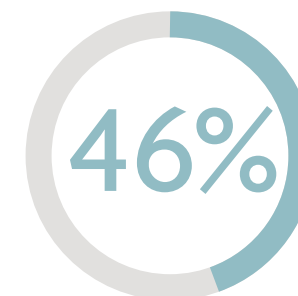
34% worked in an office, pre-pandemic, 15% worked remotely from home, and 41% combined office and remote working. Post-pandemic, office working has slumped to (14%) and hybrid office/ remote working (40%) remains almost unchanged, and remote home working (38%) has more than doubled.



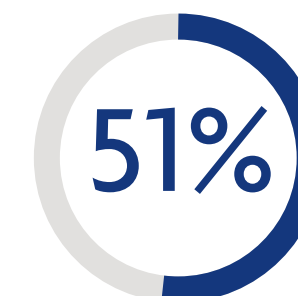
55%

Favour a hybrid working future combining office and remote working

### TOWARDS THE ERA OF THE ENLIGHTENED EMPLOYER



Say their employer better understands their needs since the pandemic



Feel that their employer's understanding of their needs hasn't changed.

## A REBOUND IN TRAVEL READINESS

### US SURVEY STATS

 **76%**

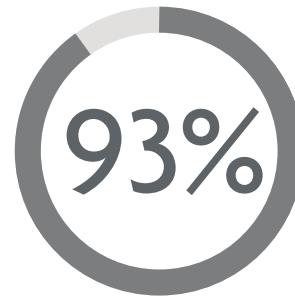
Travelled more than 6 times per year for business before the pandemic.



Are looking forward to travelling for business again

 **93%**

Plan to travel for business in the next 1-2 years



Plan to travel for leisure in the next 1-2 years

## HYBRID WORKING

50% worked in an office, pre-pandemic, 20% from home, and 25% combined office and remote working. Office working has dropped to 23%, post-pandemic, home working has risen to 38%, and hybrid office/remote working has climbed to 32%.

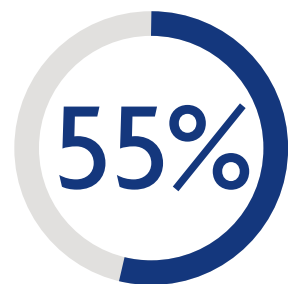
 **30%**

Would prefer to work remotely from home in future

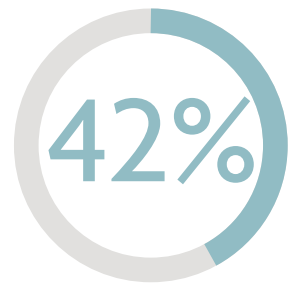
 **42%**

Would like the hybrid office/remote working option.

## TOWARDS THE ERA OF THE ENLIGHTENED EMPLOYER



Say their employer better understands their needs since the pandemic



Feel that their employer's understanding of their needs hasn't changed.

## FLEX AND BALANCES

Top four benefits of remote working are: no commute (66%), a more flexible schedule (60%), better work/life balance (53%), save money by not commuting (50%).

A clear majority (55%) say controlling both where and when they work is more important to them than controlling only when (19%) or only where (26%).

Three quarters (74%) strongly or somewhat agree that they expect more flexibility from their employer and workplace, post-pandemic.

Four in ten (42%) say their employer has enthusiastically embraced flexible working, while a further third (32%) say their business is neutral about new agile working options.





**CROWNE PLAZA**<sup>®</sup>

HOTELS & RESORTS

AN IHG HOTEL