

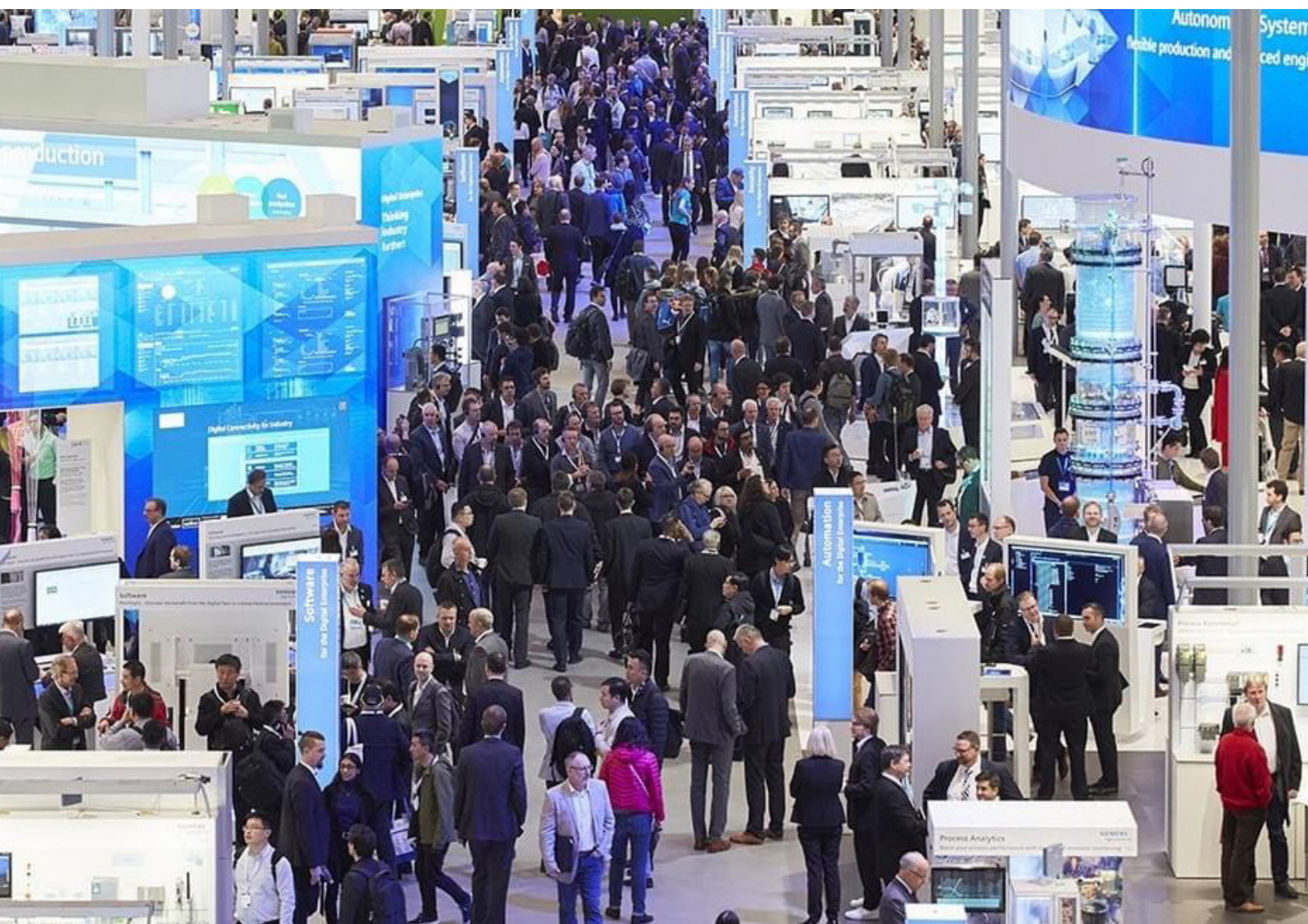


Pottinger

PERSPECTIVES

ZOOMING TO ZÜRICH

Seven travel tips to
improve your business



I have a ticket on the 15:41 train from Hannover to Zürich and it's a good thing I'm running 20 minutes early for my departure. For the last four days, Hannover's usual population of around 500,000 has swelled to more than 750,000 thanks to the city's prolific – and the world's largest – annual industrial trade fair. It's a busy day for intra-Europe train travel.

Samsonite suitcases and surgical masks are the order of the day. Many of my fellow passengers look like seasoned train travellers and they match perfectly with that very orderly vibe you get when travelling in Germany and other parts of Europe.

But while the process from start to finish is a well-oiled machine, that doesn't mean that everyone is on board with the ways to optimise their experience. Join me as I Zoom to Zürich and reflect on seven train travel tips that can also help leaders improve their businesses.

1. Know where you are going

It seems simple, but don't overlook the need to know where you are going and keep it central in your decision-making upon arrival at the station. It is not always easy to see your destination when you look up at the board that lists every near-term departure. That is because the place printed on your ticket is just one stop on a journey that may continue much further for other travellers.

Once you have found your ideal destination, it's time to hustle to the platform so you can be ready to get going.

Good business demands a known destination too. You need a corporate strategy that starts with the agreed end point – clearly enshrined and communicated in lights for all the daily commuters in your business to see. From the destination, you can work backwards to illuminate the different pathways you could take to get there. Rarely is there just one, and the quickest route is not necessarily the one that is best for the company, its people, customers, shareholders or broader society. Don't let the near-term distractions and



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motivations detract from the clarity of that long-term destination-led strategy.

2. Be on time

The train won't wait for you. And neither will the world at large.

At 15:38 my train edges to a halt and people diligently pile on. In the 60 second window that the Rolex-branded station clock shows 15:41 – the exact minute printed on my ticket – the train slowly leaves the station. If you're not early for European train travel, you're already late. And if you're late, that means missed connections, cancelled dinner bookings and doubling up on ticket costs.

Wherever you work, be there on time. It's not just for your own benefit, but it's a sign of respect for others and critical for those people who are relying on you to get the job done. This is especially so for meetings where many people come together to leverage the intellectual or inventive power of the group to make decisions and act.

However, being on time is not just about the clock. It's about readiness to act. Being on time means being organised, diligent and prepared. Be on time, stay on time, and keep time on your side.

3. Sit in your assigned seat

It's tempting to slide into a different seat to give yourself more space. But you can always be guaranteed that an awkward moment could be just one stop away when the rightful owner of that corner of the carriage arrives.

Your seat is your space and you should own it. French sociological theorists from the 1960s coined the phrase "threshold" spaces to denote private places in public spaces or public spaces in private places – think hotel lobbies and living rooms. Your assigned seat on the train is your sanctuary in an otherwise noisy and cluttered world. Treasure it.

In the business world, you need to own your place. Don't be fixated on the place and position of others. You do you. Admire your competitors, respect them, but stick to your game and to your journey. When famously comparing the attitudes of executives of Microsoft versus Apple, leadership thought-leader Simon Sinek found that Microsoft's Executives were always pitching their product and success in relative terms to the successes of Apple, whereas Apple was steadfast in positioning itself only relative to itself and what its customers want. Don't deliberately or inadvertently live in the shadow of someone else.

4. Keep an eye on your personal items

Laptops, phones, air pods, handbags, watches, jewellery and luggage. Yep – they go missing on trains. Personal assets like these can end up in the hands of people who like the look of you, your place or your valuables. Keep the things that matter close, ideally within reach, and keep a watchful eye.

What are the things in your business that you'd struggle to live without? Typically, the best and most obvious answer is your people. Look after them and keep that same watchful eye active. Pay attention to their needs and listen to their hopes and worries.

There are other assets that need protection too. Almost all businesses pride themselves on having some kind of valuable and ideally defensible intellectual property. Protect your unique methods, designs, stories, gadgets and widgets.



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5. Look out the window

Keep looking at the landscape. Sure, read a book, catch up on work and correspondence, but don't forget to catch a glimpse of the rolling hills, towering urban environments and other breathtaking features of the world outside. If you don't, your perspective is too narrowly focussed on the now and you may get distracted and miss your stop.

Look at the speed with which the world is moving around you. Look at how quickly the future becomes the present and then the past.

The pace of change in the business world has never been greater. Whether driven by evolutions and revolutions in technology, global health pandemics or just the relentless drive and ambition of the markets around you, the circumstances and context of your business and the businesses of your customers are rapidly evolving. If you're not watching, you can't possibly expect to be able to make the decisions needed to stay ahead of the game.

6. Stay busy

Downtime is essential for recovery and there is something particularly therapeutic about

long distance train travel. But, wow – what a great chance to get stuff done! Why not write an article about train travel?! Life is short – it's better to use the time than just pass the time. Rarely do we have an opportunity to sit, reflect and focus on getting done what is most important to you.

Great business leaders – and businesses themselves – are frequently characterised by daily velocity or busyness levels relative to competitors. There is a tangible, positive restlessness to those companies wanting to push boundaries and achieve progress. Working hard and staying productive is a core metric of success in business. This doesn't mean working long hours, necessarily (though working hard and working long do often go hand in hand), but it does mean being constantly on the go, always thinking, always reflecting on where to go and how to improve. Whether you are an incumbent or a disrupter in your field, keep running – your customers and employees expect it of you.

7. Book another trip

You may have reached your destination, but there are other places to see. Revisit your calendar and work out where you want to go



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next. Is it somewhere you know, trust maybe even love already, or is it the unknown, the next frontier? Somewhere that will challenge you, ask you to take risk? There's nothing like having a next trip to plan towards, to work towards.

In business, you need to balance celebration of destinations reached and holding on to the entrepreneurial hustle that drives you to keep charting new ground. The greatest companies are relentless in taking action and making progress. Imagine if Apple had decided after the release of the first iPhone – which transformed the functionality of the mobile phone – that it was done and would hang up its boots on mobile devices? I am not advocating flippant, mid-stage destinations as the appropriate way to frame your strategy. What I am suggesting is the healthy habit of revisiting and revitalising that bigger picture travel plan.

If you follow these seven steps, travel and business bliss can be a little closer than they feel at times.

Make active and deliberate decisions about where you are going and why. Rock

up on time with everything you need already packed. Ok, if you need a last-minute espresso while sitting on a beautiful station platform in northern Germany, then sure – that's part of the experience. Be honest with yourself and others and sit in the place that's made for you, or that you have made for yourself.

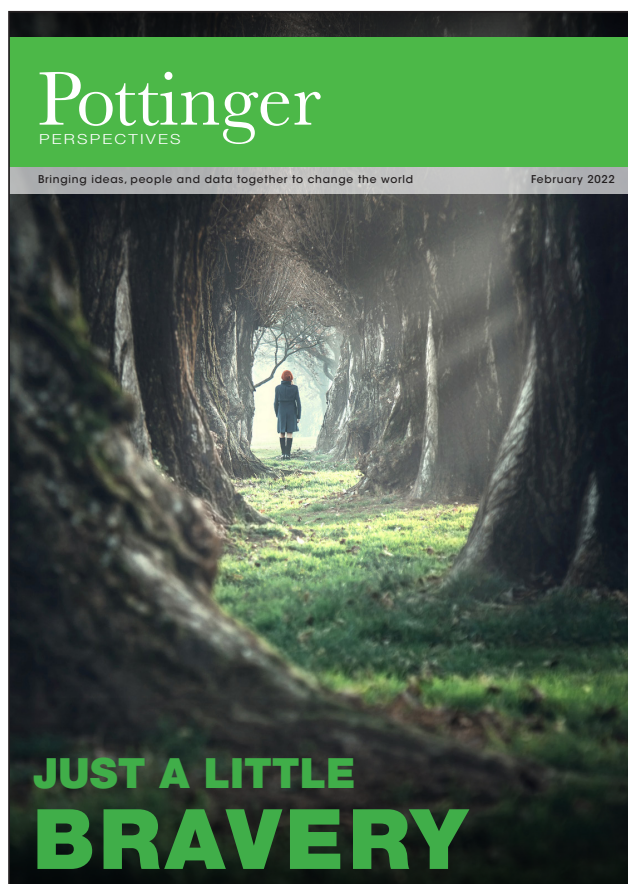
Take care of what you brought with you and what you intend to keep with you. Know that if you don't, those important parcels of personal significance will walk. Take in views that require turning your head and looking at things differently. Use your time to stay on top of things, to advance things or to let go of things. And finally, have another go. Buy another ticket. Find another reason to put that travel spring in your step.

...And don't forget to say "please" and "thank you", to everyone.

All aboard! **P**

John Sheehy is CEO of Pottinger. His favourite countries to visit are France, Portugal and the US. His favourite travel tip above is number 4.

Previous issue from Pottinger Perspectives:



Just A Little Bravery

Every business leader – indeed most employees in most businesses – must face up to significant change at some point in their careers. Whether this comes through a financial crisis, or through the creeping effects of increasing competition or technological change, the same imperative remains: don't shy away from change.

The lexicon of 21st century business is awash with excuses to ignore change, allowing leaders to “defer a decision until the landscape becomes clearer” and enabling them to be “too risk averse to act...” That's why the decisions to be made in 2022 are so important. There are huge opportunities to be seized as three parallel revolutions unfold with increasing pace.

By Cassandra Kelly

<https://www.pottinger.com/action.html>

About Pottinger

Pottinger is a global advisory firm headquartered in Sydney and New York. We combine strategic, commercial, financial and transaction perspectives, and focus first on long term outcomes, to deliver commercial advice that is practical and complete. We navigate the uncertainty inherent in commercial decisions, helping our clients to identify value overlooked by others, and to avoid risks which others may not see.

Pottinger helps organisations to adapt, innovate and transform, by providing insight and advice on strategy and public policy matters, as well as the negotiation and execution of M&A and financing transactions. Our combination of strategic thinking, M&A advice and financing capabilities allow us to find innovative solutions to the challenges arising in industries facing dynamic change and disruption.

Our team has exceptionally broad and deep strategic advisory and transaction execution experience, encompassing all of the world's top thirty countries. Examples include:

- Advice on market entry, strategic repositioning, identification of new growth opportunities, spin-outs and other forms of restructuring and advice on strategic investments, using our proprietary Destination-led Strategy® methodology, together with analogous advice to governments on public policy;
- Advice in relation to large and small-scale acquisitions, divestments and takeover responses for both publicly listed and private companies;
- Capital optimisation and financing advice for large enterprises, together with advice on commercialisation planning, capital strategy and capital raising for emerging companies;
- Specialist input in relation to the design, formation, restructuring, sale and dissolution of large scale joint ventures and partnerships; and
- Identification and quantification of risk, by applying advanced statistical techniques to relevant data pools, thus simplifying decisions impacted by significant uncertainty.

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