



Priceline Work-Life Balance Report: One in Four Working Americans Have Nine+ Days of Vacation Remaining This Year

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40 percent report that after events of 2018, they need a trip to relax; Wedding-related travel ranks as top PTO regret

NORWALK, Conn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 13, 2018-- With less than two months remaining in 2018, one in four working Americans have nine or more days of paid time off still available to use. And twenty percent of the full-time American workforce expects to reach the end of the year without using their allotted vacation time. These were among the findings of the Priceline Work-Life Balance Report, a survey of 1,003 employed Americans executed in October by Morar HPI.

The Priceline Work-Life Balance Report asked Americans to analyze how they used (or misused) their time off from work in 2018, and what travel priorities they planned to emphasize in 2019 with their vacation time. On the whole, it revealed that working Americans put their vacation time to good use – traveling extensively throughout the country, with ambitious travel plans in store for 2019 – while regularly failing to use all of the vacation days available to them.

“Too often, people begin the year expecting to take full advantage of the vacation time they’re given, but find themselves scrambling to use those days as December approaches,” said Brett Keller, Priceline’s CEO. “Our advice is to treat your paid time off like any other work project. Plan ahead, keep track of the days available, and don’t let the year end with that time unused. Vacations don’t have to be complex or expensive. Even a night relaxing at a nearby hotel is time well spent.”

American Workers Desire More Relaxation, Less Regret

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the need for “relaxation” ranks highly for working Americans. A full 85 percent of Americans surveyed cited a desire to disconnect and relax as their vacation priority. When asked specifically what kind of trip they need after the “events of 2018,” “relaxation” rose to the top of the list.

Nearly a third of American workers (29 percent) report having “regrets” about how they spent their paid time off in 2018, but the study suggested that they are optimistic about making better use of vacation days in 2019. In particular, nearly six in ten (59 percent) plan to take more time off next year.

Half of American workers plan to take more solo trips, while just under a third (31 percent) intend to travel internationally. A full 35 percent of study respondents intend to take event-related trips, such as to music or food festivals.

Wedding Regrets

One particular frustration voiced by American workers was the time spent traveling to wedding-related activities, including bachelor/bachelorette parties and the weddings themselves. Almost one in five employed Americans (19 percent) used their work vacation time for such activities in 2018. Of those who did, more than four in ten (41 percent) cited it as their top regret. And more than a quarter of Americans (28 percent) intend to use fewer vacation days for such events in 2019.

Saving Money a Travel Priority, Brand Loyalty Less So

Nearly half of American workers (47 percent) surveyed state that “saving money during the travel booking process” is particularly important, and nearly one in four (24 percent) report not having used their available vacation time because they felt they could not afford it.

American workers also report that brand loyalty – regularly flying a particular airline or staying at a certain hotel – is not an overriding priority when they travel. Overall, only 27 percent report loyalty to a single hotel brand, and only 23 percent do the same for airlines.

Female travelers show markedly less brand affinity than male travelers – only 15% of American women in the study prefer a certain airline, versus 37 percent of men. Approximately the same split is true of hotel loyalty, with brand preference about half as important to women (18 percent) as men (37 percent).

Will Fly for Food

American workers cited “food and drink” was their top travel expense in 2018, and four in ten (41 percent) claim that food will be their top influence when considering travel in 2019 – the largest consideration in the field. Hotels and other accommodations, such as home or apartment rentals, was the second most-expensive travel outlay in 2018. Transport – including flights, rental cars and trains – ranked third, at 18 percent.

Domestic Bliss

Among American workers in 2018, the most commonly visited leisure destination was within easy driving distance of home. “Staycations” topped the field as the most-taken trip (37 percent), followed by beach vacations (31 percent).

Travel within the United States was the most popular way to use paid time off. When presented with the hypothetical option of using vacation time to visit anywhere in the world before the end of the year, Americans’ first choice (37 percent) was to travel domestically. Europe was the second-most desired destination (25 percent) followed by Australia (13 percent) and South America (10 percent).

Within America, Florida was the most popular vacation destination, visited by 23 percent of travelers. California and New York round out the top three

(16 and 13 percent, respectively). The same three states top the list of desired domestic destinations in 2019, in the same order.

Among the most surprising findings of the Priceline Work-Life Balance Report was the relatively small number of American workers who reported “faking illness” to get an extra day off. Only 27 percent admitted to this practice when asked by Morar HPI pollsters. Eighteen percent invented excuses related to their children or partner. A majority of respondents did not admit to any such activity.

Survey Methodology

Research findings are based on a survey conducted by Morar HPI across the U.S. between October 13-18, 2018. For this survey, 1,003 respondents were asked general questions about their vacation and PTO use habits. The study targeted full-time employees who are 18+ years old.

About Priceline

Priceline, part of Booking Holdings Inc. [NASDAQ: BKNG], is a leader in online travel deals. Priceline offers travelers smart, easy ways to save on hotel, airline, rental car reservations, packages and cruises. With access to more than a million lodging properties of all type, consumers can find the right accommodations, as well as free cancellations and the option to pay upon arrival. Priceline’s Express Deals® offer exclusive savings without bidding, and our Name Your Own Price® service delivers the lowest hotel prices available. With Priceline, travelers can save at every stage, freeing them up to travel more and travel better.

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