



White Collar Travel Extra: Charles Hotel, Skype and the Business Traveler

by Tom Johansmeyer (RSS feed) on Mar 14th 2010 at 2:00PM



The **Charles Hotel's** recent small gesture may actually be a bold move. The hotel, based in **Cambridge, Massachusetts, has decided to add Skype and video cameras to the free computer station that occupy rooms once dedicated to ice machines.** It doesn't look like much more than a small concession to weary travelers who want to stay in touch with their loved ones, but it's actually a fairly hefty commitment.

Though the proliferation cell phones has made using the hotel phones unnecessary, the **Skype**-equipped stations still undermine a hotel revenue stream, which is tantamount to the hotel's announcing: "We'll take money out of our pocket to keep our guests happy.

The stations obviate the need for guests to lug around laptops and cameras and such, which would seem like a natural benefit to the business traveler. Of course, I toted mine around on most of my trips because of the business need, and I don't see many of that ilk dropping their laptops.

Nonetheless, there is an upside for the road warrior. In addition to not having to deal with a camera, the stations obviate the need to install Skype on their business computers. This can help business travelers remain compliant with company IT policies while still having the opportunity to see their friends and family every night when they're on the road.

Of course, this is only one gesture from one hotel. If it works, however, it won't take long for the competition to notice – that's when we'll see it start to pop up everywhere.

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