



## **Reducing the Risk: Identity Theft and the Business Traveler**

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 20 /PRNewswire/ -- The following is an excerpt of a White Paper on Identity Theft by Guillaume Deybach, President and CEO, Worldwide Assistance:

Business travelers face many real and prevalent threats, especially relative to their counterparts tucked away in familiar cubicles. For the corporate travel manager and business traveler alike, physical security concerns have been the focus in this era of terrorist attacks, hotel bombings, and natural disasters. Common crime, however, including identity theft, persists in all corners of the world and should be a security priority for business travelers and their employers, who could end up playing a costly game if they don't take precautions.

Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in the United States. Consumers and businesses nationwide lose more than \$50 billion annually to identity theft. According to the Identity Theft Resource Center, the average victim will spend some 600 hours and more than \$1,000 recovering, and the wounds to a victims' reputation and credit can take up to a decade to heal.

Identity theft threats begin simply enough. Should a wallet be stolen en route, or a credit receipt be left in the hotel trash can for the sticky hands of a thief, a business traveler may not feel the repercussions until months or even years later.

Take for example last year when it was discovered that financial and personal data from thousands of employees and guests -- both business and leisure travelers -- were compromised after old records were left in an abandoned hotel. The local criminal community didn't take long to discover the goldmine and profit by assuming the personas of unsuspecting victims.

Stolen laptops and passports, perusing eyes, and corruption -- unfortunately, business travelers don't often have the time to tuck themselves away in a hotel room before they open up their laptop or to do a background check on every local business they engage with to scan for corrupt employees.

To read the rest of this White Paper on Identity Theft from Worldwide Assistance, please go to: <http://www.worldwideassistance-idtheft.com/pages/news.html>

Guillaume Deybach is the President and CEO of Worldwide Assistance (<http://www.worldwideassistance.com>), part of the multinational Europ Assistance Group, which offers identity theft resolution services, travel assistance, emergency medical evacuation and repatriation, medical referrals, case monitoring, and international claims management.

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