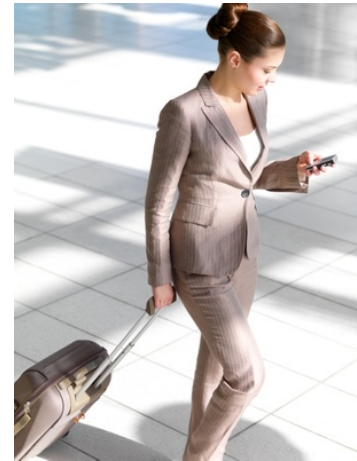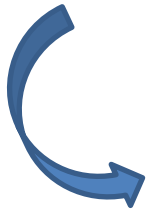# Business travel & mobile work

James Faulconbridge, Lancaster University, UK

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Demand for business travel and office (work) future(s)

Relative stable levels of business travel
despite advances in, and adoption of, ICT

Suggests a blended future of virtual AND non-virtual
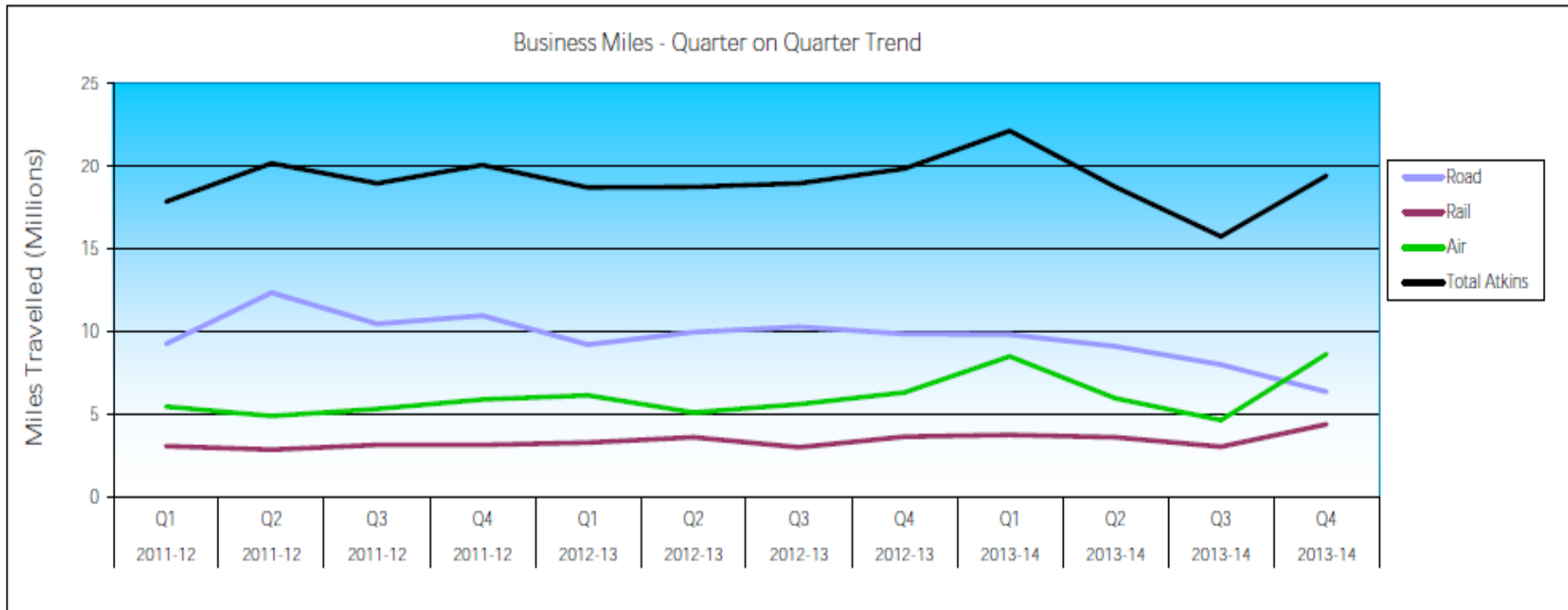and uneven transition across sectors and in use of
office space

Transitioning

Legacies

Intrinsic features

Unintended consequences

Internal data from our case firm suggests stability in business travel, despite ICT

A blended future: the office

"I can imagine it happening. I do a lot of personal interface with people, interviews and management and so on, and there's no substitute for it…. And I've been hearing for years that we, the industry, society, will do more and more of it and, therefore, we have to travel less. And therefore will be able to hot desk in offices and we'll have agile working, and that's great and it is happening but what is also happening is that when we refurbish offices we put in a huge amount of collaborative area. So in a way we're acknowledging that people can work remotely but also we're acknowledging there is a huge value in working together. …. So it's a bit of… pulling both ways. We are working remotely but we are working together more"

A blended approach: work

"Skype's brilliant, we rely on it all the time, it's a great tool. But even though technology has increased I think generally, in totality the level of communication on projects has increased in its, sort of, totality, you know….. So even though the use of Skype and everything has increased, the level of face to face meetings is still as significant as it was six, seven, eight years ago…So I suppose the total level of communication and interaction has gone up"

Office (work) future(s)

Transitioning

- Important differences between private & local government
- Not all sectors "manipulate data"

Legacies

- Where clients are and who they are matters
- Difference between large firm communication challenges & silos on single floor

Intrinsic features

- Not all work is 'virtual ready'
- Ways of working: collaboration, communication
- Interwoven elements: removing travel unravels how works gets done today

Unintended consequences

- Corporate (re)organisation: creates multi-office teams, more travel
- ICT: offshoring work opens up new job prospects
- ICT: frees up time for different travel

Insights from travel

Office (work) future(s)   Business travel

Transitioning

Whose office: private, local government

Which sector: IT, finance, engineering

Legacies

Blend of virtual and non-virtual

Uneven transition across sectors & in use of office space

Intrinsic features

Important blindspot when isolating 'office' from work

Unintended consequences

Unclear what low office utilisation rates actually indicate