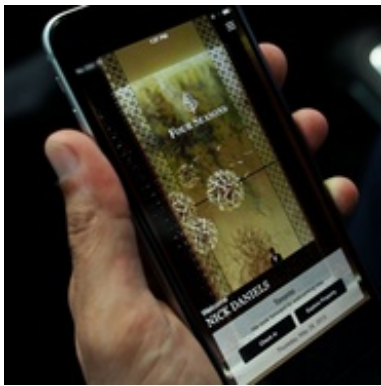


MOBILE

Four Seasons makes up lost mobile ground through global app

June 10, 2015



Four Seasons mobile app

By JOE MCCARTHY

Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is encompassing the entire consumer journey in its long-awaited, portfolio-wide mobile application.

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Luxury Daily

From bookings to in-room requests, the app rapidly changes how Four Seasons guests will use mobile. The luxury hotel sector is not known for mobile mastery, so the new app propels Four Seasons to among the top in the field.

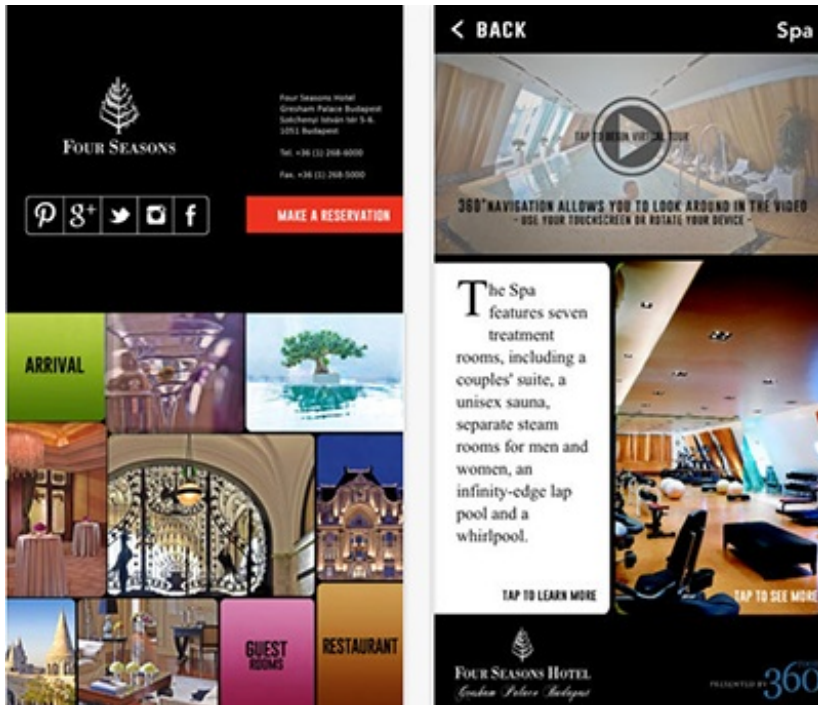
"For Four Seasons, it isn't always about being first to market but rather the best in the market," said Elizabeth Pizzinato, senior vice president of marketing and communications at [Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts](#), Toronto. "We wanted to ensure that our App was a true extension of our customized service approach and developed it based on insights from guest feedback, test and trials and comprehensive staff training.

"We also wanted to achieve scale so that it would be available in the majority of our hotels at launch," she said. While we're launching one global Four Seasons App, it is essentially 90+ individual property Apps with each property customizing their version and content to meet the needs of their specific location.

"Together, the individual property experiences come together to deliver a consistent user experience, depth of content and services unmatched in the industry."

The rise

While Four Seasons has always been a pioneer on social media and digital in general, the brand chose to invest in a mobile Web site instead of a mobile app, and for years had a piecemeal collection of individual property apps that varied in functionality.



Four Seasons Budapest standalone app

Having numerous apps only connected by a title can frustrate consumers who travel to various properties within a brand. The consumer may get to know one app only to find out the next app she has to use is totally different.

Mobile apps are especially popular among travel consumers, who appreciate the contained, concise and immersive experience of opening and browsing through an app.

Ideally, a travel consumer wants a brand mobile app to be a one-stop location for all travel-related actions.

Too often, however, travel apps have insufficient information, deficient functionality or are designed in a confusing way.

Four Seasons sought to evade these pitfalls by spending the appropriate time needed to develop a full app, even if it meant being sans app during a period when consumers demanded one.

The app quells concerns by covering the entire consumer journey across properties. The image-centric display sometimes recalls Pinterest, a platform that the brand fostered a large community on before most brands.

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/-3iyZA9s1Bo>

Four Seasons app video

Consumers will be able to make and manage reservations through the app. Check-in, check-out, luggage pick-up and airport transfers can also be handled.

Rooms can be customized with requests such as extra pillows, toiletries and baby gear. Turndown services can be customized.

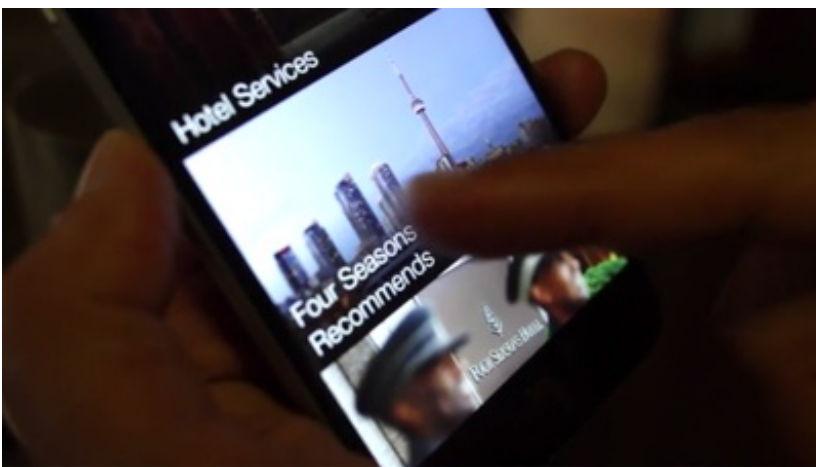


Video still of Four Seasons mobile app

Room service orders, restaurant bookings, spa reservations and other on-site activities can be arranged.

Before or during a stay, guests can consult local recommendations for exploring the destination. These recommendations are in categories such as dining, shopping and cultural pursuits, and hundreds of "very personal" recommendations are available from hotel concierges.

"Some are as unique as where to find the best Parisian macarons, a picnic spot in Singapore or recommendations on where to find the perfect shade of red lipstick in LA," Ms. Pizzinato said.



Video still of Four Seasons app

In-language maps and geo-location help guests navigate areas while in the app, and a save-and-share feature allows for itinerary building.

Part of the reason why the app incubated for so long was because every element of the

brand, every consumer-facing employee, had to be integrated into or familiar with the app. For instance, hotel staff at every property had to be prepared to meet the influx of service demands that would arrive with the new app.

"As we look to continue to innovate, it was also important to us that we had a clear road map and timeline in place to quickly follow our global launch with a fully functioning Chinese version of the App coming this fall as well as a version in Arabic for 2016," Ms. Pizzinato said.

The app can be downloaded [here](#).

Mobile front

Travel consumers may have been antsy for a mobile app, but it is not like they could have gone elsewhere for superior service.

Sixty-two percent of luxury hotel brands are lacking either a mobile site or mobile application, according to L2's latest hotel report.

Mobile has rapidly evolved from a differentiating point to a necessity for hotel brands, especially following Google's decision to favor mobile-friendly sites in its search algorithms. L2 found that luxury hotel brands are making strides but still have a long way to go to meet consumer expectations on the mobile front ([see story](#)).

"We wanted to create a comprehensive, feature-rich global app that was a true extension of our service philosophy," Ms. Pizzinato said.

"Whether you are staying with us on property or would simply like the advice of a Four Seasons concierge, Four Seasons Recommends is essentially a concierge in your pocket," she said.

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, staff writer on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/VcGIkEvZG9w>

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