

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Preferred Hotel and Resorts debuts mobile app to simplify travel booking

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Preferred Hotel and Resorts new app mobilizes its loyalty program

By DANNY PARISI

Preferred Hotel and Resorts is launching a new mobile application to streamline the hotel booking process for its loyalty customers.

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The app puts the company's digital loyalty program, iPrefer, into a simple mobile package. This development was a response to a growing desire among travelers to manage both their loyalty programs and travel information through their mobile devices.

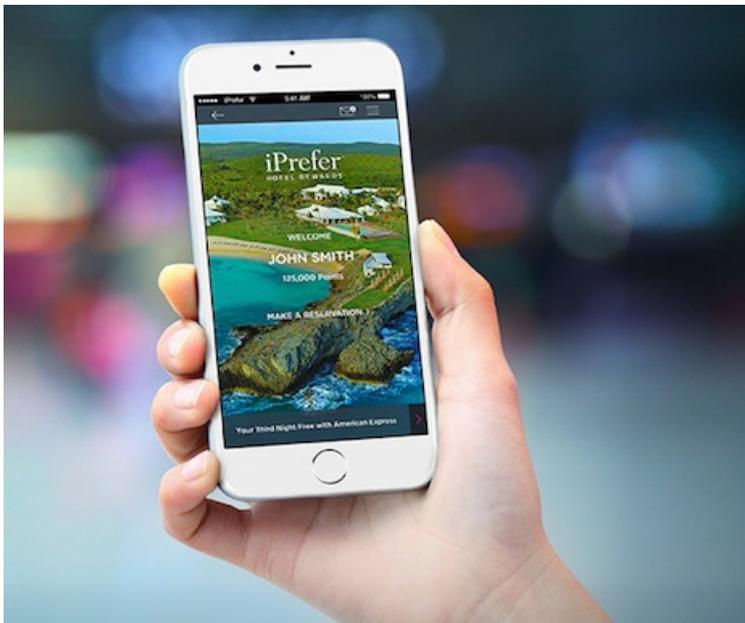
"The new mobile app and member rate program are designed to better connect today's travelers with the unique appeal of the independent hotel experience through a seamless loyalty program that delivers exclusive, on-the-go access to an attractive rate, points and valuable on-property perks," said Casey Ueberroth, chief marketing officer at [Preferred Hotels & Resorts](#), Chicago.

Desire for mobility

Increasingly, more travelers are handling their travel details through their mobile devices.

This, of course, extends to almost all industries, but travel particularly can benefit from the use of smartphones given the fact that travelers are by definition always on the go. This presents a golden opportunity for travel brands to give customers the information they need in a sleek mobile package so that they can always have it on hand as they flit around.

Preferred Hotel and Resorts heard that desire and set out to meet it with the introduction of its new iPrefer mobile app.



The iPrefer app

Through this app, customers can search for and book a room at any of the hotels and resorts that are a part of the iPrefer network. Additionally, they can see and make use of all the loyalty perks and features that they have earned from being a loyal customer.

The app was developed in collaboration with American Express and because of this, American Express cardholders can enjoy expedited checkout if they pay with their Amex card.

Soon, the app will also add a concierge service that will give consumers the ability to chat with a representative from the hotel through the app.

Preferred Hotel and Resorts, and by extension, the app, gives users access to more than 600 hotels around the world. By consolidating all of this information through the app, iPrefer members can quickly and easily peruse all of those locations from the palm of their hand.

Travel app

The integration with American Express marks a significant point of this new app, as the travel industry's reluctance to take on mobile payments has caused them to miss out on some revenue in the past.

A report called the Mobile Payments Index 2016: Travel Edition from last year revealed that accommodation services see 17 percent of volume on mobile devices while airlines see just 13 percent. This lagged behind other industries for that year ([see story](#)).



The app houses the company's loyalty program

This is especially important for travel brands as customers growing increasingly accustomed to top-of-the-line mobile experiences in other industries and they desire their travel experience to be on the same level.

Thanks to companies such as Uber and Starbucks, today's consumers expect smartphone apps that simplify their lives and anticipate their needs ([see story](#)).

As travelers' desire for smooth and seamless mobile experiences grows, Preferred Hotel and Resorts is one company that is aiming to meet that desire head on.

"These enhancements are a testament to our continuous commitment to making iPrefer the most compelling loyalty program for independent-minded travelers," Mr. Ueberroth said.

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