

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Sustainability is now driving travelers' decisions: AIG

May 1, 2017



New I Hotels Brooklyn location

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Sustainability in travel has surpassed being just a trendy benefit when it comes to staying at a luxury hotel or resort, and now directly affects booking decision-making.

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As environmental issues become not just a hot button topic in society, but also a main driver in how many consumers behave, travel is also becoming a large part of that conversation. A survey from AIG Travel shows that consumers are now making their travel decisions based on the sustainability of the hospitality brands.

"AIG Travel's research indicates that sustainable travel' has moved beyond a buzzword for consumers and, increasingly, is becoming part of the decision-making process during the purchase of travel products and services," said Jeff Rutledge, CEO of [AIG Travel](#).

"Our 2017 Pulse Poll on sustainable travel received more than 1,300 responses from travelers and 88 percent reported that when working with businesses that promote sustainable travel compared with businesses that do not consumers are more likely to either buy their products or services again' or recommend their products or services to family and friends,'" he said.

"So to boil that down: travel agents and companies that embrace and help educate about sustainable travel, and include sustainable travel elements and experiences in their offerings, may enjoy higher consumer loyalty than those that do not. This provides a major opportunity for companies to incorporate additional sustainability practices into their travel programs."

Sustainability in travel

While many consumers live a sustainable lifestyle at their homes, traveling can make sticking to an eco-friendly living difficult. More than 72 percent of respondents to the survey expressed a strong or somewhat strong commitment to green initiatives in their homes.

Another 66 percent believed that it was possible for any traveler to carry this lifestyle over while on a trip.



Image courtesy of Moncler

This concept has allowed hospitality brands that have made an effort to implement sustainable practices into their business models and locations to thrive.

There has been a significant increase in the number of consumers who feel this way about travel. In 2016, only 52 percent expressed that sustainability while traveling was very or somewhat important to them.

But in just a year that number saw an increase of 26 percent to 78 percent.

Consumers are increasingly feeling responsible for keeping up with sustainability while traveling. Since 2016, the number of respondents who believed that it was up to the traveler, not the industry, has increased by 25 percent.



Connected consumers should be the focus of any brand's marketing strategy

Because consumers are feeling as though it is their responsibility, it is likely they will lean towards booking hotels with sustainable practices.

Examples of sustainability

Many major luxury hotel brands are implementing sustainable practices on site.

For instance, the Ritz Carlton Hotel Company bolstered a sustainable future with the addition of electric vehicle charging stations at properties across its global portfolio.

The hospitality brand has currently installed the chargers at the majority of its properties in North America and at select international hotels. Keeping its dedication to service close at hand, the addition of the charging stations will benefit guests who own electric vehicles ([see more](#)).

Also, Starwood Capital Group invested further in sustainability with its ecofriendly 1 Hotel brand opening a new location in Brooklyn, NY, reflecting the luxury hospitality industry's move toward reducing environmental impact.

Consumer interest in sustainability is thoroughly disrupting the hospitality industry and changing the way luxury hotels operate. 1 Hotels is Starwood Capital Group's eco-conscious hospitality brand, which is expanding to Brooklyn for its third location, including an adjoining condominium ([see more](#)).

"What stood out to us was the significant increase in the number of respondents assigning the travelers themselves' with the responsibility of playing the most important role in helping people travel sustainably," AIG Travel's Mr. Rutledge said "This year 62 percent of respondents felt it was the travelers' responsibility compared to 2016 where only 37 percent shared that opinion.

"The other finding to note was that while most respondents expressed a commitment to sustainability overall and believe people should travel sustainably, there remains a lack of clarity around the definition of sustainable travel making it difficult for travelers to put their desire to travel sustainably into practice," he said.

"AIG Travel certainly believes it has a role to play in this space and continues to address the need for more sustainable travel education in a variety of ways, including putting tips and guidance on our blog, and partnering with other key industry influencers to develop blog and video content on the basics."

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