

MOBILE

## Small Luxury Hotels gain presence in industry with mobile app

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By RACHEL LAMB



Small Luxury Hotels of the World is steadily building its presence in the mobile market by incorporating a mobile application into its marketing strategy.

Often second fiddle to larger hotel chains, small luxury hotels have been fighting to be noticed amongst wealthy global jetsetters around the world. However, SLH's iPhone app will most likely help the group to earn some clout and presence in the industry.

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“This is a very strategic move by SLH to expand their marketing base without having to add multi-lingual functions to their own Web site,” said Lisa Holt, marketing director of DLS Hotels, Napa, CA.

Ms. Holt is not affiliated with Small Luxury Hotels but has agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Appsolutely perfect

The SLH app is functional, aesthetically pleasing and easy-to-navigate.

App users can use the app to discover hotels in a destination to book in advance, or use the phone's GPS to help them find a luxury hotel that is closest to them.

Consumers can also search for hotels via types, special offers and destinations.

Tapping on a location will help consumers narrow down their search if they know where to go, or they can find hotels based on properties such as "beach front" "skiing" or "family-friendly" that will best-fit them.

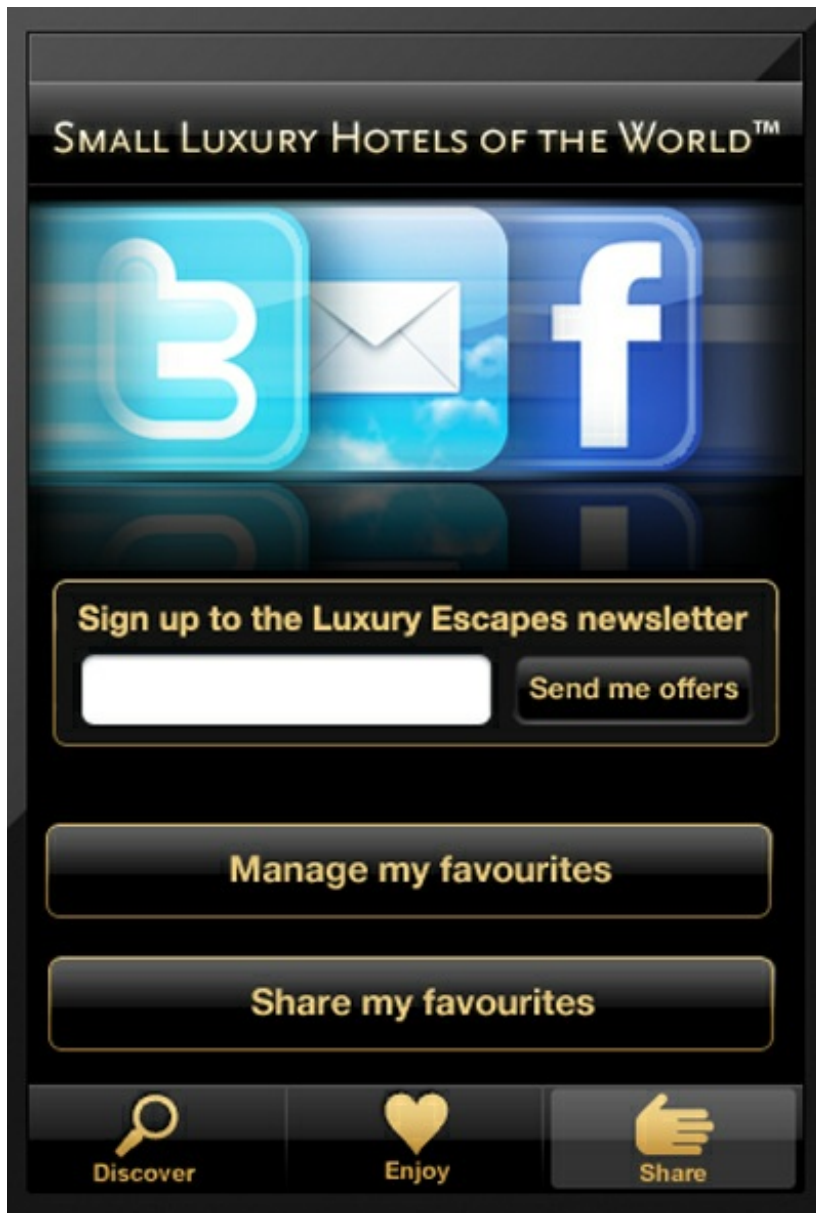
Consumers can use this app if they are already at their hotels to find entertainment around them.



This feature is helpful in lesser-populated destinations or private islands, both of which are available to search on the SLH app.

Consumers can sign up for the Luxury Escapes newsletter and share destinations and the app via social networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

Users can also manage and share favorite destinations and deals via social networks and email.



“This move will now introduce the SLH stable of properties to a new, younger demographic than their properties have traditionally appealed to, which will undoubtedly yield a larger market share,” Ms. Holt said.

Smaller is better?

A mobile app is a simple way for Small Luxury Hotels to band together to improve their scale while still remaining independent from corporate chains.

The hotels in the app are private, secluded and cater mainly to the world’s wealthiest individuals.

In fact, the only thing that differentiates them from brands such as Four Seasons and Mandarin Oriental is that they are smaller and lesser-known.

In a way, this gives them more value.

Having a mobile presence is important for any luxury brand. And even if a property wants to keep itself a best-kept secret, hotels have to market themselves somehow.

“In terms of separating themselves from the larger competitors, they can always add a weekly push for a particular property, much like the Jet Setter concept, that promotes their properties, and then links to the app itself,” Ms. Holt said.

Final Take

*Rachel Lamb, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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