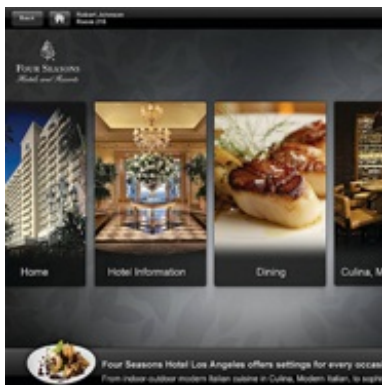


MOBILE

Four Seasons enhances mobile connectivity to attract business travelers

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By TRICIA CARR

Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts is catering to connected business travelers through a company-wide Wi-Fi access initiative as well as test programs at select properties that include meetings on-the-go, Skype check-in and in-house iPads.

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Complimentary Wi-Fi will be offered company-wide in all house cars, contracted limos and properties beginning Oct. 1. Additionally, Four Seasons' mobile accessibility test programs center on conducting business en route to hotels and airports, which could attract affluent business travelers during off-seasons.

"We know many business travelers view Four Seasons as a home away from home, and by anticipating the needs of these guests, we are able to create an office away from office – even while on the road," said Laura Fairweather, manager of corporate public relations at [Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts](#), Toronto.

"Today's business world is increasingly on the go, and business travelers are maximizing productivity while traveling by using mobile devices," she said. "By making it possible for meetings to take place on the go, we are taking our Four Seasons service approach beyond our hotels and into our house cars and limos.

"For our business travelers, we understand that there is a lack of productivity while in transit, so by introducing Wi-Fi, we wanted to make it easier for business travelers to check off items on to-do lists the moment they step into their car to one of our properties."

Workaholics

Four Seasons is rolling out test programs at a few of its properties in addition to installing Wi-Fi access at all travel touch points.

For instance, the Meetings on Wheels pilot program is available at Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills.



Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills guest room

Business groups can travel in an eight-passenger Mercedes van equipped with two plasma screens, electrical outlets, Wi-Fi and swivel chairs.

Also, guests checking in at the Beverly Wilshire, a Four Seasons Hotel; Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica at Peninsula Papagayo; and a few other properties can do so via Skype in the company's transfer cars. They can also make restaurant and spa reservations and order room service.

Cars will also have multi-adapter device chargers.

In guest rooms, the company is working to have two electrical outlets by the desk and two by the bedside with universal adapters.

"Four Seasons is focused on the user experience and with that comes the realization that the modern-day business man is inextricably intertwined with the mobile sphere," said Shuli Lowy, client services and marketing manager at [Ping Mobile](#), Beverly Hills.

"To a business traveler, there are few things as annoying or unproductive as uncharged mobile devices or inaccessible Internet," she said. "We also know that any luxury market requires not just quality of service, but also about the elimination of the small daily hassles in life.

"Small conveniences such as mobile charging stations, a quicker check-in process and broadly accessible Wi-Fi make the world of a difference to the business traveler."

Testing out tablets

Four Seasons is also extending guest use of iPads in correlation with its mobile accessibility program across its hotel properties and transfer cars.

Last year, Four Seasons Hotel Los Angeles at Beverly Hills completed the installation of 285 iPads in all of its guest rooms and suites ([see story](#)).

Guests can use the in-room iPads to order room service, make dinner reservations at the hotel's restaurants, schedule appointments at the spa and make housekeeping requests. Valet parking and transportation services to and from the airport can also be arranged using the the devices.

The iPad program in each guest room will be enacted at the Four Seasons Hotel Toronto when it opens in October.

iPads will also be installed in some company cars and throughout other hotel properties worldwide to offer another point of service. Some properties are using iPads to offer a customized experience to guests as well.

For example, Four Seasons Hotel Doha has a custom iPad application loaded on its devices that connects guests to a live concierge with Bluetooth speakerphone technology.

Also, Four Seasons Resort Jackson Hole hosts a wildlife tour that uses iPads to show maps and migration pictures. The devices are also used to take pictures for guests during the tour.

While the brand is not the only luxury hotel marketer to extend its services via the iPad, it is necessary for it to jump on this trend.

For example, Relais & Châteaux's Baglioni Hotels are stepping up the traveling experience through concierge tips in its iPad app that offer the best places to eat, go shopping and be entertained in cities where its hotels are located ([see story](#)).

In addition, Starwood Hotels & Resorts' Preferred Guest program updated its mobile app to create a seamless, guest-centric experience for all nine of its brands, including St. Regis and The Luxury Collection.

SPG's app updates include content based on whether or not the user is planning, en route or already checked-in to a specific hotel. It is available for the iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad ([see story](#)).

Luxury hotel brands could soon be obligated to create a mobile service experience that reflects its physical service to reach affluent travelers on their medium of choice.

Four Seasons is aiming at business travelers via mobile at this time, likely because the brand will see these travelers year-round rather than just during high travel seasons.

"There is a more subtle nuance to the strategy – that is the understanding of when is the right time to market your products to a traveler," Ms. Lowy said.

“The ideal moment is not when the guest enters his or her beautifully decorated room and plumps down spread eagled on the big plush bed, diving into a sea of pillows, but rather it is when the traveler just got off the five-hour flight, confined to one seat, and just dragged the luggage to the car service.

“Marketing is not just about the ‘what’ – it is also about the ‘when.’”

Final Take

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