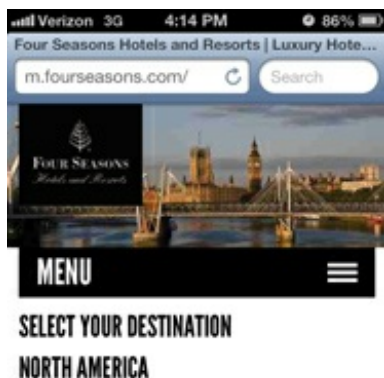


MOBILE

12pc of affluent consumers under 50 book hotels via mobile: study

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By TRICIA CARR

The majority of U.S. affluent consumers book hotel stays online, but mobile reservations are becoming more common among younger consumers, according to new research by the American Affluence Research Center.

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Luxury Daily

Eighty percent of consumers among the wealthiest 10 percent of U.S. households book their hotel stays for vacations online. Since 53 percent of this sample owns two or more mobile devices, luxury hotel marketers should be sure that their reservation sites are optimized across desktop, tablets and smartphones.

“Booking via a mobile device will certainly increase with the growth in ownership and usage of such devices,” said Ron Kurtz, president of the [American Affluence Research Center](#), Atlanta.

“However, mobile devices may be more appropriate for last-minute bookings and rearrangement of plans while traveling,” he said.

The American Affluence Research Center surveyed the wealthiest 10 percent of U.S. households based on net worth for this supplement to the [Spring 2013 Affluent Market Tracking Study](#) ([see story](#)).

It all starts online

Seventy-four percent of respondents in the Affluent Market Tracking Study booked hotel nights for vacation in the past 12 months. Therefore, the survey uncovered that an estimated 8.4 million households booked vacation hotel nights online in the past year.

Also, 76 percent of respondents booked vacation air travel online in the last 12 months.

While 80 percent of respondents booked hotels online, 89 percent said that they do online research prior to booking a hotel for vacation.

The likelihood of booking vacation hotel stays online was about the same among all age, gender and income groups.

Yet, 64 percent of respondents that fall into to the wealthiest one percentile in the United States booked vacation travel online.

Some other hotel booking preferences emerged in certain groups as well.

For example, 18 percent of respondents age 60 and over, 18 percent of female respondents, 17 percent of respondents with an income of more than \$200,000 and 17 percent of respondents in the top five percentile of net worth booked hotel stays by phone.

Notably, 12 percent of respondents under the age of 50 made hotel reservations for vacation on their mobile device.

In all, 5 percent of all surveyed booked hotels via their mobile device.

Hotel habits

Many hotel marketers are coming to the realization that the majority of their bookings are taking place online.

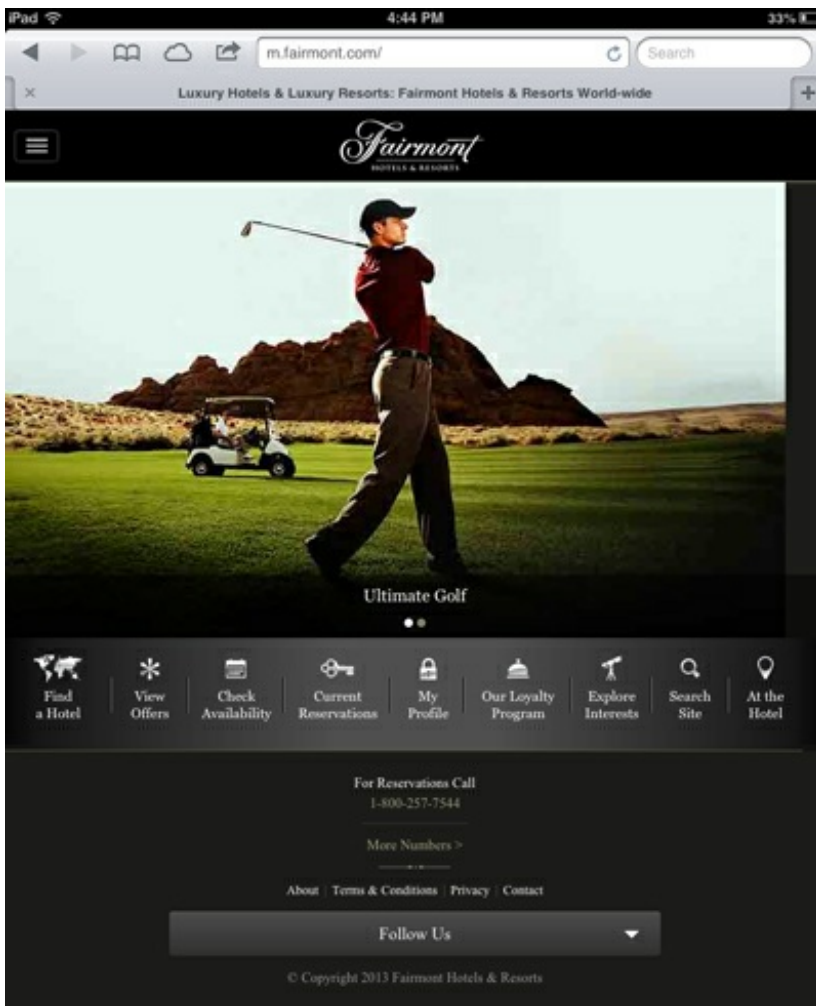
Therefore, they are optimizing their reservation system for consumer use across computers, tablets and smartphones.

For example, The Leading Hotels of the World refreshed its digital strategy in March with a new Web site that offers content to help consumers plan their trip along with a simplified booking platform.

The initial focus was the desktop and tablet version of the site so that it seamlessly adapts based on the device used. A smartphone-enabled version of the site will launch later this year ([see story](#)).

In addition, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts rolled out updates to its desktop site so that its features are optimized and touch-enabled for tablet devices.

The hotel brand saw an increase in tablet usage – up more than 300 percent in 2012 – as well as an increase in time spent on its sites. Therefore, Fairmont catered to the digital habits of its customers through the first phase of digital renovations ([see story](#)).



Fairmont site on the iPad

Indeed, a Waldorf Astoria executive who spoke at the American Express Publishing Luxury Summit 2013 said that luxury marketers should focus all technology-driven efforts on leveraging service above all else ([see story](#)).

“Luxury hotels need to be sure they are presenting their product features and prices effectively and in a user-friendly manner with easy procedures for making a booking in order to capitalize on this behavior and to be competitive,” Mr. Kurtz said.

Final Take

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