

RESEARCH

70pc of travelers value hotel's Web site, app in booking decisions: report

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By STAFF REPORTS

When booking a hotel, almost three-quarters of travelers look to a hotel's Web site and mobile application to make a decision, according to a recent report from Magnani Caruso Dutton.

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The "Seeing Returns: Building Loyalty at Hotels through Digital Customer Experience" report surveyed 1,000 travelers across the United States to learn what digital and mobile experiences they are looking for in a hotel stay. The report also looks at differences between hotel stays for business, for leisure and with family.

"Hotel guests, and travelers in general, rely heavily on their mobile devices," said John Caruso, creative director and partner for [Magnani Caruso Dutton](#), New York. "Our smartphones come with us everywhere we go.

"And as we find we are able to do more things with our phones each day, our expectations for service will continue to rise," he said. "Other sectors within the travel industry, especially airlines, have already made significant strides in increasing customer service, and therefore brand value, via mobile offerings.

"It is becoming the expectation that this experience continue with hotels."

Digital hotel

Not only is digital and mobile important for consumers when deciding on where to book, but it is also important for them during their stay.

Once consumers arrive at a hotel, 74 percent want substantial digital involvement from the hotels to improve their stays. Additionally, 80 percent of travelers want a hotel to let them set personal preferences that can be updated and saved for future use to customize

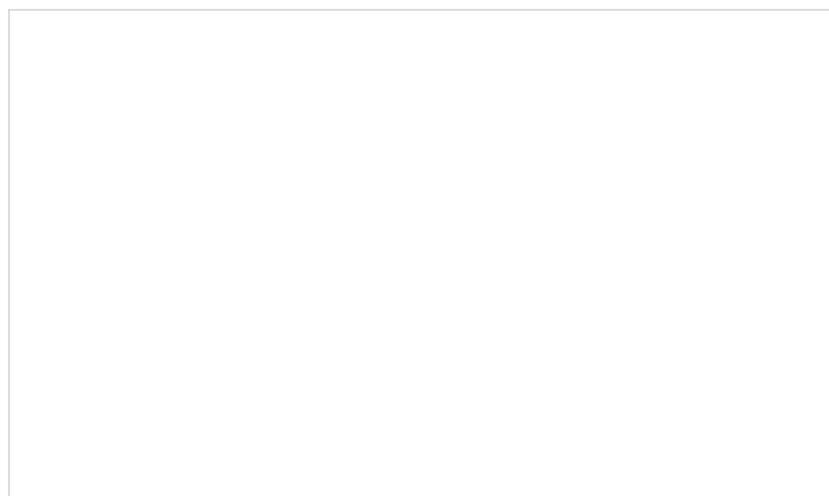
and streamline their experience.

When asked which mobile capabilities they were looking for, 80 percent of travelers wanted to easily see offered amenities and hours, and 78 percent wanted to engage with maps of the areas they visit. Seventy-three percent of travelers wanted to be able to access automated check-in to bypass the front desk, 73 percent wanted to request a late check-out and 68 percent wanted to see concierge tips about the places they visit.

The report also broke down responses based on the purpose of the hotel stay. Seventy-two percent of business travelers said that the quality of a hotel's Web site and app had a moderate or strong impact on their decision to stay.

Sixty-four percent of leisure travelers said the same, and 74 percent of guests traveling with their family said the same.

Seventy-nine percent of business travelers said they were interested in hotels leveraging digital channels to create a more personalized experience. Seventy-two percent of family travelers said the same, and 71 percent of leisure travelers said the same.



When asked "How much of an impact does the quality of a hotel's website, app or other digital tools have on your decision to stay?"

Mobile implications

More so than any other industry the travel sector comes with high expectations in mobile. Since consumers are inherently on-the-go when traveling, they tend to perform more activities on mobile devices, and they want hotels to match these expectations.

This report should come as a challenge for hotels to do better on mobile and meet consumers' expectations before, during and after their stay. This can help them acquire more loyal guests, especially when it comes to business travelers.

"The travelers we surveyed were interested in location information on their phones, simple things like what's available, what's nearby, and when is it open, more than digital services like ordering room service or using their phones to control in-room televisions," Mr. Caruso said.

"What may be most valuable is knowing the customer," he said. "The travelers we

surveyed are interested in sharing preferences with hotels so that hotels in turn may use them to enhance the guests' visits.

“Hotels should not overlook the power of sending their guests timely text messages, linking to useful mobile websites, or just sending helpful emails with information like the health club's hours or recommended restaurants nearby.”

Final Take

Rebecca Borison is editorial assistant on Mobile Commerce Daily, New York

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