

Report reveal travellers desire personalised services

The expectations of 21st century travellers are evolving - and the standards expected of global hotel brands are high, according to research recently published by InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG). In the past, the hospitality industry has traditionally focused on how to be 2D - global and local. This research shows that given the rapid rise of technology-enabled personalisation, travellers now want hotel brands that are 3D - global, local and personal.



Understanding travellers around the world

Last year, IHG published: 'The New Kinship Economy', highlighting a transition from brand experiences to brand relationships in the hospitality sector. This year's, 'Creating 'Moments of Trust': The key to building successful brand relationships in the Kinship Economy', builds on this work to help IHG gain a deeper understanding of what it is that travellers around the world are likely to want from their relationships with hotel brands. It shows that travellers are reshaping their expectations of global hotel brands and are now looking for hotels to not only deliver consistently good service and to reflect local trends and customs, but to also tailor their stays to meet their personal preferences.

According to the research, travellers' expectations of tailored experiences at every touch-point are increasing:

- Nearly three in five (59%) travellers say their hotel stay is significantly more comfortable if services are personalised and more than half (54%) admit it makes them feel more valued.

Factors such as age and geography mean travellers view personalisation differently:

- Millennials (people age 18-34) are particularly interested in access to personal content, such as movies or music while travellers over 65 are most interested in healthy food and beverage choices.
- Three in four of these Millennial travellers believe that global hotel brands do a better job at being innovative in comparison to local hotel brands.
- "New Global Explorers" (travellers originating from emerging economies) have higher expectations for personalisation than travellers from developed markets. For example, 64% of Chinese and 62% of Brazilian travellers expect a hotel to tailor the experience they have to their personal needs, compared to 43% of US and 42% of UK travellers.

- These "New Global Explorers" also prize personalisation more highly than developed market counterparts, seeing it as a sign of respect. 62% of Chinese, 54% of Brazilians, and 46% of travellers from the UAE feel more respected if their experience is personalised.

Richard Solomons, IHG Chief Executive said: "This report shows us that today's traveller trust global brands to deliver on a promise of quality and consistency. They also increasingly expect these same brands to deliver localised and personalised experiences, whether they are travelling for business or leisure - to experience truly 3D brands. That is why IHG has developed our ground-breaking HUALUXE Hotels & Resorts and EVEN Hotels brands and why we are focused on supporting technology-enabled personalisation across our whole brand family."

Preferences vary

According to the research, preferences for what is personalised also vary:

- Americans are most likely to value choosing their exact check in and check out time
- Britons are most likely to appreciate surprises with a personal touch
- Russians are most likely to look for travel guides in their own language
- Travellers from China most want interactive apps to find special things in the local area.

Whether in New York or New Delhi, people are increasingly looking for reliable, familiar services every time. For many travellers only global hotel brands can provide this reassurance, with nearly three in four (71%) saying global hotel brands are more likely to be consistent and more than half saying they like knowing what to expect (60%).

However, despite placing a high importance on consistency, travellers don't want cookie cutter experiences. Travellers from emerging markets (Brazil 68%, UAE 60%, and China 58%) purposely choose global hotel brands because they feel they are considerate to local tastes, customs and cultures. For these travellers, the more a brand demonstrates its respect for the local culture, the more trusted that brand is likely to be.

Regional spokesperson, Karin Sheppard, chief commercial officer AMEA at IHG says: "People now expect products and services in all aspects of their lives to be completely personalised and the travel industry is no exception. This research shows that travellers are increasingly demanding more from their hotel experience - they want authentic and exciting experiences as well as the comforts of home, wherever in the world they are. With this new paradox of desires for both innovation and consistency, IHG continues its focus on delivering a higher degree of localisation and personalisation across our portfolio of trusted global brands."

View the full report: www.ihgplc.com/Trends_Report

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>