

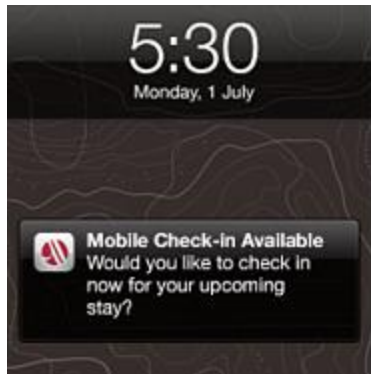
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<http://www.mobilecommercedaily.com/hotel-brands-must-travel-cross-channel-route-to-bookings-report>

Hotel brands must travel cross-channel route to bookings: report

By [Michael Barris](#)

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Marriott's keyless check-in.

Optimizing the cross-channel experience to align with the traveler's customer journey is key as mobile becomes the first screen as well as the primary physical-digital connection, according to a report from Sabre.

A key finding of the report, "The Future of Hotel Booking – A Guide to Hotel Retailing," is that technology increases conversion rates by capitalizing on moments when travelers are more inclined to complete a transaction. The findings point to how, as mobile multiplies the paths to purchase and inundates consumers with price and deal information, hotel brands are challenged to connect with guests, particularly in booking a stay.

"Travelers interacting with brand properties across devices and platforms are expecting a unifying, consistent experience throughout that allows them to pick up a booking process on one device where they left off another," said Sarah Kennedy, vice president of marketing and strategic development for Sabre Hospitality Solutions, a unit of Sabre Corp., Southlake, TX.

"Developing a comprehensive system for syncing shopper profiles across channels, offering recognized engagements and experiences at every stage of the purchase path, can ensure travelers feel supported regardless of where they choose to book."

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Closing gap

The report was commissioned by Sabre and conducted by PSFK Labs.

It urges hoteliers to leverage integrated technology systems to share data across channels and devices so travelers have a unified and consistent experience at every stage of the purchase path, regardless of where they book.



Starwood Hotels' partnership with Uber fills out the experience for travelers.

To engage consumers on their path from discovery to purchase, marketers must sell the way their customers wish to buy and ultimately, that means distributing the brand effectively across all consumer facing touch points, according to the report.

It also emphasizes the importance of helping guests envision the ideal trip, pointing out that virtual reality and live-streaming platforms allow hotel brands to immerse their guests in the sights, sounds and feel of a destination before booking.

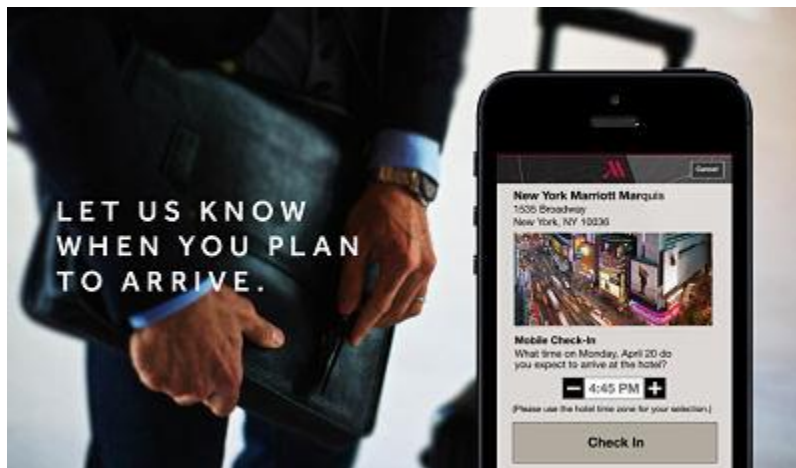
In other findings, the report urges hotel marketers to close the gap between discovery and purchase to create a smoother booking process by using technology that identifies pertinent booking details, uses known data to auto-fill forms or creates one-click transactions.

The report also favors using customer data and preferences to treat guests like old friends. Every interaction that a customer has with a brand's digital or physical property gives the hotel insights to uniquely tailor every touch point with that individual guest.

Hotel brands are working to shift bookings back to their own court as consumers gravitate toward online travel agencies such as Priceline and Expedia.

Mobile features

For instance, Marriott International has introduced many mobile features in recent years, including keyless check-in, which allows consumers to skip the check-in at the registration desk and unlock hotel room doors with their phones.



Marriott International promotes its mobile offerings.

“This reports affirms what we as marketers are working to achieve,” said Tom Edwards of the Marketing Arm, Dallas. “The integration of technology, creating a frictionless consumer experience that is personalized via data is the current recipe for success.

“The key element to consider is the role that mobile can play to connect the experiences,” he said. “From SMS messaging to app acquisition and engagement to immersive experiences unlocked through mobile to advocacy and content created through applications to further validate the experience, mobile is a key connector.”