

The Booking Truth: Delighting Guests Takes More Than a Well-Priced Bed

Booking.com's American Guests Share What Really Matters

AMSTERDAM – June 20, 2013. American travelers have spoken and their feedback will certainly surprise industry insiders. To be “good”, hotels and accommodations need to provide their guests with a comfortable bed at a competitive price. But these are just the table stakes. It's the properties that outperform on the intangible elements of travel – superb service, shared family experiences, discovery, adventure, and the chance to fall in love – that truly deliver a delightful stay.

Booking.com, the largest brand in the global online accommodations sector, captures unbiased reviews from guests who have booked through its site. As a result, the company has an unrivaled reservoir of rich data on real guest experiences, including more than 21 million reviews written – in their own words – by guests who booked, stayed and paid through the site. From this vast bank of data, Booking.com has mined customer experience data from more than 800,000 reviews written by U.S. travelers – and asked 1,200 Americans to tell Booking.com more about what made theirs a truly delightful travel experience.

A collection of these travel insights, [*The Booking Truth*](#), provides the first truly honest look at the factors that drive the American traveler experience in hotels and other properties. “With *The Booking Truth*, we didn't want to make biased assumptions about travelers, or put words in the mouths of our customers,” says Booking.com CEO, Darren Huston.

“We wanted to take a completely different approach and look at the picture solely from the point of view of our guests and ask what makes a stay truly delightful. Through big data analysis, crowdsourcing approaches, and various visualization techniques, *The Booking Truth* unlocks the power of verified customer stories, reviews, feedback and social media commentary to provide not-so-ordinary travel insights – and what we arrived at was a much richer, more nuanced guest experience story than we could have ever anticipated.”

The Booking Truth identifies **65 factors** responsible for driving guest experiences – everything from the disappointing to the satisfying to the truly delightful. It explores everything that is likely to have an impact on a traveler's stay from basic tangible factors like beds, bathrooms and décor to experiential considerations like staff, location and

ancillary services. These factors also form the basis of their reviews and therefore what they tell other travelers.

When it comes to delivering a delightful guest experience, there are six ways for hotels and accommodations to impress their guests:

1. The Total Package

- Whether their stay is for business or pleasure, 42 percent of guests say that they only truly relax and enjoy their stay when they have confidence that they can hand over all aspects of their stay to the “hotel that does it all.”

2. A Little Staff Attention Goes a Long Way

- Attentive staff turns a good hotel experience into a delight. The moment a guest walks through the front door sets the tone for their entire stay.
- 21 percent of all customers mentioned staff and front desk service as being key factors that lead to an exemplary stay.

3. Falling in Love

- A *coup de coeur* always ensures repeat business. Accommodations that have that something extra that guests can fall in love with get the most applause from guests.
- Travelers mentioned that they fell in love with something (or someone) in 20 percent of the cases.

4. Good Location + Adventure = A Memorable Experience

- Hotels that help guests to take full advantage of their locations and amenities to enjoy new adventures leave them with the best memories of their stay, according to 6 percent of travelers.

5. Discovering Something New

- Travel has always meant opening up to new experiences. And the hotel that helps its guests discover new things delivers the most delight for 6 percent of travelers.

6. Beyond Family Friendly

- Family friendly is par for the course these days. Guests favor hotels that are “family supportive” and foster quality togetherness, as mentioned by 5 percent of all guests.

“Every traveler is entitled to a delightful experience,” says Huston. “But that doesn’t always happen – which is where Booking.com can help. It is important that guests can rely on their online travel reservation sites for more than simply delivering a confirmation number. At Booking.com, we’re here for our customers throughout the entire accommodations experience, from searching for the right property to when they first make the reservation to providing night and day customer support throughout their stay, and then to following up with them afterwards to ask them about their experience. Booking.com can help put their vacation back on track with dedicated customer support through a 24/7 toll-free service from anywhere in the world.”

For more information, please visit www.thebookingtruth.com.

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About Booking.com

Booking.com is the world leader in booking hotel and other accommodations online. It guarantees the best prices for any type of property – from small independents to five-star luxury. Guests can access the Booking.com website anytime, anywhere from their desktops, mobile phones and tablet devices, and they don’t pay booking fees – ever. The Booking.com website is available in 41 languages, offers over 315,000 hotels and accommodations in 183 countries, features over 21 million reviews written by guests after their stay, and attracts online visitors from both leisure and business markets around the globe. With over 16 years of experience and a team of over 5,500 dedicated employees in 100+ offices worldwide, Booking.com operates its own in-house customer service team, which is available 24/7 to assist guests in their native languages and ensure an exceptional customer experience.

Established in 1996, Booking.com B.V. owns and operates Booking.com™, and is part of the Priceline Group (NASDAQ: PCLN). Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Google+](#), [Pinterest](#), like us on [Facebook](#), or learn more at <http://www.booking.com>.

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