Executive Summary

As users’ expectations for all-in-one shopping experiences grow, hotels can no longer simply designate a siloed experiences page on their sites to incentivize users to book. Integrating such resources along the purchase path builds a stickier and more cohesive user experience. While retail sites provide suggested products and add-ons at each step of the purchase journey, hotels need to build out their booking process to present users with such options. The inclusion of experiential resources across hotel sites has increased year over year, but execution varies. Legacy brands’ larger portfolios prevent them from presenting destination guides and experiences too early in the booking process. To compensate, these brands attempt to build a streamlined path to purchase on their desktop and mobile sites. Boutique brands, with smaller portfolios, are better able to integrate curated experiences and more customizable features throughout the booking process. With more customizability comes more transparency, allowing boutique hotels to best legacy brands with property-specific contact pages and access to customer service from the homepage through check-out.

Brands with mobile apps must translate the booking process to yet another medium. While the majority of Index brands with mobile apps are legacy brands, some boutique brands have entered the fray with their own mobile apps. Mobile apps have traditionally been the home for loyalty perks for larger portfolios. Mobile apps can also be resources for destination guides and hotel experiences, features that are advertised as frequently as loyalty enrollment within brand apps.

Key Findings

- Eighty percent of brands provide information about experiences options during room selection, versus 44% on the homepage, to allow users to build their itineraries while they book their rooms.
- Brands have doubled down on the mobile booking experience, making features like customer service contact info nearly ubiquitous (97%) while sometimes omitting such important tools on desktop, where only 44% include the same feature during booking.
- Eighty-seven percent of brands’ mobile apps offer the ability to book rooms, and 52% advertise experiences-related resources. Both are more common app features than directions, hotel services or loyalty enrollment.

Key Recommendations

- Integrate itinerary-building features, like reservable experiences, throughout the purchase funnel on desktop and mobile sites and within apps to give users a feeling of “customizability” and control.
- Ensure that customer service features are readily available during the booking process, regardless of which platform a customer is browsing.
- Communicating a mobile app’s benefits upfront on the site can drive downloads by distinguishing between the site and app user experiences without compromising functionality.

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