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The hotel and travel research that should be on your radar

by [Alicia Hoisington](#) | Oct 15, 2018 9:21pm



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Because there are many facets to the hotel industry, there is always a great need to gather and disseminate information so that hoteliers can understand how to strategize and capitalize. Hotel Management has compiled some of the most current research that should be on hoteliers' radars. Here's what you need to know for your next strategy session.

1. Family Travel on the Rise

Family travel is expected to increase at a compound annual growth rate of 4.6 percent from 300 million trips in 2017 to 376 million in 2022, according to GlobalData's "Key Trends in Family Travel" report. Family travel accounts for 30.8 percent of outbound tourism and is largely driven by Chinese travelers.

"As disposable income grows and emerging markets open their borders, we will see trends like multigenerational travel drive trips forward,

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particularly from hugely valuable source markets like China, and this represents a massive opportunity for the industry if it is able to tap into the specific needs of this complex cohort," said Sara Grady, head of travel and tourism for GlobalData.

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The research indicates that in order for hoteliers to capitalize on this demand, they need to understand what this group of travelers wants today and how to cater to them. For instance, the cohort comprises many different age groups, but overall these consumers are accustomed to tailored products and services, transformational activities and seamless technology.

"Family travel is moving beyond the traditional sun and beach getaway to offer families some much-needed time to reconnect with each other and create lasting memories, increasingly in unique destinations or on niche holidays, from cultural trips to activity-filled adventures," Grady said. "It has never been so essential to offer travelers something beyond the norm to stand out from the crowd and that caters to their specific demands, irrespective of where they are from."

2. Responding to Online Reviews Could Be Harmful

Researchers from the Yale School of Management, the National Bureau of Economic Research, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California studied online reviews of hotels and analyzed and data from TripAdvisor, Expedia and Hotels.com. They found that responses from



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management were likely to stimulate more reviewing activity.

In comparison to reviews for products where consumers were trying to influence an audience of other consumers, reviewers for hotels were more likely to impact the manager and not just other consumers, according to the report, "Channels of Impact: User Reviews When Quality is Dynamic and Managers Respond."

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In working to understand the consumer profile of those who engage in online reviewing, particularly in response to managerial posts, researchers said that having the ability to influence the manager could be a major factor. That means when managers respond to reviews online, it is seen by reviewers as being impactful and that there is a chance it could beget more negative reviews because of this.

3. U.S. Identified as a Travel and Tourism Powerhouse

The United States ranks No. 2 in the World Travel & Tourism Council's Power ranking, which assesses countries whose travel and tourism have grown the most in absolute terms over the past seven years. The U.S. scores just behind China and just ahead of India.

The scoring is outlined in the the group's "**Travel & Tourism Power and Performance Report**," which studied the performance of 185 countries, combining four factors: contribution of travel and tourism to gross domestic product, international visitor spend, domestic tourism spend and capital investment in tourism.

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Meanwhile, in 2017, the U.S. ranked as the world's largest travel-and-tourism market based on the sector's total contribution to GDP, with China coming in second place. The U.S. contributed \$1.5 trillion to GDP, and China contributed \$1.3 trillion.

4. Finding the Right Talent

When it comes to hiring employees in the hotel industry, a new survey from Strategic Solution Partners found that it's all about finding the right

talent—and quickly. And that can be tricky in an industry known for its [labor issues and concerns](#).

For example, the research discovered that it's taking longer to find senior hospitality talent. In 2013, 50 percent of hoteliers spent three to four weeks to find a senior candidate for a permanent position. By 2018, 55 percent of those hoteliers have to spend more than four weeks on the search.

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As a result, hoteliers are looking to task force consultants to fill senior positions. In 2013, 50 percent of hoteliers did not consider using a task force. However, in 2018, 72 percent of them regularly use task-force consultants in their senior executive hiring plans. Given the current climate, it seems like hoteliers are using agencies as a new way to find the right people. Forty-six percent of them refer to agencies for short-term hires only, while 31 percent use them for permanent and contractor positions. Meanwhile, 8 percent of hoteliers use selection agencies for permanent positions only.

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