



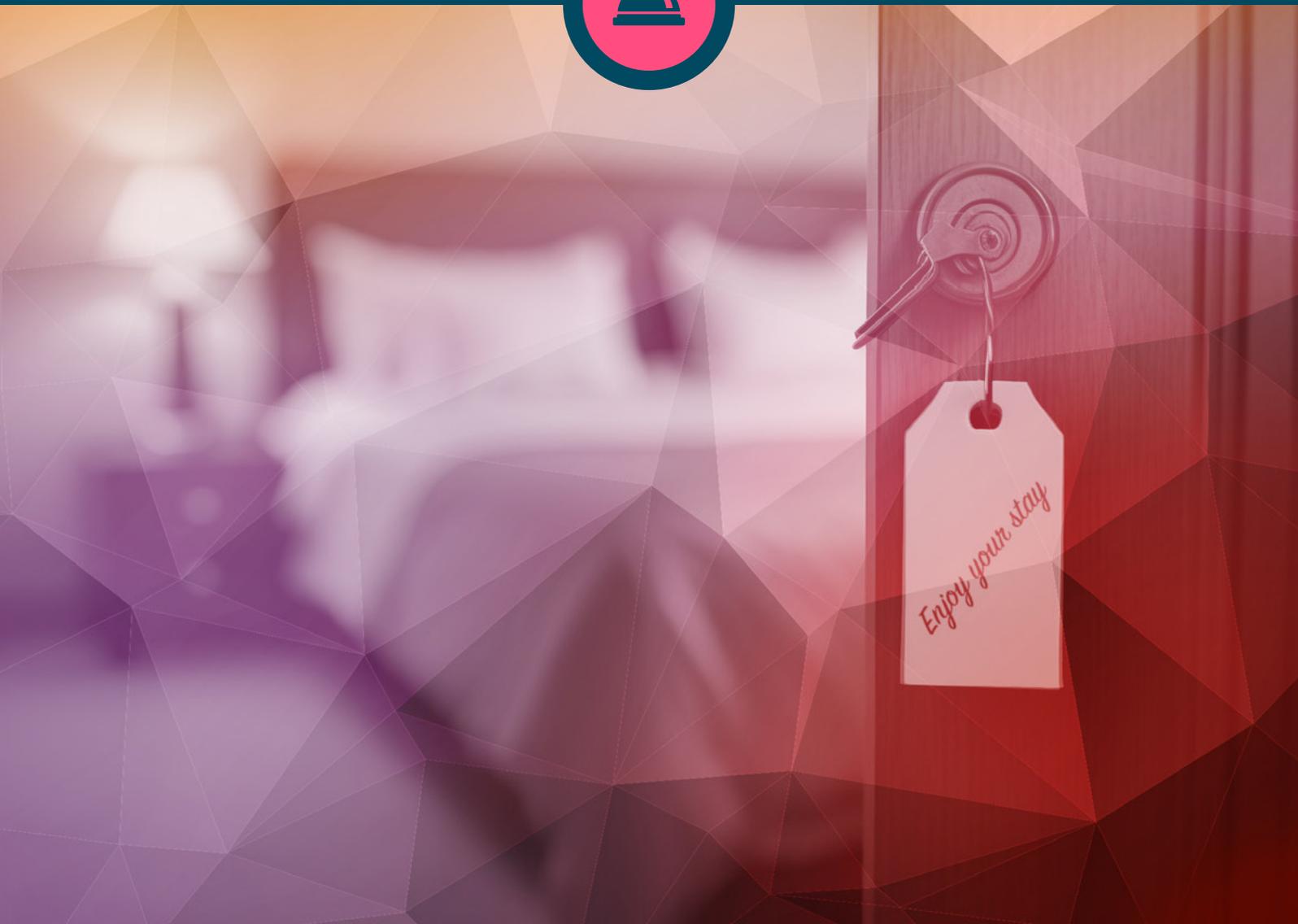
DIGITAL MATURITY REPORT
BY



2024 DIGITAL MATURITY REPORT

THE WORLD'S TOP HOTEL GROUPS

How are the world's leading hotels performing digitally?



About this report

The hotel industry is undergoing rapid digital transformation. Fueled by significant growth in online bookings and ever evolving consumer behaviors, the global online travel market is set to reach \$1.2 trillion by 2027. This growth is particularly pronounced in the Asia-Pacific region, which holds immense potential for online travel booking.

Hotels are increasingly reliant on digital channels to capture consumer interest and drive bookings. On average, travelers visit 38 websites before finalizing a hotel reservation underscoring the critical role of a strong digital presence in influencing decisions. With 70% of travelers opting to book hotels online, effective digital marketing strategies are pivotal for success.

Despite these opportunities, there's room for improvement as the industry strives to fully leverage digital capabilities. For instance, direct bookings through hotel websites currently average around 30%, highlighting substantial revenue growth potential through enhanced digital engagement.

Looking ahead, the hotel industry faces the challenge of adapting to economic fluctuations as consumer expectations continue to change. However, embracing digital transformation remains crucial, with predictions indicating that online sales will drive up to 80% of total hotel revenue in the coming years. As hotels navigate these dynamics, those that prioritize digital maturity stand to gain a significant edge in capturing market share and ensuring sustained growth.

We conducted an extensive two-month research and analysis on the digital effectiveness of the world's 20 leading hotel groups. Our study looks into each company's performance across eleven fundamental aspects of digital transformation. Using this data, we were able to effectively rank the top 20 hotel groups based on their digital maturity.

Who should read this report?

This report is intended for forward-thinking hotel industry professionals ready to embrace digital transformation. It is valuable for individuals within the hospitality sector, including hotel managers, digital marketing specialists, and anyone interested in enhancing digital strategies. Offering comprehensive insights and actionable recommendations, the report aims to guide hotels in optimizing their online presence, improving customer engagement, and capitalizing on digital opportunities to increase revenue.

The research utilized a variety of tools and sources, including Google, and was conducted between 05/10/2024, and 06/11/2024, reflecting that timeframe. For a detailed understanding of the evaluation criteria, please refer to the complete methodology available [here](#).

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01 Introduction

Our study of the world's top 20 hotel groups identifies a clear set of digital challenges and pain points hotels are facing. Throughout this report, we have addressed and analyzed these issues whilst providing recommendations for best digital practice.

The travel industry is well on its way to pre-pandemic levels. With an annual revenue growth rate of 3.32% projected for the hotel market between 2024-2028, the market value is projected to be \$508.9bn by 2028. This underscores the ongoing growth opportunity for hotels. There is huge potential for the travel industry to continue expanding and return to pre-pandemic levels.

DIGITAL MATURITY VS REVENUE

There is a clear correlation between digital maturity and revenue, with 60% of the top 5 largest hotel groups by revenue in the top 3 for digital maturity. Conversely, the bottom 10% of hotel groups by revenue all scored below 25%.

Our research found that 100% of hotel group websites underperformed in key areas such as email, content, security, loading speed and accessibility. With a significant amount of the revenue for hotels coming from online sources, brands must reassess their digital strategy to prioritize optimal customer experiences.

Compared with other industries, hotels are falling behind. Whilst there is clear investment into best-in-class digital solutions, including Adobe Experience and Drupal, hotels are yet to utilize these fully, with many failing to meet customer expectations.

“The top two most digitally mature hotels were also in the top three by revenue”

100%
of the world's leading hotel groups have underperforming websites



Book A Demo

See what the future of the sector looks like and what is possible for pioneering hotel groups.

Speak To An Expert

Paul Stephen



paul@remarkable.global

Nearly half of the top hotel groups fell short of attaining a digital maturity score above 50%, with LuxUrban Hotels achieving the lowest performance at just 6.43%. We were disappointed to see leading hotel groups underperforming, especially in a sector which relies heavily on online revenue and customer satisfaction. With 80% of total revenue set to come from online sales in the next 3 years, hotels which fail to innovate, risk losing to their competition. **If hotels maintained their properties to the same standard as their websites, no one would stay in them.**

To address this, we have developed an online solution aimed at motivating ambitious hotels. This establishes a standard for best website practices, showcasing how these companies can maximize their digital investments. This model acts as a valuable guide for digital and marketing professionals looking to adopt digital transformation.

Our research found issues with some of the world's leading hotels, from search and discovery through to conversion. Digital maturity across this sector is, unfortunately, lagging behind other industries. If hotels are to increase their direct bookings and save on third-party processing fees, there is a lot of work to be done.

“Personalization can lower acquisition costs by up to 50%”

While Google offers immense potential for enhancing brand awareness, reaching new audiences, and generating business opportunities, most hotels (70%) are not fully utilizing organic search. Given that nearly half of all travelers begin their trip planning on Google, overlooking this channel could be a significant oversight for hotels striving to remain top of mind for potential guests.

“69% of customers begin their journey with online search”

With increasingly impatient customers, website speed is critical. 70% of people report that website speed can affect their willingness to make a purchase online. To encourage customers to book directly, hotels need to ensure their website is on par with industry standards. Unfortunately, just one hotel met the Google recommendation of loading in three seconds or less. The slowest hotel website took a whopping 20.90 seconds to load, 6 times slower than Google's recommendation. This is slower than the time it takes to break an egg for breakfast or connect to hotel Wi-Fi. Hotels need to maintain their digital investments so they are not losing customers before they've even made it to the site.

With hospitality being a particularly competitive industry, brands need to prioritize deeper connections with their customers to stay top of mind. With vast and diverse audiences that all have different preferences, personalization is crucial for hotel websites to enhance the overall guest experience, increasing satisfaction and loyalty. Additionally, personalization can lower acquisition costs by up to 50%, improve revenue by up to 15% and enhance marketing spend efficiency by 10 to 30%.

Surprisingly, our research found that 60% of hotels tested lacked personalization altogether. By tailoring content and offerings to individual preferences and behaviors, hotels can create a more engaging and relevant online experience, increasing conversion rates.

“We show how any hotel, with a limited budget and a small in-house team, can be more effective than the top 20 hotel groups within 6 months”

This report examines the digital performance of the top 20 hotel groups worldwide. We highlight industry best practices and trends, providing insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the hotels included in the report. Our analysis covers 12 core aspects of digital marketing, enabling a side-by-side comparison of performances and offering tailored recommendations for improvement.

Additionally, we have prepared a confidential report for each of the top 20 hotel groups. These reports contain direct and actionable insights. While we do not make this information public, we are more than willing to share it individually with each company [here](#).

To demonstrate best practices and possibilities, we have developed a showcase applicable to any forward-thinking hotel brand. This demonstration illustrates how an agile hotel, operating with a limited budget and a small in-house digital or marketing team, can outperform even the top hotels within six months. [Contact us](#) to see the future of the hotel sector.

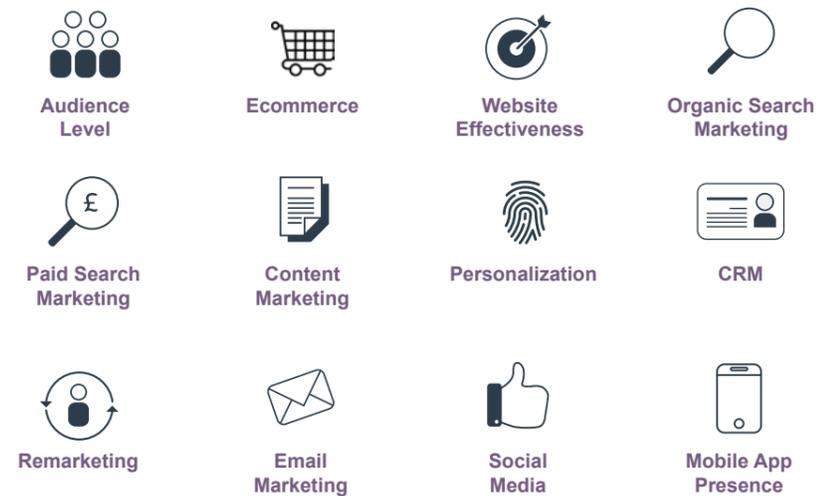
02 Digital Maturity

Digital maturity measures a hotel brand's effectiveness and innovation by evaluating its adoption and utilization of digital marketing techniques and technology. Hotels that actively pursue digital transformation and aim for a strong digital maturity score can consistently deliver high-quality digital experiences to customers, thereby securing a competitive edge in the industry.

The concept of digital maturity encompasses various areas, including IT, digital technology, customer service, marketing, communications, and thought leadership. Achieving high digital maturity is dependent on a comprehensive approach that influences recruitment practices, working processes, and overall company culture within the hotel.

What does this report measure?

For each of the top 20 hotels, we've tested and analyzed their digital performance and presence across:



Pos	Hotel Group	Score (%)
1	Hilton Worldwide	76.43
2	Marriott International	70
3	InterContinental Hotels Group	68.93
4	Hyatt Hotels	59.64
5	Meliá Hotels International	61.79
5	Shangri-La	61.79
7	NH Hotel Group	54.29
8	Accor	53.57
9	Choice Hotels International	55.71
10	Wyndham Hotels & Resorts	51.43
11	Centara Plaza Hotel and Resorts	51.07
12	MGM Resorts	49.64
13	Mandarin Oriental	46.79
14	Regal Hotels International	45.71
15	Wynn Macau	33.93
16	Playa Hotels & Resorts	26.43
17	Minor International	24.64
18	GreenTree Hospitality	23.93
19	Whitbread	17.5
20	LuxUrban Hotels	6.43

03

A Closer look at the Top 5

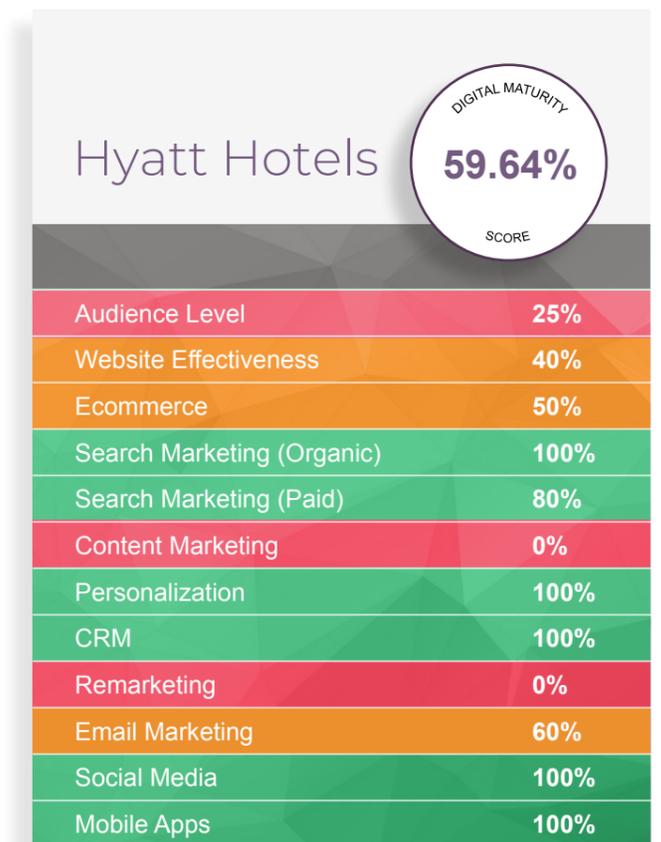
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04 Audience Levels

The average Google ad click-through rate (CTR) is about 6.11% but the good news for hotels is that the travel industry enjoys one of the highest CTRs at 10.03%. There is a huge demand for hotel information, including room rates and availability, amenities, and special packages. By integrating audiences across various channels such as organic search, paid search and social media, hotels have the opportunity to capitalize on the substantial existing traffic.

We were eager to assess how this demand translates into website visits for the top 20 hotel chains. Utilizing industry tools, we gathered audience figures for each website, encompassing both organic and paid media traffic.

Disappointingly, only 15% of the hotel websites tested scored well, with a shocking 75% of websites falling completely. This included some of the world's leading names like MGM resorts, Minor Hotels and Whitbread. Some hotels completely ignored paid traffic, meaning they are missing out on a significant untapped potential.

Reaching larger audiences continues to present a challenge for the world's leading hotel groups. MGM Resorts has the second-highest revenue globally yet scored a 0 for audience level, suggesting an enormous potential for audience growth. With a staggering 85% of hotel groups scoring below par, there is clearly a lot of room for improvement for hotels to bring additional traffic onto their websites.



Good (75 - 100%)

Marriott International
Hilton Worldwide
InterContinental Hotels Group

Poor (0 - 25%)

Hyatt Hotels	Shangri-La	Mandarin Oriental
Accor	Wyndham Hotels & Resorts	Regal Hotels International
MGM Resorts	NH Hotel Group	GreenTree Hospitality
Minor International	Playa Hotels & Resorts	LuxUrban Hotels
Whitbread	Wynn Macau	
Meliá Hotels International	Centara Plaza Hotel and Resorts	
Choice Hotels International		

04 Audience Levels (Continued)

Brand and Audience

Our research shows hotels rely heavily on 'brand' searches, limiting their reach to existing customers. Expanding digital marketing efforts to target specific search terms can attract new audiences, boosting revenue and brand recognition.

Active audience searches on hotel brand names can serve as a measure of brand awareness. High search volumes suggest potential gains through improved SEO and PPC strategies.

However, Shangri-La has over 550,000 monthly brand searches but is not fully capitalizing on this, as evidenced by their subpar organic search performance. Despite Shangri-La and Choice Hotels having some of the highest monthly search volumes for brand-related terms, their websites scored 0 in audience engagement, highlighting a significant gap in their strategic approach.



Interestingly, our research found that 20% of hotel groups scoring 0 in this category are using top platforms like Adobe or Drupal. This indicates that while some of the world's leading hotel brands are making efforts to align their digital and business goals, they are not maximizing their investment due to poor implementation or underutilization.



06 Ecommerce

By 2028, it is expected that 82% of the total revenue in the hotel market will be generated through online sales. Customers favor booking online not only to find the best room but also to add extras to make their stay even better. This means hotels must invest in complex ecommerce functionality that enables seamless planning, efficient payment and intuitive interfaces to increase the number of paying customers.

Disappointingly, none of the hotel websites we tested scored well in overall ecommerce performance. It's important to note, our team of researchers evaluated the ecommerce capabilities by checking out as guests rather than creating accounts, which is a crucial journey for new potential customers.

We examined the performance of the top 20 hotel groups across four key areas of a travel ecommerce website:

Planning

With customers taking around 71 days to commit to a travel plan, hotels have a lot of opportunities to capitalize by building trust and engaging with customers throughout the decision process. Trip planning also typically involves coordinating with family, friends, colleagues, or business contacts, and sharing flight details, dates, logistics and prices.

Despite this period of opportunity, we were shocked to find that no hotels offered any helpful tools for planning. This included relatively simple functionalities such as sharing potential bookings via WhatsApp for example. With 60% of the hotels tested featuring an events section for weddings, conferences or meetings, this is incredibly frustrating. Larger groups are likely to be managing more complicated booking processes and in need of basic sharing tools to support this.

With other websites in the travel industry like booking.com embracing tools such as AI to support pre-trip planning, hotel websites lacking basic features risk losing direct customers and a cut in profits.

Booking

To build strong customer connections, Hotel experiences should be highly customisable, and with guests typically having a wide variety of needs and requirements, the booking process is a great way to upsell and cross-sell to boost revenue and enhance the hotel-customer relationship. 10-30% of ecommerce revenue is driven by product recommendations such as cross-sells and upsells, with sales leaders reporting this contributes to an average of 21% of total revenue.

It was good to see that 85% of hotels were taking advantage of upselling. With only 3 hotel groups, Choice Hotels, LuxUrban Hotels and Whitbread not capitalizing on this. However, it was disappointing to find that 70% of hotels were not engaging in cross-selling, including major brands like Hyatt, Marriott, and Accor.

We also found that just 2 hotels sent abandoned cart emails. With 60% of customers returning to their cart after abandoning it, this represents a huge missed opportunity for hotels. Without this tool, hotels are losing out on potential revenue and customer retention efforts.

! No hotel achieved a good ecommerce score

Paying

Hotels expect a widely international customer base, with guests accustomed to paying in their own currency. 92% of shoppers prefer to make purchases on sites that price in their local currency, and a staggering 30% will abandon their cart simply because they can only pay in USD. We found that 30% of hotels tested didn't offer multi-currency options, representing a significant lost opportunity for a global customer base.

We also found half of the hotels tested, including two of the most prominent brands, Hilton and Marriott, did not offer the opportunity to redeem any kind of promo code as a new customer. This presented a lack of encouragement for first time buyers to spend with new brands. Even more worrying was the number of hotels (55%) that offered just one form of payment. Hotels must invest in better payment gateways to truly capitalize on any traffic that reaches the purchase stage, and to mitigate an already large percentage of abandoned baskets.

Managing

Quick and easy access to manage hotel bookings is crucial. Whether guests want to extend their stay, change dates, or verify details, being able to load the hotel's website and find an option to manage your booking on the homepage should be a priority. This simplifies the user's experience and also builds trust and loyalty. However, our testing found that 40% of hotels lack this feature and 25% do not offer a login option on their homepage. Ensuring a seamless post-booking experience is as important as simplifying the booking process itself to maintain a positive brand image and prevent customer frustration and negative feedback.

“90% of hotel brands are missing out on abandoned basket remarketing opportunities.”

5

15

Good 75 - 100% Average 26 - 74% Poor 0 - 25%

Pos	Hotel Group	Score %
1	Meliá Hotels International	66.7
2	Hilton Worldwide	58.3
2	Shangri-La	58.3
2	Centara Plaza Hotel and Resorts	58.3
5	Hyatt Hotels	50
5	Accor	50
5	InterContinental Hotels Group	50
5	NH Hotel Group	50
5	Wyndham Hotels & Resorts	50
5	Regal Hotels International	50
11	Marriott International	41.7
11	MGM Resorts	41.7
11	Wynn Macau	41.7
14	GreenTree Hospitality	33.3
14	Playa Hotels & Resorts	33.3
16	Choice Hotels International	25
16	Mandarin Oriental	25
18	LuxUrban Hotels	16.7
18	Minor International	16.7
20	Whitbread	0

05 Website Effectiveness

With experts predicting that 74% of hotel revenue will be generated through online sales by 2027, having an effective website has never been so important. A hotel's website is a key indicator of a brand's reputation, and overlooking this can be risky. A beautifully designed, well-built and fully optimized website is essential to win conversions. With 92.3% of internet users accessing the web through mobile phones, hotel marketers have the opportunity to capitalize on this growing audience.

We looked at how the top 20 hotel groups performed across four areas that underpin website effectiveness:

- Website page speed
- Mobile friendliness
- Multilingual Options
- Accessibility

“100% of the world's leading hotel groups have underperforming websites”

Our research uncovered that all the leading hotel group websites we tested had underperforming websites. This included huge names like MGM Resorts, Marriott and Hyatt.

Website Speed

Website speed is critical for customer satisfaction and for boosting SEO performance. Audiences are impatient. As 88% of website users won't return to a site after a bad experience, it is evident that a fast website is critical.

“95% of the top 20 hotels failed Google's Core Web Vitals”

Google recommends that the ideal web page load speed should be under three seconds. This is reflected in conversion rates, which decrease by an average of 4.42% for every additional second of load time.

During our testing, only LuxUrban achieved Google's recommended benchmark, loading in 3 seconds. 90% of the hotels tested took at least 5 seconds to load. The slowest being Wynn Macau at nearly 21 seconds, 7 times slower than Google's benchmark. Prominent hotel brands such as Marriott, MGM, and Meliá all had load speeds exceeding 15 seconds, which is concerning given that users typically form an opinion about a website in just 0.05 seconds.



47% of users won't wait longer than two seconds for a website to load

”

“25% of the top hotel websites do not offer a translation facility”

The slow speeds across the board demonstrate a core weakness with the digital presence of the leading hotel groups. Our investigation showed bloated websites with unnecessary imagery, videos and animations. Half of online users say they'd prefer to miss out on animation and video if it meant faster load times. We also found many websites were using poor design and developmental practices. In response, we've compiled actionable insights for immediate improvements that can be shared with a development partner.

	LuxUrban Hotels	3.0s
	Minor International	4.4s
	GreenTree Hospitality	6.5s

Core Web Vitals

Google's Core Web Vitals assess a webpage's real-world user experience, focusing on loading speed, interactivity, and visual stability. Google prioritizes websites that offer excellent user experiences, so these metrics can boost organic traffic and visibility. Therefore, optimizing a website's core vitals isn't just about enhancing digital presence but also about attracting and retaining customers in a competitive hospitality market.

Our team found 95% of hotels failed Google's Core Web Vitals test. This shortfall underscores a critical need for hotels to prioritize website performance optimization to enhance user experience and meet modern digital expectations.

Over 20% of the hotels failing the test are using leading DXP, Adobe. This correlation suggests that whilst brands are investing in best-in-class technology, there are challenges in configuration and implementation.

Multilingual

75% of internet users speak a language other than English. With the diverse, global audience hotels attract, marketers must prioritize multilingual options. The results speak for themselves, with 68% of consumers saying they would switch to a brand that offered support in their native language. Taking a multilingual approach can also help brands to broaden their organic reach by targeting non-English keywords in their SEO strategy.



Whilst the majority of hotels offer customers to change the language on their site, a staggering 25% don't, alienating an international audience. This is particularly surprising in the hotel industry, given key audiences are largely multinational. Hotels with translated landing pages can anticipate up to a 20% surge in conversions, suggesting a multilingual website is essential.

Mobile

In 2024, mobile commerce sales are set to dominate, representing a significant 70% of the total market. It's estimated that by 2025, approximately 72.6% of internet users will exclusively access the web through their smartphones. Hotels that neglect to prioritize this shift run the risk of falling behind competitors and disappointing potential guests. For hotels, designing and building websites that align with Google's mobile-friendly criteria will directly prevent them from losing audiences and market share to competitors.

“95% of the top hotel websites had accessibility issues”

We were very pleased to see that every hotel passed Google's mobile-friendliness test, a testament to the investment hotels are putting into their mobile infrastructure. With so many customers accessing websites via mobile devices, it's vital this is maintained.

Accessibility

Customers have immense buying power, with access to more options and information than ever before. The World Health Organization reports that 1.3 billion people have disabilities and this demographic also contributes around half a trillion dollars annually. Customers expect hotels to be accessible online. With the online spending power of disabled people estimated at over \$20 billion, an inaccessible website could result in significant missed revenue opportunities. Prioritizing website inclusivity opens hotels to a larger target market and boosts the hotel's overall brand reputation.

*Regal Hotels International failed to be tested by Google's tools

Website Effectiveness

(Continued)

Website Platform

The travel sector remains one of the most competitive sectors, with customers looking for the best prices and the best experiences. As online sales begin to rise annually, selecting the best website platform is only step one. Hotels need to make sure they are using the right features in the best way to maximize ROI.

Our team concluded that whilst many global hotel groups have invested in leading technology, common issues persist across the board. Adobe and Drupal appeared to be the favorites of hotel brands, with 30% of hotels selecting one of these as their platform of choice. Given both of these platforms are market leaders, this is understandable. However, leading platforms don't always mean leading performance, with all hotels using these advanced tools still failing Google's Core Web Vitals test. It's clear that there is an opportunity for brands to improve and maximize their return on investment.

Every year, the trusted industry research and consultancy, Gartner releases a report on the leading technologies in various sectors, showcasing the dominance of industry giants like Adobe, Sitecore, Optimizely, and Salesforce in the market.

For any hotel aiming to achieve digital maturity, having a robust platform is crucial. 95% of travel executives consider digital transformation to be either "very important" or "somewhat important" to their business's overall strategy and success. Considering that 48% of consumers abandon a company's website due to a poorly curated experience, optimizing digital investments should be a top priority for hotels.

In terms of digital maturity, the performance across hotels was average, with 90% of them scoring below 70%. While there are clear benefits for hotels investing in website platforms that align with their needs and ambitions, failure to implement them correctly or maximize their potential can diminish digital effectiveness.

To showcase how swiftly and effectively hotels can enhance their digital presence, we combined the top-performing features identified in our study and seamlessly integrated them to create a digitally effective website. Leveraging recognized leading technology, we exemplify the 'best practice' for hotel websites, incorporating features such as:

- **Enhanced SEO features**
- **Exceptional mobile features**
- **AI driven personalization**
- **Exceptionally for content marketing across all digital channels**
- **Inbuilt testing for campaign assets**
- **Bulletproof security**



Source: 2024 Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Digital Experience Platforms

Pos	Hotel Group	Score %
1	Marriott International	60
1	LuxUrban Hotels	60
3	Accor	50
4	Hilton Worldwide	40
4	Hyatt Hotels	40
4	Minor International	40
4	Meliá Hotels International	40
4	InterContinental Hotels Group	40
4	Choice Hotels International	40
4	Shangri-La	40
4	Wyndham Hotels & Resorts	40
4	NH Hotel Group	40
4	Playa Hotels & Resorts	40
4	Wynn Macau	40
4	Centara Plaza Hotel and Resorts	40
4	Mandarin Oriental	40
4	Regal Hotels International	40
18	Whitbread	30
19	MGM Resorts	20
20	GreenTree Hospitality	20

07 Search Marketing (Organic)

Search engines are crucial tools for attracting travelers, surpassing traditional booking methods like travel agents. With approximately 24 million global monthly searches for “hotels,” digital research is clearly a primary channel for travelers. Over 68% of online experiences begin with a search engine, and customers on the hunt for their next hotel stay typically start looking 12 weeks before their intended trip. This offers hotels the opportunity to leverage search engine optimization strategies to get in front of their audiences at every step of the buying journey.

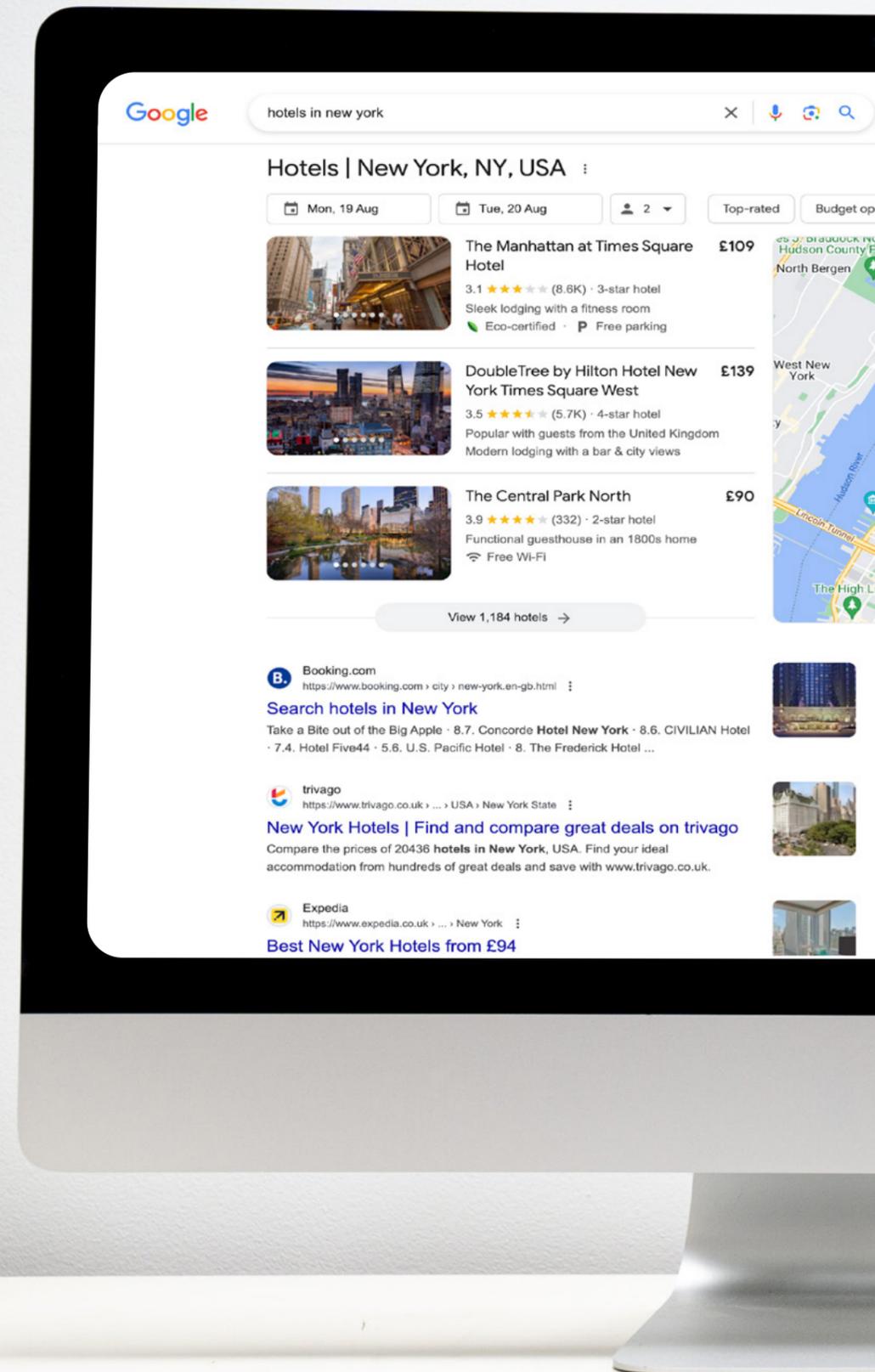
Leading hotel brands must prioritize SEO strategies to secure high-quality traffic and visibility in a digitally-driven world. The number 1 result in Google’s organic search results has an impressive 27.6% CTR, and those who rank in the top 3 places get over half of all clicks. Showing up any further down the page significantly decreases the likelihood of clicks, with only 0.63% of searchers making it to the second page. Major hotel brands need to prioritize SEO strategies to secure high-quality traffic and visibility online.

“Brands who rank in the top 3 places on Google organic search get over half of all clicks”

With SEO driving over 1000% more traffic than organic social media, hotel brands need to prioritize this fundamental channel. Our investigation revealed that 30% of hotels achieved a good score for Search Engine Optimization, with the top 4 most digitally mature hotels achieving full marks for organic search. The top 3 most digitally mature hotels, Hilton, Marriott and IHG, also had the highest number of keywords.

40% of hotels scored poorly, including the 5 least digitally mature brands. From a revenue perspective, LuxUrban, who were 20th by revenue, also had the fewest number of keywords worldwide. This correlation clearly suggests that a robust SEO strategy is vital to gain a competitive edge over other brands.

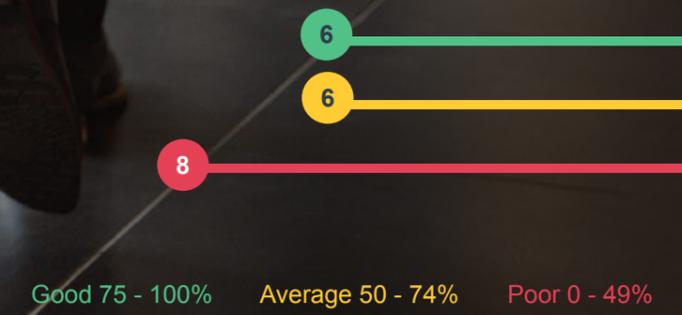
The results underscore a clear need for improvement, with 70% of hotels failing to fully leverage search engines to their maximum potential. There is plenty of opportunity for hotel brands to enhance their digital presence and capitalize on the growing number of customers who book hotels online.



Search Marketing (Organic)

(Continued)

Pos	Hotel Group	Score %
1	Hilton Worldwide	100
1	Marriott International	100
1	InterContinental Hotels Group	100
1	Hyatt Hotels	100
5	Accor	83.33
5	Choice Hotels International	83.33
7	Meliá Hotels International	66.67
7	Wyndham Hotels & Resorts	66.67
9	Shangri-La	50
9	NH Hotel Group	50
9	MGM Resorts	50
9	Mandarin Oriental	50
13	Centara Plaza Hotel and Resorts	16.67
13	Playa Hotels & Resorts	16.67
13	Whitbread	16.67
16	Regal Hotels International	0
16	Wynn Macau	0
16	Minor International	0
16	GreenTree Hospitality	0
16	LuxUrban Hotels	0



08 Search Marketing (Paid)

The travel industry accounts for 16.8% of the total online ad market. Whilst paid search is a competitive space, Google Ads still have an impressive conversion rate of around 7.04%. The travel industry has one of the highest CTRs at 10.03% which showcases a huge opportunity for hotels to promote their brand to a wider and more targeted audience.

According to Google, for every \$1 a business spends on an ad, \$8 is generated in profits, delivering an 8:1 ROI. 75% of internet users express that paid ads facilitate an easier way to find the information they need. These ads can be finely tuned using filters based on factors like location, industry, job title, and more. Importantly, paid search operates as a dynamic strategy, capable of delivering results swiftly.

Unlike other industries, travel keywords are affordable to target, coming in at around \$1.63 per click. This is significantly lower than the average CPC benchmark of \$4.22. Google ads offer a big opportunity for hotels that want to spend little and yield a high return.

Given these figures, we were surprised that over half of the hotels tested were under-utilizing the full potential of paid search with 25% of the hotels tested scoring 0. It was reassuring to see that 3 of the top 20 hotels scored full marks for this section. Notably, two of these top performers, Hilton and IHG also rank among the top three most digitally mature hotels.

The top 5 hotels with the highest number of keywords were all present in multiple territories, something that's important for brands operating in a global industry. Below-average PPC strategies can leave your brand keywords open to competitors, who will often bid on names of other hotels or related terms to redirect traffic to their own sites.



Good (75 - 100%)	Average (50%)	Poor (0 - 25%)
InterContinental Hotels Group	Choice Hotels International	Wynn Macau
Centara Plaza Hotel and Resorts	Wyndham Hotels & Resorts	Playa Hotels & Resorts
Hilton Worldwide	Shangri-La	GreenTree Hospitality
Minor International	Mandarin Oriental	Whitbread
NH Hotel Group	MGM Resorts	LuxUrban Hotels
Accor	Regal Hotels International	
Hyatt Hotels		
Marriott International		
Meliá Hotels International		

Content Marketing

Content marketing costs 62% less than traditional advertising and generates 3 times more leads, making it an essential part of any marketing strategy. Consumers tend to feel more connected to a brand that uses content strategy, with 68% of consumers feeling more positive about a brand after engaging with content. When it's done well, content can enhance visibility and build strong customer relationships.

For this report, we looked at how hotels used content to generate inbound traffic. Our evaluation looked at core objectives of content and how hotels used this to engage, captivate and convert website visitors. According to marketing standards, the core content formats are:

- **Video**
- **FAQ's**
- **Blogs/Destination Guides**
- **Images**

Results were mixed in this category, with less than half achieving a good score. Despite 5 hotels, Hilton, Choice Hotels, Shangri-La, Centara and Mandarin Oriental all setting a high standard achieving full marks, the majority of the industry are still falling behind. An FAQ section, for example, is an intelligent solution for hotels to quickly answer key questions, whilst also boosting SEO rankings. However, our testing revealed 55% of the leading hotel websites lacked this basic content.

Additionally, there is a prime opportunity for hotels to leverage blogs or destination guides on their site, as websites that prioritize blogging are thirteen times more likely to achieve a positive ROI. However, 18% of hotels didn't have a blog or destination guide. This is a serious oversight, considering the value of inspiring and engaging content when trying to persuade a customer to stay with you. It is no surprise that these hotels did not achieve a good score in this category. Hotels could use this strategy to craft tailored messaging and curate content that not only builds customer trust but also establishes their authority within the industry.

Video content has been steadily gaining popularity for quite some time. With 83% of people watching travel content, this medium offers a form of escapism and inspiration. Incorporating videos on a website can boost the time visitors spend on a page by 88% so we were disappointed to find only 60% of hotels had videos on their website. Given that 96% of individuals seek videos to gain insights into products or services, hotels should capitalize on this medium by offering travel guides for popular destinations and tours of their accommodations. Video content not only informs but also enhances potential visitors' confidence in your brand.



“Less than half of the world's leading hotel brands are successfully utilizing content marketing to its full potential”

Good (75 - 100%)

Hilton Worldwide
Choice Hotels International
Shangri-La
Centara Plaza Hotel and Resorts
Mandarin Oriental
Whitbread
Meliá Hotels International
Wynn Macau
NH Hotel Group

Average (50%)

InterContinental Hotels Group
Wyndham Hotels & Resorts
Minor International
Marriott International

Poor (0 - 25%)

Playa Hotels & Resorts
MGM Resorts
Accor
Hyatt Hotels
Regal Hotels International
GreenTree Hospitality
LuxUrban Hotels

10 Personalization

Consumers expect a personalized experience at every touchpoint, much like customer favorites Amazon, Netflix, Spotify, and YouTube that personalize every interaction. According to McKinsey, hotels that adopt personalization strategies can increase revenues and improve the efficiency of marketing expenditures by up to 30%.

Despite 78% of travelers being more likely to book with properties that offer personalized experiences and 61% of consumers willing to spend more with companies that offer a customized experience, our research revealed that 38% of hotels have yet to implement any form of personalization.

Moreover, only two hotels demonstrated any form of visual personalization. Consumers are increasingly seeking personalized experiences, with almost 90% influenced by eCommerce personalization and 67% claiming that high-resolution visuals drive more views and conversions.



Personalization can return \$20 for every \$1 invested

Unsurprisingly, there was a correlation between digital maturity and personalization with 7 out of the top 10 most digitally mature hotels demonstrating personalization. The impact of overlooking this essential strategy could mean missed opportunities for hotel brands to connect and engage customers. And with personalization yielding an impressive \$20 for every \$1 spent, this tactic should not be overlooked.

There was also a direct correlation between hotels who were under-utilizing personalization and hotels who achieved poor results for email marketing. 91.6% of the hotels without personalization achieved a low score for their email marketing, which is a channel that offers granular personalization for brands.

Even hotels using platforms lacking personalization features, such as WordPress, can swiftly implement AI-driven personalization, and plan to invest in a Digital Experience Platform (DXP) for the future. Unfortunately, despite using Adobe, a personalization leader in the Gartner Magic Quadrant, Hilton Hotels failed to take advantage of personalization at all. With access to the best tools, brands must utilize them to their full potential in order to get the best results.

Discover how hotels can swiftly and effortlessly integrate website personalization for various audience segments, enhancing user experience, boosting engagement, and achieving more goals.

BOOK A DEMO



Only 2 hotels demonstrated visual personalization at the top half of the homepage.

11 Customer Relationship Management

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems play a central role in delivering an authentic, personalized guest experience. These systems organize and interpret audience data, making it quick and easy to personalize interactions.

CRM tools empower hotels to customize service recommendations and communications based on guest behavior. However, while 85% of brands claim to offer personalized experiences, only 60% of consumers agree. Bridging this gap, CRM platforms offer a consolidated perspective of guest interactions across various touchpoints.

98% of website visitors return to a site multiple times before booking. Hotels that embed CRM strategy into their digital marketing benefit from delivering seamless personalized experiences across each touchpoint for their guests. By leveraging customer data effectively, hotels can keep guests engaged based on their browsing activity and generate sophisticated personalized experiences from the first interaction to nurture campaigns via channels such as email marketing.

Whilst brands understand the value of a CRM, 73% of employees don't believe their CRM offers a comprehensive, unified view of customer information, and 68% of executives agree.

Leveraging CRM to create unified guest profiles detailing preferences and spending habits enables hotels to target marketing effectively, boost bookings by up to 29%, and enhance the overall performance of their websites.

Following a carefully crafted criteria, we were able to determine how well each hotel is using CRM systems and how much they are utilizing the technology available.

In our testing, we were pleased to find that 50% of the hotels we assessed received full marks, with 40% of these organizations also being in the top 5 for digital maturity. This is a good achievement and shows the true power of data to customize interactions with potential and existing customers.

However, we still found 25% of hotels scoring poorly, 3 of which achieved no marks at all. Without gaining access to customer data, segmentation and personalization becomes impossible. The absence of an effective CRM strategy may be a significant factor behind 60% of tested hotels also scoring poorly in personalization.

Successfully optimizing content for organic search also requires deep knowledge on the customer base being targeted. Data-driven insights help hotels to predict which terms would be relevant to which segments based on previously recorded behavior. 80% of hotels with a poor CRM score did not score well for organic search either, highlighting the importance of integrating data systems.

With customer satisfaction and engagement being at the heart of a robust hotel marketing strategy, it is disappointing to see that some of the world's leading hotels are still not taking advantage of the technology available to create meaningful interactions.



Book A CRM Trouble Shooter Session

A unique session where one of our CRM experts will identify 3 big problems with your CRM activities and work with you to fix them

Speak To An Expert

Paul Stephen



paul@remarkable.global

”

“64% of companies perceive CRM technology as either impactful or highly impactful”



12 Remarketing

Remarketing, leveraged to instill brand familiarity, yields a remarkable click-through-rate (CTR) ten times greater than conventional display ads. With an efficiency rate of 1,046%, remarketing emerges as the supreme ad strategy. On average, it takes eight touchpoints for a new customer to engage with your brand before converting. This emphasizes the power of remarketing as a budget-friendly method for re-engaging users with your website.

The results in the remarketing category were generally positive, with 60% of the leading hotel brands achieving good scores. However, 2 leading hotel brands, Hyatt Hotels, and LuxUrban Hotels, scored 0 in this category.

Remarketing as a channel cannot be understated, as 48% of all ecommerce transactions stem from returning visitors. With 97% of first-time visitors exiting without a purchase, remarketing can capture and engage those potential customers, leading to a surge in revenue of up to 33%.

Hotels can strategically utilize remarketing ads across various platforms like Google, LinkedIn, and Facebook to effectively reconnect with past website visitors and increase sales. Additionally, 30% of individuals respond positively to retargeted ads.

This tactic gives hotels the opportunity to:

- **Employ tailored audience lists for precise ad targeting**
- **Enhance brand recall and maintain top-of-mind awareness**
- **Drive conversions and increase revenue**
- **Obtain valuable insights into audience preferences and behavior**



Good (66 - 100%)

Hilton Worldwide
Marriott International
Shangri-La
InterContinental Hotels Group
Meliá Hotels International
Choice Hotels International

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts
Centara Plaza Hotel and Resorts
MGM Resorts
Mandarin Oriental
Regal Hotels International
Playa Hotels & Resorts

Average (31 - 65%)

NH Hotel Group
Accor
Wynn Macau
Minor International
GreenTree Hospitality
Whitbread

Poor (0 - 30%)

Hyatt Hotels
LuxUrban Hotels

*Some websites' tags were not available at the time of testing

13 Email Marketing

Email marketing stands as one of the most effective digital marketing channels, with a projected 4.48 billion email users worldwide by the end of 2024. Research from January 2024 highlighted the travel industry's impressive average email open rate of 36.2%. Hotels can use personalized emails to deliver targeted promotions, exclusive offers, and relevant travel updates to drive repeat bookings. Personalized emails perform better still, with an 82% higher open rate and a 41% higher click-through rate compared with generic messaging. Hotels can provide booking reminders, upgrade opportunities, and destination recommendations to the right guest at the right time, enhancing the overall travel experience.

Hotels rely on timely communication and personalized engagement to keep guests satisfied. 58% of users make email their first daily check and the average ROI of email is 3600%. It's the cornerstone strategy for hotels seeking cost-effective and impactful marketing avenues.

Almost a third of all marketers (29%) rank email as the most effective marketing channel, and 31% prioritize email newsletters for nurturing customer relationships. Newsletters serve as a crucial tool for giving room updates, promotions, and travel tips to connect with passengers.

Email marketing can engage audiences through:

- Audience segmentation
- Personalization of email content
- Automation of email delivery

We registered for email alerts from leading hotels to analyze their frequency and assess personalization and audience segmentation.

Unfortunately, just 1 hotel group, Regal Hotels, managed to achieve a good score for email marketing with no hotel receiving full marks. With 75% of hotels receiving a poor score in this category, it's clear that the industry needs to work harder to improve their email marketing efforts.

While email remains an excellent means to engage with both new and existing customers, it's disappointing that only 40% of hotels had the option to sign up for an offer or newsletter subscription. Among the hotels that did offer newsletters, only 37.5% sent a confirmation of the subscription, and just 25% sent a weekly newsletter. 50% did absolutely nothing with the information we gave them, missing out on the immediate opportunity to engage with a new potential customer.

There is a key relationship between poor website effectiveness and a lack of email marketing, with 66.67% of poor performers in website effectiveness also scoring poorly for email marketing.

Most of the top hotels in the industry have yet to tap into the potential of email marketing. For sharp marketers, this presents an opportunity to connect with their customer base, gather additional behavioral data, and establish a competitive edge in the hospitality market.



Good (80 - 100%)		Average (50 - 70%)	Poor (>50%)
Hilton Worldwide	Wyndham Hotels & Resorts	NH Hotel Group	Hyatt Hotels
Marriott International	Centara Plaza Hotel and Resorts	Accor	LuxUrban Hotels
Shangri-La	MGM Resorts	Wynn Macau	
InterContinental Hotels Group	Mandarin Oriental	Minor International	
Meliá Hotels International	Regal Hotels International	GreenTree Hospitality	
Choice Hotels International	Playa Hotels & Resorts	Whitbread	

14 Social Media

With 4.80 billion people around the world now using social media, brands cannot afford to underutilize this channel. It is especially important for brands in the travel sector, with 75% of people using social platforms as a source of inspiration for travel. This makes social media the perfect place to promote engaging content to inspire travelers to embark on their next adventure. We examined how top hotels utilize these platforms and identified missed opportunities.

With 77% of internet users heading to social channels to learn more about a brand, hotels that underutilize social media are missing out on crucial interactions. 84% of millennials and 73% of non-millennials are “likely” or “very likely” to plan a trip based on someone else’s vacation photos or social media updates. Neglecting the full power of social media could result in poor customer engagement and retention for hotels.

Increasingly, customers are turning to social as a search engine. With as many as 74% of Gen Z using TikTok search as their preferred search channel, hotels need to seriously consider how the new era of social media fits into their strategy, to ensure they’re reaching all target travelers.

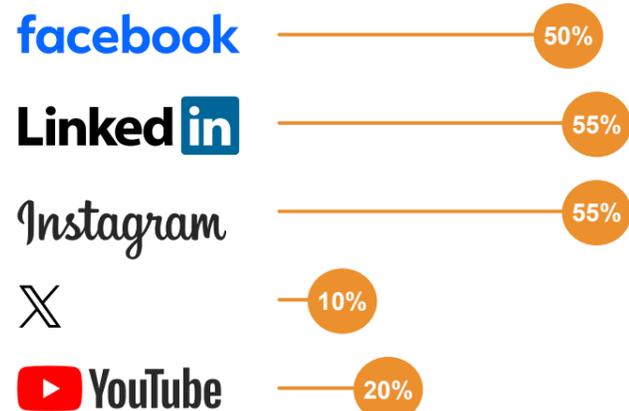
Our research found that whilst most hotels had a social media presence, many of them were not using these accounts effectively. The most underutilized channel was X (formally Twitter), with only 10% using this channel effectively. Additionally, whilst all brands had a LinkedIn account, only 55% of the hotel groups were regularly posting. Overlooking social media channels can leave room for competitors to be engaging regularly with your customers.

With 2 billion unique users every month, YouTube is the second most visited search engine. Despite the widespread demand for video content, 80% of the top global hotel groups are currently not leveraging YouTube to its full potential. Hotels need to uphold an active social media presence to avoid being disregarded and forfeiting the SEO benefits of video content.

Social media is not only for inbound marketing. 17% of brands use this channel to provide customer support, and top performing hotels use it for travel inspiration. As its user base continues to grow, social media is an integral part of every hotel’s marketing strategy.

“Only 20% of hotels scored well in their utilization of social media”

Hotel Group Social Media Usage Per Channel



Pos	Hotel Group	Score %
1	Hyatt Hotels	100.00
1	Hilton Worldwide	100.00
3	Marriott International	80.00
3	InterContinental Hotels Group	80.00
5	NH Hotel Group	73.33
5	Mandarin Oriental	73.33
7	MGM Resorts	66.67
7	Meliá Hotels International	66.67
7	Shangri-La	66.67
10	Choice Hotels International	60.00
10	Accor	60.00
12	Wyndham Hotels & Resorts	53.33
12	Whitbread	53.33
12	Playa Hotels & Resorts	53.33
12	Wynn Macau	53.33
12	Regal Hotels International	53.33
17	Minor International	40.00
18	GreenTree Hospitality	33.33
18	Centara Plaza Hotel and Resorts	33.33
20	LuxUrban Hotels	6.67



15 Mobile Apps

In the travel sector, app conversion rates are five times higher than mobile website bookings. Mobile apps are essential for hotels to engage with their audience, wherever they are. A staggering 73% of people expressed their willingness to download a hotel app, with nearly two-thirds preferring to check in and out through such an app. This makes app development a priority for ambitious hotels.

We were pleased to see that 70% of hotels had apps on both Google Play and the Apple Store, achieving a good score overall, which included all 5 of the top digitally mature hotels.

However, we found that 1 brand, GreenTree Hospitality, appeared in only one of the two stores, excluding a huge amount of potential customers. It was shocking to see 5 hotels had no presence on either mobile app store. It's no surprise that 2 of the least digitally mature brands, Whitbread and LuxUrban had no mobile app presence at all. Since 90% of mobile time is spent in apps, offering guests a dedicated app should be a key component of a hotel's digital strategy. This not only serves as an additional marketing channel for the brand but also enhances the guest experience, increasing the likelihood of return visits.

14 App Store + Google Play

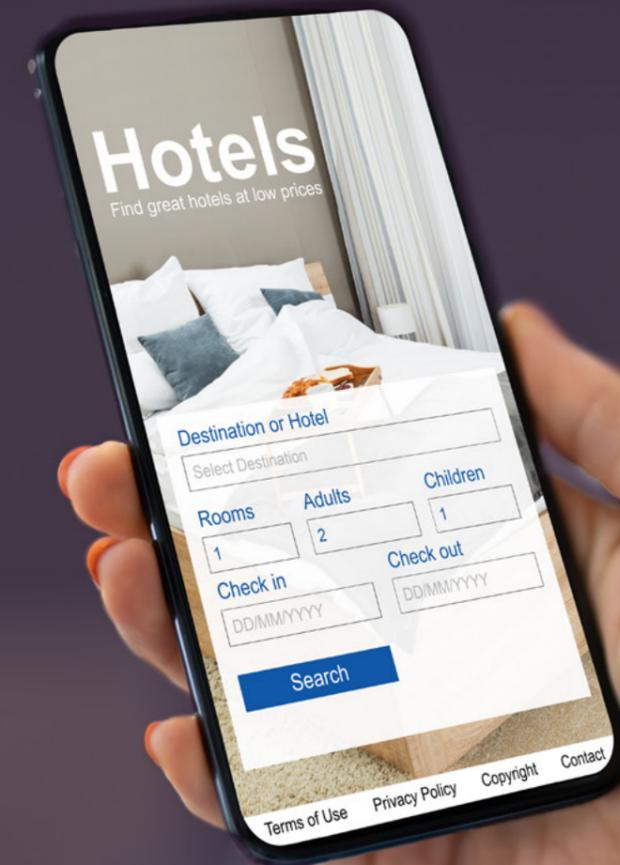
1 App Store

5 No App



“Two-thirds of people prefer to check in and out through a hotel app.”

Pos	Hotel Group	Score %
1	Hilton Worldwide	100
1	Marriott International	100
1	InterContinental Hotels Group	100
1	Hyatt Hotels	100
1	Meliá Hotels International	100
1	Shangri-La	100
1	NH Hotel Group	100
1	Accor	100
1	Choice Hotels International	100
1	Wyndham Hotels & Resorts	100
1	Centara Plaza Hotel and Resorts	100
1	MGM Resorts	100
1	Regal Hotels International	100
1	Wynn Macau	100
15	GreenTree Hospitality	50
16	Mandarin Oriental	0
16	Playa Hotels & Resorts	0
16	Minor International	0
16	Whitbread	0
16	LuxUrban Hotels	0



The Next Steps in Digital Maturity

Our research confirmed that while hotels are making technological advancements, they still significantly lag behind other sectors in terms of digital maturity, including other areas within the travel industry. Although some hotels have initiated digital transformation, further improvements are needed for them to meet the expectations of their tech-savvy customers.

Delaying digital innovation poses significant risks. Companies that persist in disregarding the pivotal role of digital technologies for their customers and internal operations are essentially handing their competitors a substantial edge. With many brands already taking advantage of AI improvements, hotels find themselves at the beginnings of another exciting digital revolution and have great opportunities to be smart about how they use customer data for enhanced experiences that drive revenue.

Digital transformation revolves around providing enhanced experiences for customers. The elements discussed in this report foster customer confidence and loyalty. They serve as the backbone for generating revenue and seizing recruitment opportunities within organizations.

These strategies enable marketers to swiftly adapt their approaches, effectively communicate with their audience, and deliver exceptional experiences on a large scale. Crafting intricate, personalized, end-to-end customer journeys can quickly become overwhelming without the necessary expertise, support, or tools to achieve your objectives.

The digital revolution shows no signs of slowing down. Hotels must urgently accelerate their efforts to evolve in sync with the broader industry and the wider business landscape.

About the author

Remarkable is a global digital leader with over 25 years of experience unlocking digital potential for ambitious global organizations such as hotels.

Our team specializes in guiding organizations worldwide towards achieving their digital goals, leveraging our expertise in strategy, website development, user experience, and digital marketing. Backed by our accreditations, we offer comprehensive premium services and knowledge to empower our clients in propelling their organizations forward with confidence.



Chief Growth Officer, Paul Stephen

Paul is one of the UK's leading digital experts, with over a quarter of a century of experience helping enhance the digital performance of major global brands. With a wealth of experience in the travel sector, Paul has produced numerous reports on best practices to support digitally ambitious brands.

To discuss the research in this report, learn more about the performance of a particular supplier or unlock more insights from the research, please contact Paul:

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/paulstephen4/>
Email: paul@remarkable.global
www.remarkable.global