

HOTEL BOOKINGS CONFIRM THE GLOBAL TRAVEL RECOVERY TRENDS



Since the outbreak of the pandemic, hoteliers have had to rethink many aspects of their business in order to implement new safety measures, adapt to the changing needs of tourists and survive in an extremely complex operating environment.

In this context, a recent study by Amadeus describes how the hospitality industry has adapted worldwide and what trends hoteliers believe will likely persist as the industry rebuilds.

Hotel Bookings on a Rise

Data are showing that hotel reservations are currently on an upward trend, as global occupancy reached 46 % in April 2021. This is a significant increase compared to a low of just 13 % in the same month in 2020.

This means that global hotel occupancy has increased by two-thirds of the way back to pre-pandemic levels of around 70 % for this time of the year.

Moreover, booking lead times are increasing, indicating increased consumer confidence to plan ahead. In the past, almost all bookings worldwide were made within zero to seven days prior to travel.

Over the past few weeks, same-day trip bookings, which are the most problematic for the industry, have declined globally from 39 % in the first week of 2021 to 23 % in the week of April 25, 2021. Hotel bookings between 31 and 60 days increased from 6 % in the first week of the year to 11 % in the week of April 25 this year.

A Spirit of Optimism

Among hoteliers, there is a general spirit of optimism, as 30 % of them expect one or more locations to open in 2021. 63 % of them believe that holidaymakers will drive the upswing, with domestic travel making the largest contribution by far (45 %).

In line with this, data shows that the U.S., China and the rest of Asia are starting to see increases in booking volumes from online travel agents, moving the focus away from reliance on direct bookings during the pandemic.

Moreover, more than half (59 %) of hoteliers worldwide assume that they will have to hire new employees this year.

More than half of Asian hoteliers say they are considering requiring a vaccination certificate to stay, while just under half of the hoteliers in North and South America say they definitely will not. In Europe, the Middle East and Africa, almost half of the hoteliers are unsure of their strategy in this area.

Which Trends Will Persist?

While hotel bookings are currently on a rise, it is necessary to ask which aspects of the 'pandemic tourism industry' will persist in the long term?

More than a third of hoteliers are of the opinion that the increased hygiene measures will remain in place. **In addition, 30 % said contactless technology to support personalized guest experiences is one of the developments they look forward to most once the pandemic is over.**

Business ideas such as offering "work stays" and investing in space to help travelers extend their stay have helped hoteliers test new strategies to tap into new guest segments. Hoteliers report that these will remain part of the portfolio in the long term.

All in all, it must be said that one of the key findings, if not the most important one, from the study, is that technology will play a central role in the recovery of the tourism industry. This will represent a big challenge for many stakeholders in the industry and it will be interesting to see what the sector of the future will bring.

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