

AVOIDING EXTRA HOTEL PAYMENTS



For many people the modern world of business seem full of sharks eager to prize the final dollar out of one's pocket. The EU recently announced plans, for example, to clamp down on airline websites conning people into paying for things they do not need. Similar unfair tactics have been recently reported in the hotel industry as well. The argument of the hotels and the airlines is that the customer always has a choice to avoid paying for things they do not need. However, is stuffing a mini bar full of Snickers at \$5 a piece and charging for 'complimentary' newspapers a choice which people expect to have to deal with?

As a result of this deception, customers are leaving hotels with massive bills which they never expected. The first problem, for instance in New York, is taxes. New York hotels charge 5% hotel tax and up to 8.75% sales tax. Customers must keep an eye out so that the hotels do not start charging more.

Another piece of advice is to not expect anything for free. The newspapers which dangle on your door are not always for free, nor are the snacks and drinks in the mini bar. One may expect to pay for food and drink in the room, yet the prices are sometimes ludicrous. Telephone calls have the same habit of tempting people to believe they are for free. Internet is also in this bracket; do not be surprised to get charged up to \$10 per day.

Perhaps it is now clear why some economists claim that, out of the \$23 billion which the US hotels made last year, \$1 billion of that money was made on the basis of deception.

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