

User Traveler & Rewards Observations

Insights completed by Hilton User Experience Team (HUX)

Lesly Limon 2/27/21

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Executive Summary

The following points best summarize our key findings during our user research.

Users will only join a loyalty program if the payoff is noticeably greater than if they weren't enrolled.

Users overall felt that there needs to be solid evidence of significant savings in order to enroll in a loyalty program. Users weren't enticed by the idea of a small percentage of savings and potential spam emails.

Users feel that there aren't enough incentives to join a loyalty program, especially when competitors like Priceline offer lower rates.

There needs to be significant perks aside from cost savings in order for a loyalty program to be successful. Users felt that not enough perks were offered through these programs, and would potentially book through a competitor site just to save money if savings was the only incentive.

When booking a hotel for business, travelers value location above everything else.

Business travelers want to be close to where they need to be when traveling for business.

When booking a hotel for leisure, travelers want to “feel” like they're on vacation.

When on vacation, travelers want more of a luxurious experience and quality amenities.

Business Goals/Stakeholder Questions

During our research we aimed to find details about the questions below and corresponding goals that align with them.

Why (and why don't) people sign up for the loyalty program?

By conducting research around this, we will be able to figure out how to overall increase customer loyalty program enrollment.

What do business travelers look for, want, and need when evaluating properties and choosing a room to book, and why?

Research around this question will provide answers by highlighting the key services business travelers look for. Once we are aware of these key services, this could potentially increase business traveler reservations.

What do leisure travelers look for, want, and need when evaluating properties and choosing a room to book, and why?

Research around this question will provide takeaway as to the key services leisure travelers look for. Once we are aware of these key services, this could potentially increase leisure traveler reservations.

Participants

This study included the observations of 8 individuals. Observations were conducted in person and remotely by each member of our research team.

Name	Randy	Peter	Danielle	Marvin	Trey	Erica	Aaron	Eric
Gender	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female	Male	Male
Relationship Status	Married	Single	Single	Singe	Single	Married	Single	Single
Job Title	Construction management	Software Engineer	Digital Strategy Lead	Nonprofit Management	Entertainment Industry	Healthcare Industry	Business Auditor	Audio Engineer
Business Travel Experience	Frequent business traveler	No business Travel Experience	No business Travel Experience	Moderate business travel experience	Frequent business traveler	Moderate business travel experience	Frequent business traveler	No business Travel Experience

Research Methods Used

User Interviews

Each team member interviewed two participants for this study. The interview questions were primarily focused on customer loyalty enrollment, as well as the needs and wants of travelers when booking hotels for business and leisure. Each team member followed an observation guide and script for consistency.

Video and Notes

Notes and video recordings were taken during each of our interviews. These were then used to complete joint data collection results and data analysis.

*Link to the research observation guide and script are located in the Appendix

Joint Data Collection Results

As a team we input all data from our interviews into a single document. Within this document we were able to see similarities between answers of participants. It also includes notes as well as links to the individually recorded sessions. This evidence was key to the next step in our process, where we analyzed data of all participants.

Data Analysis

After looking at the joint data collection as a team, we were able to analyze and discover some key findings within our interview results. These results are as follows....

*Link to the joint data results are located in the Appendix

*Link to the data analysis diagram results are located in the Appendix

Key Findings For Loyalty Programs

Benefits Need to Be Substantial

Participants showed an interest in signing up for a loyalty program only if the benefit was noticeably positive. For example, small discounts of 10% wouldn't entice the participants to sign up, they would need to see a substantial discount, freebies or benefits that aren't available otherwise.

Booking Sites Offer More Discounts

Booking sites like Priceline, Expedia, etc., offer substantial discounts compared to booking on chain websites. A number of users preferred booking with these websites versus directly with the hotel itself because of price alone. Some participants were even signed up with their loyalty programs.

Email Spam and Automation are Concerns for Users

Some participants expressed concern with possible email spam and the idea of systems being hard to access or hard to reach customer service. This turned off some participants from enrolling in loyalty programs.

Key Findings For Business Travelers

Location Is Key

Location is key when booking a hotel for business. The business traveler wants to be close to where they will be working or attending a conference. Other amenities are nice to have, but proximity to attractions, restaurants and their work location was something every single participant mentioned.

Wifi Wanted

Free high speed internet access is something important to the business traveler. Since they are traveling on business, they are usually conducting business in the hotel room as well. Wifi helps the business traveler stay connected during their stay.

Pricing and Amenities

While participants expressed that some amenities were nice to have like a gym, free parking or laundry service, they also expressed that pricing when booking a hotel should be fairly low. Since this traveler is just staying for work purposes, the price needs to be reasonable and not too high. At the end of the day travelers want to feel safe, comfortable and have clean surroundings.

Key Findings For Leisure Travelers

Location Is Key

Much like the business traveler, the leisure traveler also values location. While traveling for leisure the participants expressed that they want to feel as if their location is central to all of the city hot spots.

Feeling Like Royalty

Participants expressed that while they are traveling on a vacation they “want to feel like” they are on vacation. Many participants expressed having excellent customer service, a welcoming atmosphere, complimentary beverages and having a great view of the city. Amenities like a nice pool, restaurant or bar located in the hotel or nearby, and high tech amenities like Alexa were all stated as a nice to have but not necessary. Leisure travelers want to feel comfortable, relaxed and taken care of on their stay.

Pricing Matters...Sort Of

Participants showed interest in spending a bit more money while traveling for leisure versus traveling for business. While they still expressed that price should be reasonable and not too expensive, it was also mentioned that they would be willing to pay a bit more if the location was great and if it had luxury amenities and a hip or welcoming atmosphere.

What Keeps Travelers Away?

Lack of Cleanliness

All participants expressed that if a hotel looks dirty or isn't regularly updated that they would not want to stay there. Cleanliness is something that is high priority, especially given the state of the world at the moment. The rooms don't necessarily have to look new, just as long as it looks clean and inviting.

Feeling Safe

Safety plays a huge factor when traveling. Even if the room is priced right, if the location is in an unsafe area or if it has low reviews online (below 3 stars), participants said they would be less likely to book a room there.

Not Enough Room Options

Room options are important when booking a hotel. If a hotel doesn't have enough variety in their rooms it may not fit the needs of the individual booking the room and they would therefore go look for a room somewhere else.

Loyalty Program Recommendations

Offer Significant Discounts and Perks for Loyalty Members

Each team member interviewed two participants for this study. The interview questions were primarily focused on customer loyalty enrollment, as well as the needs and wants of travelers when booking hotels for business and leisure. Each team member followed an observation guide and script for consistency.

Compete with Booking Sites

Make sure to offer discounts that compete with booking sites that are exclusive to loyalty program members. If the price is lower on a booking site and there aren't any additional incentives to keep your loyalty customer, they will potentially book through booking sites instead.

Rethink Email Marketing

Ensure that emails sent to loyalty program members always include some insightful information, perks, or discounts. Participants expressed that they would unsubscribe from emails and possibly even get rid of their loyalty program membership if emails were excessive after signing up.

Recommendations to Accommodate the Traveler

Accommodate the Need for a Central Location

Understandably all locations aren't located central to where travelers need to be. If this is the case, perhaps offer free shuttle services to take travelers where they need to be as well as high traffic areas located within the city.

Wifi is a Must

Wifi is an absolute must have for the business traveler. If the hotel doesn't already have free wifi for travelers, consider offering free wifi for business travelers as an incentive to get them to book.

Pricing Should Be Competitive

Ensure that pricing for the hotel room is a similar range with competitors in the area. Business travelers take into account a lower cost when booking rooms versus leisure travelers.

Additional Amenities

Wifi, price and location are most valuable to the business traveler. Any other additional Amenities are nice to have and may separate your hotel from the competition but aren't a deal breaker for the business traveler. Take into account the leisure traveler and any luxury amenities that they look for such as bar, restaurants, nice pool, and high tech features in rooms.

Recommendations to Accommodate the Traveler

Have a Variety of Room Choices

Having multiple choices for travelers to choose from when it comes to booking rooms gives the traveler choices when booking.

Luxury Add-On Options

Luxury add-on options are nice to have during the booking process. Especially for leisure travelers who are looking for a more relaxing stay. Offering complimentary drinks or a welcome package may be enticing to some.

Make Cleanliness a Priority

Travelers, especially right now, want to ensure that where they are staying is clean, safe and comfortable. Providing some sort of standard to ensure that clean process are being kept in place during these unprecedented times.

Ensure Photos are Accessible During the Booking Process

Ensure that photos look up to date online for hotel rooms. Participants expressed that if they couldn't see a room, or if the room had a bad quality photo, they were hesitant about booking it.

Appendix

Links

Research Observation Guide & Script

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/17pkQA7QE8mgEz3lwyOpUGhnep4qCxHgG9IDbwj6VssY/edit?usp=sharing>

Joint Data Results

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1gpTbK0wbppI_Z2MUEZ-xiEnW2I3hOf8YO6gl2ZGxm6c/edit?usp=sharing

Data Analysis Diagram

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/19378TJayHskOYfwMWQPBUbJbaMD3ROUsotVKSxT_KD8/edit?usp=sharing