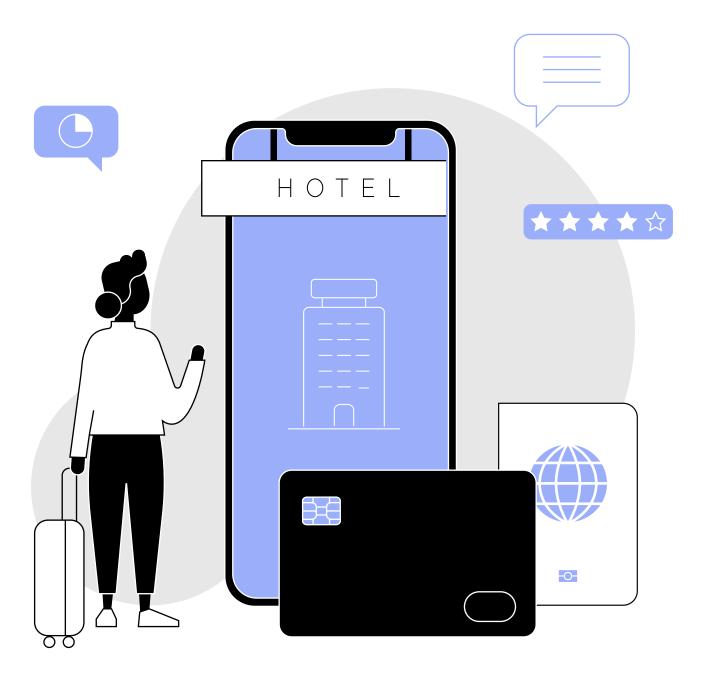


REPORT

Global Guest Sentiment Report

Amaze your guests in a connected world



Foreword



By Lennert De Jong, President of Hospitality at Planet

It's tough being a hotelier. Increasingly demanding guests want everything to be faster, easier, and more personalised. In fact, for many guests, enjoying an exceptional experience is no longer a luxury – it's become their norm.

It means hotels are having to fight harder than ever to win and retain the loyalty of their guests as travel returns to normal levels, leaving hoteliers to discover new ways to delight their guests, so they post glowing reviews and keep coming back to spend more.

With this in mind, what do today's hotel quests want?

We wanted to equip hoteliers with the latest data and insights so we can help them deliver amazing experiences that drive loyalty and grow revenue.

That's why we interviewed 6,500 people across the world to ask them questions about their preferences across key aspects of their stay. The findings from our research provide hoteliers with a holistic, up-to-date view, exploring differences across the age groups, demographics, and regions.

When it comes to technology, it can also be a challenge for hoteliers to know where to start. Fundamentally, I believe that the role of technology is to empower hotels and their staff to deliver a seamless, connected experience from booking right through to checkout.

But that's not always easy to do. Fragmented systems and processes can disrupt the guest journey and take up staff time.

We're making it easier for hoteliers to manage and improve the guest experience thanks to our single hospitality platform. We're making payments easier, so they become almost invisible. By embedding payments into PMS, we're helping hotels to save time, reduce errors and free up staff to add more of a human touch. And with our interactive Wi-Fi and TV services, we can deliver guests a home away from home experience. All of which empower hoteliers to deliver a better guest experience.

I hope you find the report helpful, and if you're keen to see what we can do to help you unleash the power of hospitality, then why not check out our website.

Contents

Executive summary	4
The Hospitality landscape	5
Booking	6
Preferred payment methods	8
Check-in	10
During stay	12
Check-out	12
Returning guests	13
Removing the pain with integrated payment	14
The currency opportunity	15
Payment security matters	17
Keep guests connected at all times	19
The ideal guest experience	21
Guest of the future	22
Generation Z	23
Millennials	24
How Planet can help you	25
About Planet	27
Methodology	28

Executive summary

Today's hotel guests want an exceptional end-to-end experience from booking to check-out.

From the moment they arrive, at all points of their visit and right up to the point when they leave, they have their own expectations that they want the hotel to meet. Everything needs to be just right for them to want to book a return stay.

It can be a challenge for hoteliers to know where to start, especially when looking at how to use technology to enhance the hotel journey for their guests. The systems used might be old, slow, lacking features or in need of an upgrade. There might be multiple, fragmented systems and processes which are taking up staff time. All of which can get in the way of delivering an amazing guest experience.

The natural place to start is to look at what guests today really want. Ensuring guest experience is always at the heart of decision making is paramount to a successful hospitality business.

With travel returning to normal levels, hoteliers are seeing an international mix of guests so to help discover exactly what they want from their hotel stay, we surveyed 6,500 consumers, aged 18+ from 19 countries around the world. The survey took place in May 2023 asking a mix of questions about hotel experiences in different channels and preferences for payment methods and technology used in hotels including TV and Wi-Fi services.

The findings of our survey get under the skin of the modern hotel guest, providing useful consumer trends for hoteliers to make decisions about where to invest to improve the guest experience. Here are some of the key ones:



Simple direct booking – Data on the preferred methods and channels used for hotel reservations, with smartphone-based booking clearly on top, but with a need for payment on the hotel's website.



Convenience is key – A range of flexible payment methods are needed from booking through to check-out, with credit/debit card transactions preferred and digital wallets also popular.



Currency choice – Guests indicated a strong preference to pay in their home currency – not least so they can keep track of what they spend – right across the guest journey, but especially at the booking stage.



Flexible check-in – Our results showed guests were split down the middle on in-person vs. self check-in. Still with an ongoing desire to be checked in by hotel staff, but with the choice for self-check-in options also required, knowing your guest types in key here.



Slick technology – Guests want to use convenient payment technology throughout their stay, from QR codes to apps. And they want to be connected via reliable and secure Wi-Fi at all times.



Speedy check-out – A hassle-free check-out service that avoids queues and where they can pay easily and quickly is a big factor in building loyalty and ensuring guests return.

Of course, tastes and requirements differ depending on where guests arrive from. This report delves into those regional variations, as well as taking a closer look at a booming audience hoteliers must identify as 'the guest of the future'. Millennials and Gen Z.

Ultimately, there's a need to better use technology to join up the different phases of the guest journey, with integrated systems and slick payment interfaces - all vital elements of an exceptional experience.

THE HOSPITALITY LANDSCAPE

Guests demand an exceptional experience



Customers want to use an easy booking system and enjoy a warm and hassle-free welcome when they arrive at reception.

During their stay they expect the same slick experience to continue, from fast and reliable Wi-Fi connection throughout the hotel to the ability to make payments for extra charges in a seamless and secure way.

And express check-out should be a given, with the opportunity to avoid queueing, settle final bills simply and be on their way.

Let's take a closer look at each stage of the stay.

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Booking

Globally, 59% of consumers prefer to use a mobile device to browse online for hotel reservation ideas, while 37% do so on their laptop or PC.

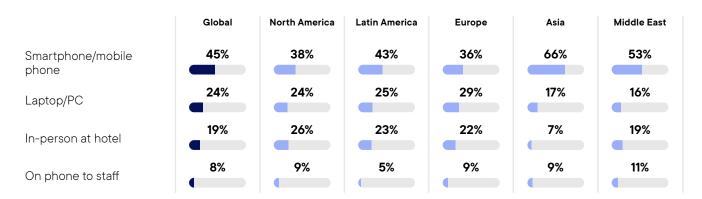
The vast majority (98%) of consumers make hotel reservations online. This increases to 100% of consumers in Finland, although one in 20 (5%) in Austria say they never book a hotel stay online.

It's also interesting to note that while paying via a digital device to make a reservation works for the majority – 45% using a mobile device, 24% paying via a laptop or PC – 19% of consumers globally still prefer to make payment in person at the hotel, and a further 8% like to speak to hotel staff to pay. There is some variation by age, and also by region.

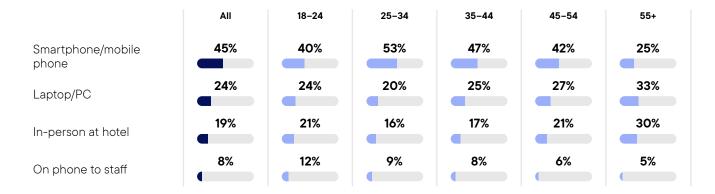
98%
Of consumers make hotel reservations online.

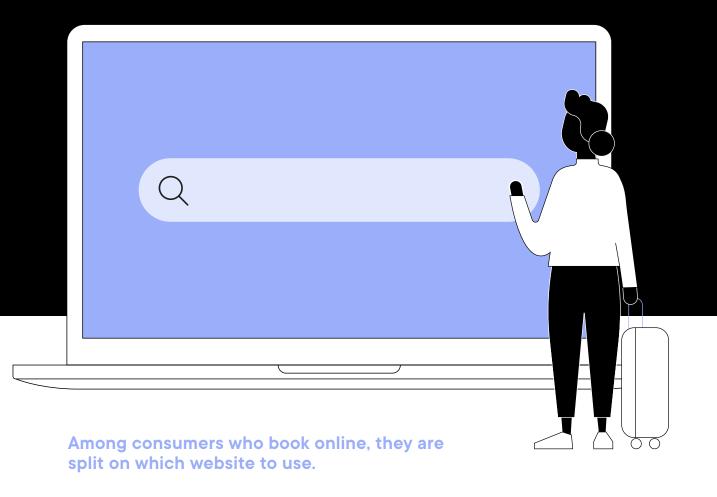
When completing your hotel reservation what is your preferred way to pay?

Regional %



Age %



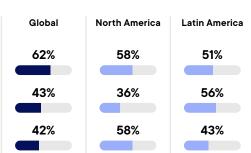


When you book a hotel reservation online what, if anything, is your preferred site? (Tick up to two)

Online travel agent e.g. Booking.com, Expedia

Comparison/review e.g. Tripadvisor, Trivago

Hotel website direct



The hotel experience begins at A further booking – and many are missing out on guests because they aren't offering the features consumers demand.

Of those who shun booking direct, 30% say they find hotel websites don't offer this option. This highlights the need for hotel websites to include a booking engine with a payment facility – or they might miss out among the 42% of customers who prefer to book direct.

A further 29% are keen to avoid paying upfront for their stay. It's therefore essential to offer a full range of payment options during the booking phase: customers value – and expect – choice.

Asia

68%

50%

42%

Middle East

68%

46%

36%

Europe

64%

36%

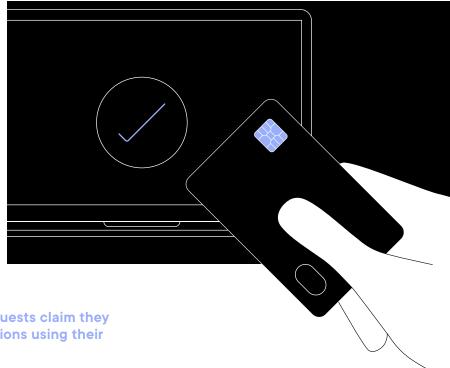
41%

Preferred payment methods

Crucially, 29% of consumers globally state their preferred payment method is not available when paying for reservations online.

This is a prominent problem for consumers in Asia, nearly half (44%) of whom claim they can't pay for reservations using their usual method. It is less of an issue in Europe, although more than a fifth (22%) of consumers based say they have similar trouble.

It's therefore vital that hotels offer convenient and complete ways to pay if they are to avoid missing out on reservations. As the table below reveals, consumers from different regions expect a wide range of methods to be offered.

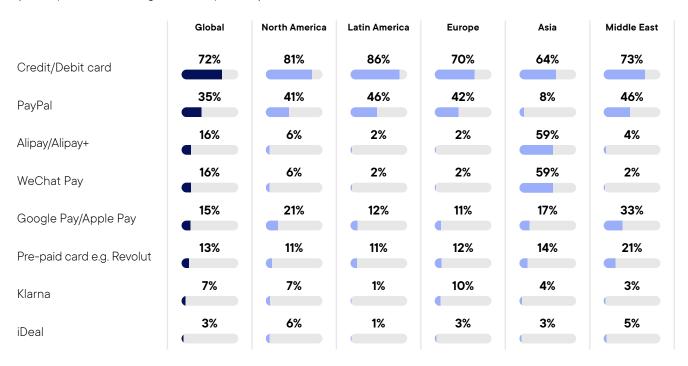


44%

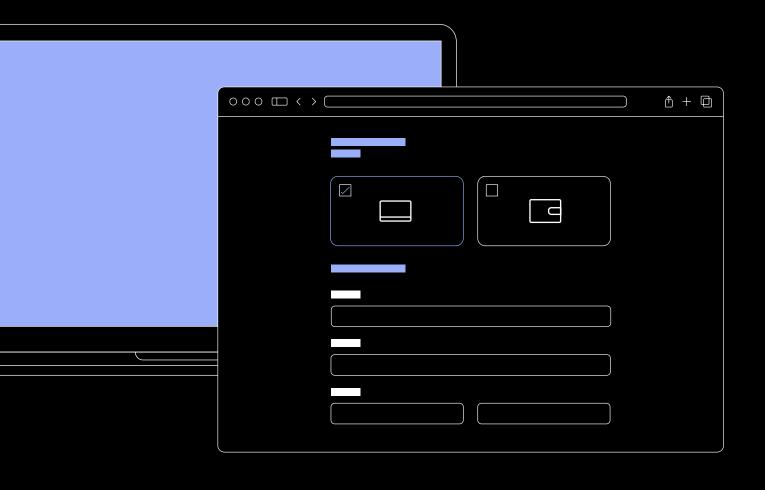
Nearly half of Asian guests claim they can't pay for reservations using their usual method.

What is your preferred payment method for hotel bookings online?

(Tick up to three - Regional comparison)







33%

Say including digital wallets as a payment option is very important during the booking process.

Including digital wallets as a payment option is popular with many consumers. A third (33%) say this is very important during the booking process, while fewer than one in 10 (9%) state it's not important at all.

Meanwhile, cryptocurrency-based reservations aren't quite so popular yet. Fewer than a fifth (19%) of consumers globally say this option is very important to them with substantially more (29%) saying it isn't important at all. However, in the US nearly half (44%) of consumers, and 36% of those in China, say the availability of a cryptocurrency payment option is very important to them. The results indicate a growing demand for this emerging payment method from consumers, despite its risky reputation and regulatory drawbacks.

Furthermore, a high level of importance is ascribed to hotels taking booking payments in consumers' domestic currency.

More than four in 10 (42%) consumers deem this very important. This rises to 60% in the US, but drops to 25% in Singapore and 13% in Sweden.

This suggests that hoteliers should consider offering guests the choice online to pay in their preferred currency at booking. Whether that's dynamically offered via the website based on their GEO IP, or when a secure payment link is sent to the guest, give them the chance to pay on a page that offers currency selection.

Check-in

Although nearly half (49%) of consumers prefer to be checked in by hotel staff, almost as many want to bypass the desk and use self check-in. Just under a third (32%) want to do this on a personal device such as a smartphone; 15% expect self check-in to be available at kiosks in the hotel.

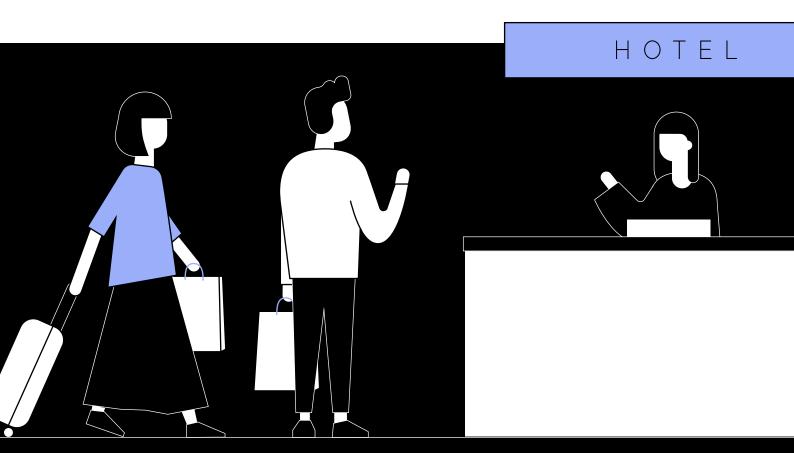
These preferences vary greatly across markets. In Canada, for instance, 67% like staff to handle check-in. But in China, exactly half (50%) expect to be able to check-in on a personal device. Almost a quarter (23%) in Singapore say they would like to complete check-in by themselves at a kiosk in the hotel.

Regionally, these preferences differ too.

What is your preferred hotel check-in method?

(Regional comparison)

Global North America Latin America Europe Asia Middle East 49% 57% 40% 39% 43% 56% Hotel staff 43% 24% 43% 37% Self check-in. 32% 25% personal device 14% 19% Self check-in, 15% 16% 14% 16% hotel kiosk



Many guests have become tech-savvy.

More than half (59%) of global consumers state they prefer self check-in for speed and avoiding queues. A further 13% do not like dealing with hotel staff. There is a convenience factor at play here, with only 23% of consumers saying they are never, or hardly ever, asked to fill in forms if they go to the reception desk to check in. However, that means more than three in four guests do have paperwork pushed their way.

It's fair to say this shouldn't be required in a modern, tech-driven world, and simply increases friction for the customer. They might also wonder what the hotel does with personal information they write down and pass to staff. A booking engine integrated with the hotel's PMS and payment platforms, which can securely store guest info, saves time for both the customer and busy hotel employees.

Meanwhile, more than a quarter (27%) deem self check-in via their own device to be more secure than speaking to staff. Many guests have become tech-savvy – a trend accelerated during the pandemic when more transactions were made online. As a result, not everyone now chooses face-to-face customer service, preferring to head quickly to their room or the bar/restaurant.

It's another case in point that not all quests are the same.



Installing Planet's PMS was very straightforward, and the team offered great support whilst everyone was learning how to use the system. The system is interactive, and the benefits were clear from the very start. Increased revenue from new international guests is the best result we could have hoped for. The whole experience from system to service is fantastic. We highly recommend Planet.





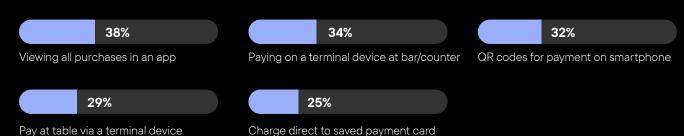


During stay

Slick and convenient features are in demand as guests add optional extras during their stays.

They expect a range of functionality throughout their stay when tacking on treats such as meals, room service, spa treatments and upgrades.

These include:



Check-out

Convenience is also the key factor in a satisfying checkout service. More than half (55%) of consumers globally want a quick process to avoid queueing, with those in China seemingly the most impatient (63%).

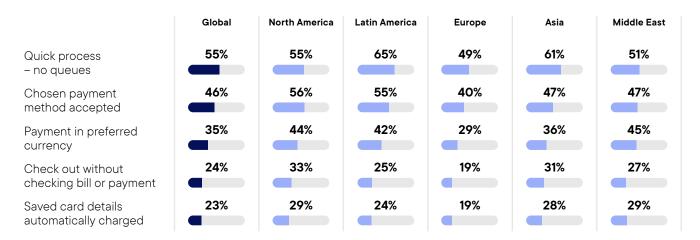
But payment options are also front of mind. Almost half (46%) globally say that check-out should offer their payment method of choice.

In addition:



What most makes a great hotel check-out experience?

(Tick all that apply - Regional comparison)





Returning guests

The quality of a guest's experience from booking to check-out will have a strong influence on whether they would return, if they get the chance.

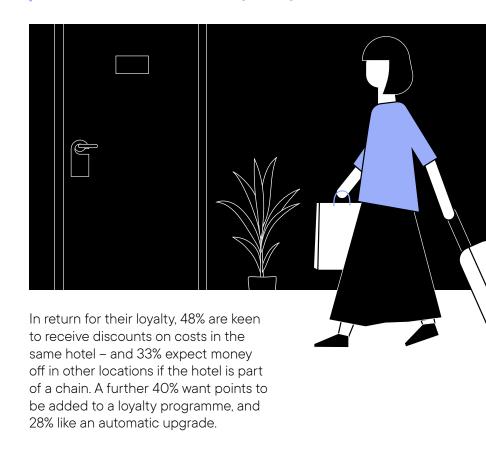
When they do come back, almost one in five (18%) guests say that staff recognise them. Consumers in the US are the most certain of this (45%).

Importantly, just 37% of consumers globally say their details had been saved from a previous visit, impacting the time and effort needed to complete future check-ins. This kind of unsatisfactory experience could impact guest loyalty.

By securely storing guest data – from contact details and payment data to details of where they stayed – hotels can build a guest profile and information on their spending patterns. That way, they can welcome the guest back, tailor their stay, and reward them with offers and discounts.

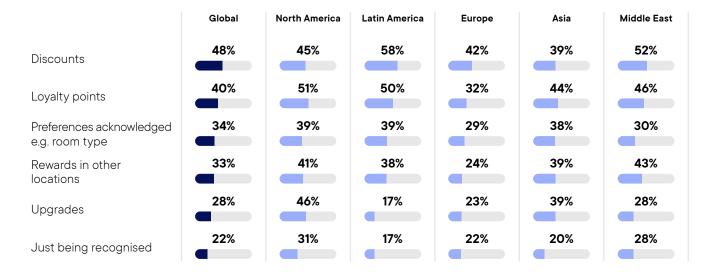
A further 48% say staff remember their personal details but request payment information again. While this is understandable from a security viewpoint, a tokenisation tool can be used to securely store card data and retrieve it when guests return.

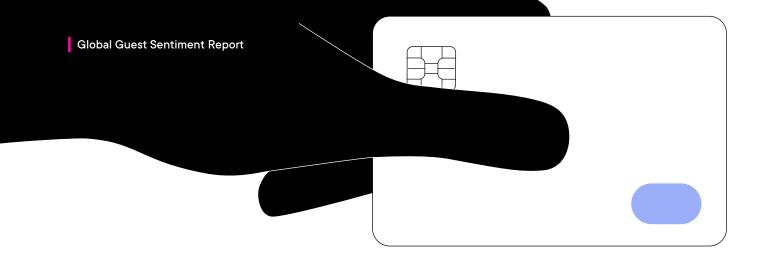
Money is on people's minds when choosing to visit a hotel on multiple trips.



What loyalty rewards are important to you as a returning hotel guest?

(Tick all that apply - Regional comparison)



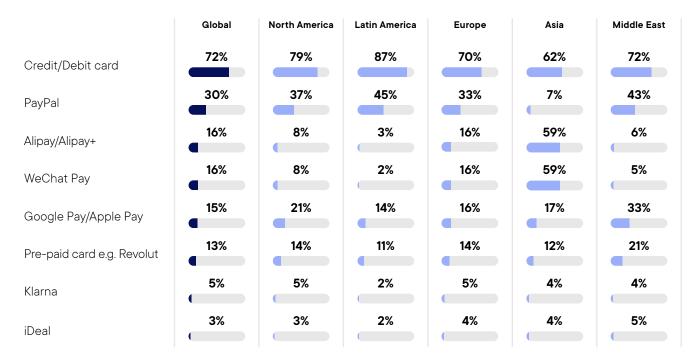


Removing the pain with integrated payment

When asked how they like to pay the hotel for items during their stay, guests' responses map closely to their reservation payment preferences.

What is your preferred payment method when paying in-venue at a hotel?

(Tick up to three - Regional comparison)



Guests are keen for hotels to offer payment via digital wallet, with 44% globally saying this is very important. This requirement rises to 60% in the US and 54% in China. It's also interesting to note the preference to use Google Pay and Apple Pay in the Middle East (33%), far higher than in other regions.

The currency opportunity

Guests show a strong preference for being able to pay using their preferred currency for both hotel reservations and extra purchases during their stay.

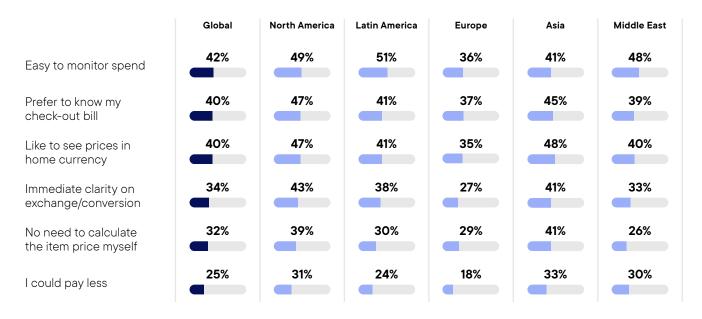
In fact, the highest proportion globally (49%) demand this option to be available when they make a reservation. This increases to 57% in the US, and 54% in Singapore. Furthermore, 42% of consumers globally believe it is very important that they can book a hotel in their preferred currency, with only 3% saying this is not important at all to them.

And the currency opportunity goes beyond booking. A huge majority (90%) say they want to pay in their home currency when using their debit or credit card to make purchases at the hotel. This is imperative to consumers in the US (97%) and China (96%).

Mostly, consumers find using their domestic currency makes it easier to monitor spending (42%), with 40% suggesting they don't want to be surprised by an unexpected bill at check-out. A further 40% like to see prices itemised in their home currency.

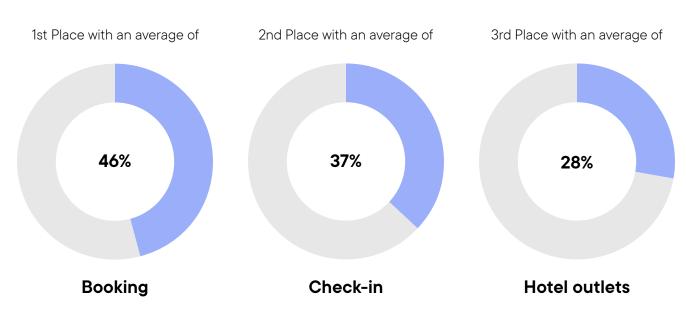
Why would you pay in your home currency on your debit/credit card?

(Tick all that apply - Regional comparison)



Conversely, those who would opt not to pay using their domestic currency, if possible, say they struggle with exchange rates (25%), while the same proportion (25%) also believe they could pay more if they pay this way.





By offering Currency Conversion (DCC) at booking, check-in and check-out, hotels offer guests the choice and clarity of knowing exactly how much they are spending throughout the guest journey.



We needed to find a payments company that shares our vision of delivering a luxury guest experience when they visit. Providing a wider range of payments options all on one stylish Android terminal, fully integrated to our systems, allows us to deliver this. The support we've enjoyed from the whole team at Planet has been first-class.





Payment security matters

Consumers share strong concerns around the security of online payments



There is a substantial level of distrust in the general security of websites, with 37% globally believing most are not safe from fraudsters. A further 37% want their data to always be encrypted, while 29% do not want third-party businesses to have visibility of their data.

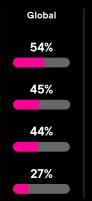
Despite these anxieties, consumers also reveal their thoughts about what can make online payments more secure, putting their minds at rest.

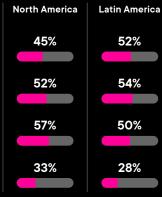
What do you consider the safest online experience when buying goods and services?

(Tick all that apply - Regional comparison)

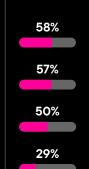
My bank prompts me to authenticate payment Clearly displayed security & protection message on-site Direct payment via merchant, not third-party, site

"Https:" appears in URL

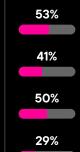








Asia



17

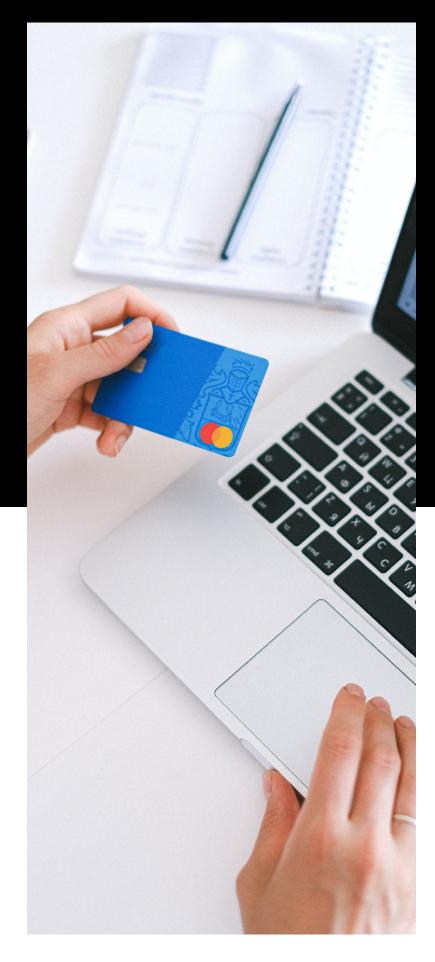
Middle East



It is also worth noting that more than a quarter of consumers (27%) consider using their own device to be a more secure way to check in at a hotel, than speaking to the reception staff or entering details via a self check-in kiosk provided. In the Middle East this increases to 38% of consumers.

This insight indicates that while guests are keen to use software and online payments they remain wary of the risks. Being clear with guests that payments especially are safe and compliant gives them confidence to spend freely.

It's important for hotels to work with their payment providers to understand how sensitive data is handled in their networks; the best way to integrate payments on their website for a seamless user journey while keeping PCI compliance simple; and understanding the benefits of tokenisation for guests and staff.





Implementing Planet's PCI compliance solution means less PCI Scope, less PCI related costs, almost zero risk of suffering a cyber-attack.

@ AirEuropa





Keep guests connected at all times

The connected customer expects uninterrupted Wi-Fi and availability of online services from their chosen hotel.

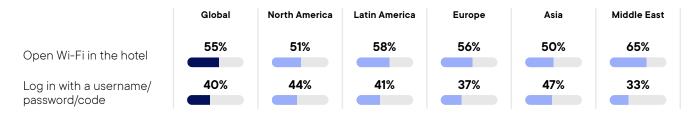
In fact, of all the aspects of hotel life measured in our study, Wi-Fi is deemed the most vital service – with 56% of consumers globally marking it very important to them. This climbs to 63% for consumers in the US.

While guests are keen on payment security, a majority (55%) of consumers globally prefer the convenience that open Wi-Fi in all areas of the hotel can offer them – presumably relying on the security of their device instead. Fewer (40%) state they want to log in with a password or code each time they go online.

56%

Of consumers deem Wi-Fi as the most vital service.

What are your preferences for Wi-Fi access?



With so much to see and do in their location, guests are not as bothered about the features of the TV service on offer during their visit. However, 29% still rate this a very important part of their overall experience. In particular, consumers in the US are eager for access to the finer features of the small screen, with 54% saying this is very important.

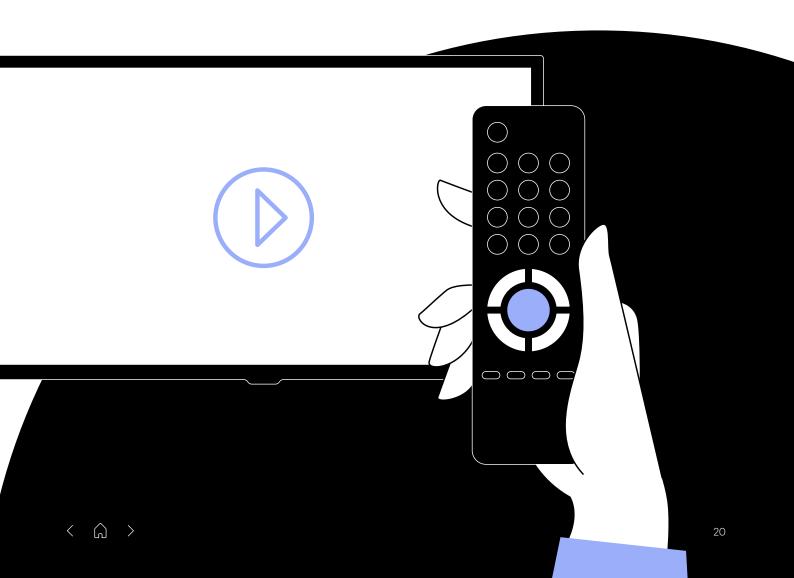
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In addition, hotel guests believe a range of TV services should be made available free of charge.

What TV services do you expect free of charge when you stay in a hotel? (Tick all that apply)

	Global	North America	Latin America	Europe	Asia	Middle East
TV/film packages	50%	49%	68%	40%	56%	58%
Local TV stations	41%	58%	35%	43%	35%	37%
Cast-to-TV via guest device	32%	35%	40%	21%	46%	40%
Hotel and local area information	31%	46%	21%	25%	43%	38%
Google Chromecast	24%	31%	24%	17%	32%	34%
No expectation of free services	7%	4%	3%	11%	5%	3%



The ideal guest experience

The % of consumers globally stated the following solutions contributed to the ideal quest experience:

contributed to the i	deal guest experience			
Loyalty points for returning:	Full range of booking and in Credit/debit payments top			
40%	72%			
Online hotel booking facility available:				
98%	•			
7070				
No check-in queues	:			
	59%			
No check-out queues:				
	55%			
In-person hotel check-in with staff:				
	49%			
Check-out with preferred payment method:				
4	16%			
	((i)			
Wi-fi services – very important:	Open Wi-Fi throughout hotel:			
56%	55%			

High security: bank prompts

payments authentication during stay:

Direct booking nd in-hotel payment options: function on hotel website: 42% Booking payment via digital wallet - very important: 33%

Discounts for returning to same hotel location or chain

45%

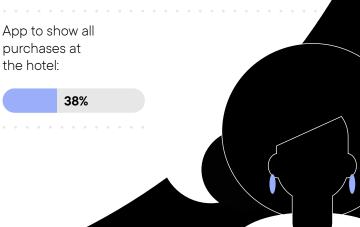
Free TV/film

package:

50%

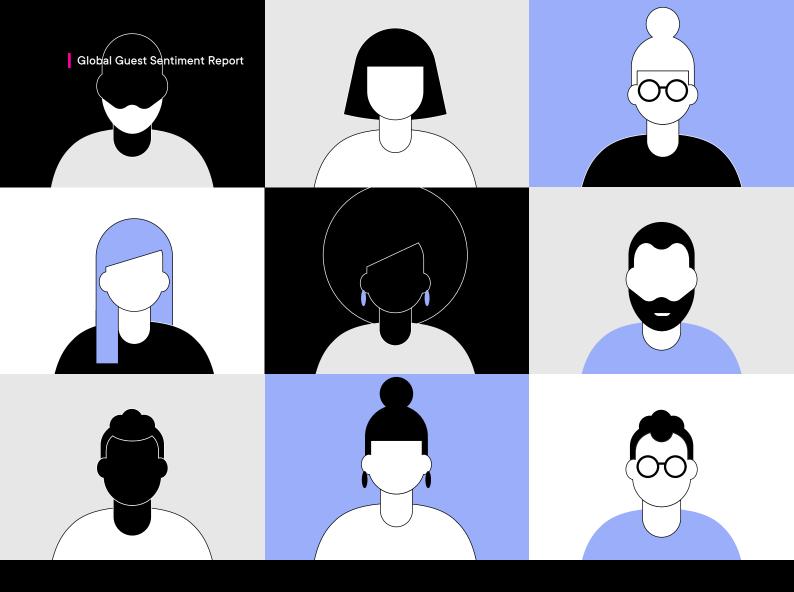
Paying for reservation in preferred currency - very important: 42%

Paying for extras at hotel during stay in preferred currency – very important: 33%





21



Guest of the future

Most younger guests might not have the financial clout of older visitors who have had longer to accrue wealth – but ignore them at your peril.

Not only does Gen Z collectively command <u>\$100bn spending power</u> globally already, hotels must recognise that this group and Millennials are the guests of the future. In fact, calculations show Millennials are collectively worth <u>\$2.5tn</u>. These guests are the ones they need to tempt to book in the first place and give a first-rate experience to keep them coming back as loyal customers.

So what do younger guests want from today's hotel experience?

Generation Z

(18 – 26 years old) 30% of the global population









say speedy check-out is key to a great experience

35%

want to book using their home currency (lowest of all generations)

85%

would pay in their domestic currency on debit/credit cards if possible (lowest of all generations)

42%

speak to staff for hotel check-in (lowest of all generations); although they are the least bothered by queueing 57%

When returning to the same hotel, they demand:

42%

make reservations via a smart device

33%

don't book direct if preferred payment option is unavailable

63%

make reservations payments on credit/debit cards but **10%** use Klarna

32%

say using digital wallets to book is very important (2nd highest of all generations)

20%

would like cryptocurrency to be a booking payment option (2nd highest of all generations)

\$ 48%

deem hotel Wi-Fi very important (lowest of all generations); 52% want open access, with 44% preferring password-protected connection

60%

make in-hotel payments by credit/debit card (lowest of all generations); **9%** use Klarna

38%

want to view purchases in an app (2nd highest of all generations

23

Discounts 39%, loyalty points 37%, and acknowledgement of their preferences 32%





>

Millennials

(27 – 42 years old) 27% of the global population







57%

say speedy check-out is key to a great experience

45%

want to book using their home currency

92%

would pay in their domestic currency on debit/credit cards if possible (joint highest of all generations)

44%

speak to staff for hotel check-in (2nd lowest of all generations); they are the second least bothered by queueing **59%**

[□] 52%

make reservations via a smart device

31%

don't book direct if they cannot opt to pay at a later date

73%

make reservations payments on credit/debit cards; 14% use pre-paid cards

38%

say using digital wallets to book is very important (highest of all generations)

24%

would like cryptocurrency to be a booking payment option (highest of all generations)

\$ 57%

deem hotel Wi-Fi very important (2nd lowest of all generations); **55%** want open access, with **41%** preferring password-protected connection

73%

make in-hotel payments by credit or debit card

43%

want to view purchases in an app (highest of all generations)

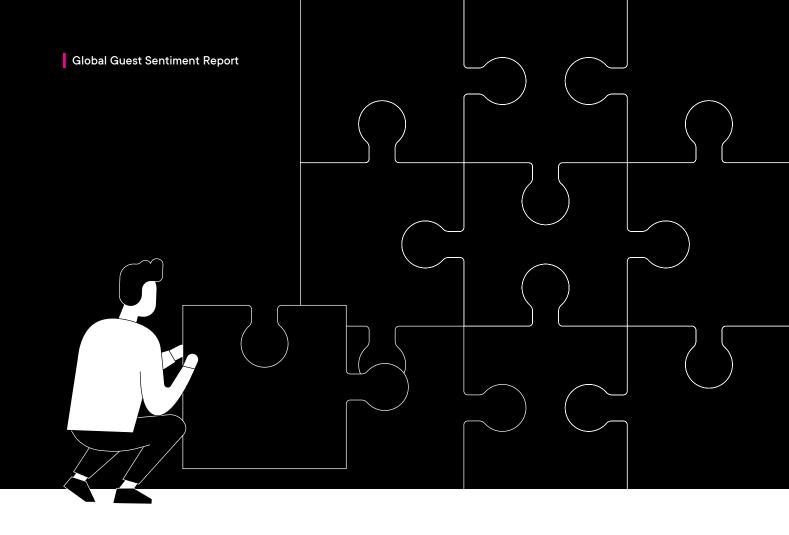
When returning to the same hotel, they demand:

Discounts **46%** loyalty points **43%** and acknowledgement of their preferences **36%**









How Planet can help you

The key for many hoteliers to winning hearts and minds of their guests, and growing revenue is to meet the demands of tech-savvy guests who are looking for a seamless, connected experience from booking to checkout.

The findings in our report clearly highlight how important choice, convenience and connectivity are to guests across the world today. And that understanding the needs of different guests across generations can be key to delivering the best personalised experience that keeps them coming back. After all, the needs of younger guests vary considerably to the older generations.

It's not always easy to deliver this, especially when disjointed systems and processes can disrupt that experience and take up staff time, and when payments are often considered an afterthought.

So what's the answer?

We believe the answer lies in using technology to power a seamless guest experience by connecting payments software and networking on a single hospitality platform.

At Planet, we're helping hoteliers deliver a more connected guest journey, saving them time and money, and helping to generate more revenue. We're doing this with a connected commerce platform that's flexible and brings together systems, technology, and payments...



Amaze your customers with a connected guest journey

Enable guests to pay on their own terms using their favourite <u>payment</u> <u>methods</u> and the currency they know the best – their own.

Make every moment in every stay, smoother and more enjoyable with a cloud-based PMS at the heart of your operation which connects to a full range of solutions including payments, booking engine, networking and third-party applications. Give guests a home away from home experience with interactive TV and Wi-Fi services.

Save time and money with integrated systems

Choose the solutions you need thanks to our fully modular approach that works with your existing infrastructure. Through a single technology partnership, you reduce operating costs, as we provide all services through one contract.

And staff save their time using one consolidated system and one point of contact, so they can spend more time focusing on guests.

Generate more revenue

Drive revenue through loyalty by recognising your guests' behaviour, and preferences so you can target them with promotions and special offers.

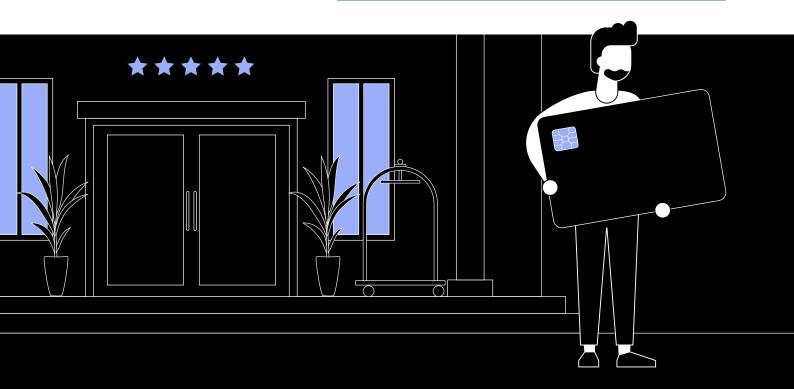
Enhance and automate your payment flows to always capture payments for no-shows and cancellations, as well as making it easy for guests to upgrade their stay and spend more money with you while at your hotel.

Planet's <u>Currency Conversion</u> service ensures you generate incremental revenue streams, and your guests have the freedom to pay in their preferred currency.



We are extremely happy with Planet's Networking services. It has resulted in enhanced guest satisfaction, allowed us to be more agile as guest demands change and prompted an increase in new and returning business.







About Planet

Planet provides integrated software, payment and technology solutions for its customers in the Hospitality and Retail sectors and worldwide via a network of global **Financial Services Partners.**

Planet helps its customers and partners make the most of the connected commerce revolution. Our software and payment technology enables businesses to unlock the benefits of a more connected and digital world.

Founded over 35 years ago, we have evolved our services, delivering an innovative digital commerce platform that puts customer experience first.

With headquarters in London and nearly 3,000 expert employees located across six continents we serve customers in over 120 markets.

For more information, visit:









About the research

The research was conducted by the independent market research consultancy, Censuswide. 6,559 consumers across the UK, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Nordics, KSA, UAE, USA, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Singapore, China, and Italy who have stayed in a hotel in the past 12 months and who do so more than once per year were surveyed online via on online link between the 3rd and 9th of May 2023. Censuswide abide by and employ members of the Market Research Society which is based on the ESOMAR principles and are members of the British Polling Council.

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