

eTravel Benchmark Finds A Strong Online Presence Is A Must For Turbulent Travel Industry

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The latest eTravel Benchmark results from eDigitalResearch have found that creating a strong, engaging and responsive online presence is vital to travel firms to provide security and protection during the current turbulent trading times in the industry.

Sites that provide customer reviews, interactive features, such as videoâ€™s and map planners, as well as good customer service, came top of the overall travel customer satisfaction leagues, as some companies continue to struggle financially.

Derek Eccleston, Head of Research at eDigitalResearch, explains, â€œThe difference between a good travel site and a great site can often make all the difference for potential holiday makers. Whilst household budgets are shrinking, research suggests that most consumers still arenâ€™t sacrificing their holiday. As the travel industry is faced with some difficult times ahead, firms need to invest in their website, creating an engaging environment and reassuring online customers, helping to booster booking rates and interest in holidays, especially as most consumers are still willing to spend where possible. Those sites that step up their game, both online and offline with their customer service, will ultimately win through the tough time aheadâ€•.

Holiday Camps and Self Catering websites continue to outperform their international rivals and dominate the top ten. â€˜Staycationâ€™ site Haven topped the benchmark for the first time, performing strongly across all areas, scoring particularly high in the search sections. Customers found that the site provided more than enough information, including comprehensive destination guides, as well as being easy to use. Competitors Hoeseasons Lodges and Keycamp complete the top five alongside Hayes and Jarvis and British Airways.

The study, which benchmarked 54 of the UKâ€™s top travel websites, found that hotel chains remain the lowest performing sector on average, with the worst performing sites not offering customer reviews and often leaving email enquires unanswered. Email customer service still remains the lowest performing area in the entire study, with some travel sites still failing to provide this service and support, and ultimately losing the confidence of customers.

Derek continues, â€œIt is vital that travel sites offer customers the option to contact them by email. As online communication continues to grow, especially with the continued dominance of social media, customers expect to be able to contact a brand online. To offer a customer the chance to browse and book a holiday online, but not allow them to contact you in the same way will frustrate a lot of your holiday makers. Some travel sites seem determined to force customers to self serve, something they need to change in the near future if they want to keep customers encourage bookingsâ€•.

Budget airlines are still falling behind their bigger counterparts. With the burden of increased Air Passenger Duty (APD) facing travellers in 2012, airlines must review their website to ensure they remain competitive and that passengers are able to make an informed booking decision.

Download a copy of the eTravelBenchmark study for the full results by completing this short registration survey: <https://ecustomeropinions.com/survey/survey.php?sid=914824029> .

Alternatively, for access to this study, as well as past results, sign up or log into the benchmark area of the website www.edigitalresearch.com/benchmarking .

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