

eCommerce in Independent Hotels 2012 Report



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INTRODUCTION

For over 30 years, MICROS has been providing technology to hotels around the world, from large chains to small independents.

We've seen a lot of change in that time in how hotels engage with their guests.

The internet has been the biggest driver of change and MICROS has been working with our customers to deliver the e-commerce services that they need to remain competitive and profitable.

This report is part of that work. We asked our MICROS eCommerce Services team to produce a snapshot view of how independent hotels are using web and mobile technologies today.

They came up with some very interesting findings and so we decided to share them with our customers and the industry as a whole.

We discovered for example that only 38% of the hotels were offering additional products, such as flowers or champagne, during the online booking process - a good opportunity for increasing revenues that is potentially being missed. We also noted that 39% of hotels didn't appear on the first page of Google search results for the keywords that best described them. Again, a missed opportunity that we are now helping our customers to grab with both hands.

We hope that you find the data in this report interesting and useful. More of our reports can be found at www.micros-ecommerce.com or you can call us on +44 (0) 1753 501607.

Paul Finch
Vice President of Hotel Sales
MICROS UK

SIX KEY FINDINGS

1. 38% OFFERED EXTRAS DURING ONLINE BOOKING

90% of the 156 hotels had an online booking facility on their own websites. However, only 38% gave the guest the option of buying additional products during the online booking process. The most popular items were flowers, wine, champagne, chocolates and balloons, although we also came across 'a bucket of beers' and other ideas. This is a missed opportunity - the ability to sell optional extras at the booking stage generates revenue and provides the guest with an extra special experience, making them more likely to return.

2. 6% OFFERED ONLINE RESTAURANT RESERVATIONS

Only 6% of the hotels allowed us to make a restaurant reservation during the online booking process. Not all of the hotels had a restaurant and many others that did suggested that the guest could e-mail or phone up to book a table. However, only 6% allowed the guest to book a table online as part of the online room booking process. Again, for hotels that have dining facilities, this is a missed opportunity to ensure that guests eat in the hotel rather than going elsewhere.

3. 10% HAD A MOBILE-OPTIMISED WEBSITE

Only 10% of the hotels that we tested had a mobile-optimised version of their websites. Some had only optimised the home page - if we tapped the 'book a room' button we found ourselves back on non-optimised web pages, while others had optimised the full booking process.

4. 37% RESPONDED TO ALL COMMENTS ON TRIPADVISOR

Impressively, 37% of the 156 hotels that we evaluated and that had a profile on TripAdvisor were responding to every single comment made about their hotel, whether good or bad. At the other extreme, a quarter of the hotels were not responding to any comments at all. Strangely (we thought), 4% were only responding to positive feedback, while a fifth only answered negative reviews. But it does show how important TripAdvisor is to the hotel industry, if 73% of independent hotels are taking the time and findings the resources to respond to guest reviews.

5. 39% DIDN'T APPEAR ON FIRST PAGE OF GOOGLE

This was very surprising. 39% of the hotels did not appear on the first page of Google natural search results for their keywords. For example, if a hotel described itself as a 'luxury spa resort' and it was in Wales we searched for that phrase and noted where the hotel appeared. Research suggests that 7% of Google users will click on the *second* result in a list, so the chances of them looking on pages two or beyond are slim. Search engine optimisation allows hotels to ensure that they appear high up on relevant results pages.

6. 35% RESPONDED TO TWEETS, 85% WERE ON FACEBOOK

We were also impressed by the commitment to social media. 85% of the hotels had a Facebook page, although the quality of the updates varied. We were surprised, for example, that only 43% of the hotels on Facebook were putting details of promotions and offers on there. When we tweeted the hotels with a question, 35% responded to us - in all, 74% had a Twitter account.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

- 39% of the hotels did not appear on the first page of Google search results for their key phrase. 31% of the hotels appeared at the very top of the results.
- Only 11 hotels got full marks for optimising their sites for Google
- There was huge variation in how many links hotels were achieving from Facebook - one hotel had 1053 links, many other hotels had none
- Similarly, there was a lot of variation in how many links the hotels were receiving from Twitter. One hotel had received 130 mentions in the previous seven days while many others had none.
- 33% of the hotels were using pay-per-click advertising on Google. 16% were paying to advertise for the name of their hotel.

WEB DESIGN & USER EXPERIENCE

- The fastest load time for a website was 0.48 seconds, while the longest was 16.8 seconds
- 86% of the websites had a look and feel that was in keeping with the hotel's type and rating
- On 10% of the websites, the text was difficult to read
- No website showed targeted content based on our activity on the site
- 90% of the websites had the hotel's phone number on the home page
- 10% of the hotels had mobile-enabled websites

ONLINE BOOKING

- 89% of the hotels had a website with an online booking facility
- 15% of the websites had difficult online booking processes
- 61% of the websites made it easy for a guest to change the details of an online booking when they were half-way through
- 12% of the online guest details forms were difficult to complete
- 30% of the hotels with an online booking system did not accept bookings beyond the next five months, while 5% allowed us to book 20+ months in advance
- 55% of the websites with online booking were carrying out 'quick calls' during the booking process to provide a responsive online experience
- 67% of the websites with online booking showed a price breakdown before payment
- 34% of the websites with online booking did not provide any help facility during the booking process
- 38% of hotels with online booking allowed the guest to purchase additional products through the booking system. The most popular items were flowers, wine, champagne, chocolates and balloons.
- Only 7% of the hotels with online booking allowed us to make a restaurant reservation during the online booking process
- 88% of the hotels with online booking gave an option for booking children in online. The most popular age limit for a child was 12.
- 18% of the hotels we evaluated offered a discount if we paid for our accommodation at the time of booking

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS CONT.

SOCIAL MEDIA

- 85% of the hotels had a Facebook page
- 57% of hotels did not post special offers on their Facebook pages
- Only 19% of the hotels were using auto-populated links when linking to special offers on their website from Facebook
- 35% of the hotels responded to a tweet asking them about their hotel. 74% of the hotels had a Twitter account.
- 37% of the hotels that were on TripAdvisor were responding to all comments about their hotels, good and bad. At the other extreme, a quarter were not responding to any comments at all.
- 41% of the hotels allowed visitors to their website to sign up for an e-mail newsletter
- 35% of the hotels with an e-mail newsletter asked us about our preferences when we were signing up.

METHODOLOGY

ABOUT MICROS

MICROS is a global provider of technology solutions to the retail and hospitality sectors. Over 330,000 MICROS systems are currently installed in hotels, restaurants, casinos, leisure and entertainment operations in more than 180 countries. Our enterprise technology solutions for property management and point-of-sale provide full support for eCommerce, while MICROS eCommerce Services delivers a wide range of web design, mobile, and online marketing services. Read more at www.micros-ecommerce.com

HOW WE DID THIS RESEARCH

The purpose of this research was to help MICROS understand trends and developments in the independent hotel sector. How are independent hotels using web and mobile technologies to attract guests? What can we learn and share with our customers to help them improve their e-commerce strategies?

We took 156 independent UK hotels and tested each of them over a two month period in July-August 2012.

Rather than choose the largest hotels, we focused on creating a list that covered all areas of the UK and all star ratings. 36 were five star, 71 were four star, a further 41 were three star and then eight two star hotels. Around half of the hotels were existing MICROS customers.

1. SEARCH ENGINE MARKETING

39%

of the hotels did not appear on the first page of Google results for their key phrase

33%

of hotels were using pay-per-click marketing to attract guests

Search engines such as Google have become an extremely important part of the hotel booking process. 77% of UK travellers use search engines at some point during their customer journey when planning a trip*.

Before we look at how independent hotels are using search engines to reach customers, let's start by clarifying what we mean by search engine marketing.

If you carry out a search on Google, your results will usually be divided into three areas (see below). Across the top and in the right-hand column are paid results – that is, someone has paid Google to show an ad whenever a user searches for a particular phrase or word.

On the left-hand side of the page, lower down, are the natural or organic results. It's not possible to buy this space – the results are based on how Google ranks your webpages. Your ranking is based on a number of factors but the most important are popularity (how many links come into your webpages) and relevance (the text within those links and on your pages).

<p>Ads related to boutique hotels in the cotswolds</p> <p>Cotswolds Boutique Hotels MrandMrsSmith.com www.mrandmrsrsmith.com/Cotswolds Unique Selection of Boutique Hotels No Reservation Fee. Great Rates! 635,841 people +1'd or follow Mr & Mrs Smith</p> <p>Secret Escapes - Save Up To 70% On Your Holiday www.secretescapes.com/ ★★★★★ 56 reviews for secretescapes.com Lowest Prices Available Online!</p> <p>Get offers Privacy</p>	<p>Paid adverts</p> <p>Romantic Cotswold Hotels www.cotswoldhotelbreaks.com/Romance Champagne Breaks, 4* Luxury Hotels Romantic Getaways from £49 pppn</p> <p>Cotswolds Hotel & Spa ellenboroughpark.com/CotswoldsHotel 5 Star Cotswolds Hotel: Book Your Stay Today.</p> <p>The Speech House Hotel www.thespeechhouse.co.uk/RoyalFOD 16th Century Hotel. Located in the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire.</p> <p>Cotswold Breaks www.snooty-fox.co.uk/ Best rates and packages Book direct</p> <p>Boutique Cotswolds Hotels www.lastminute.com/Cotswolds-Hotels ★★★★★ 229 seller reviews Low Prices on Cotswolds Hotels. Price match promise. Book Online! 345 people +1'd or follow lastminute.com UK</p>
<p>Natural search results</p> <p>Cotswolds - Boutique & Luxury Hotels - Mr & Mrs Smith www.mrandmrsrsmith.com/destinations/united.../cotswolds More typically English than a bowler-hatted Bertie Wooster, Cotswolds is a gently undulating and...</p> <p>Cowley Manor Luxury hotel spa in the glorious Cotswolds ... www.cowleymanor.com/ Cowley Manor sits in the glorious Cotswold countryside. Comfort, service and very few rules, luxury hotel spa the ideal place to relax, unwind and indulge in the ... You've visited this page 3 times. Last visit: 11/07/12</p> <p>Cotswolds Hotels, Romantic Hotels Cotswolds www.roomforromance.com/romantic-hotels/.../cotswolds/hotel... Behind its elegant, honey coloured Regency facade, Cotswold House brims with new-age comforts and chicest bedrooms. This smart boutique hotel overlooks ...</p>	

*http://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/insights/library/studies/how-search-helps-drive-purchases-in-the-uk-travel-market/

A. ORGANIC SEARCH: WHERE DID THE HOTEL RANK ON GOOGLE?

We started our research by looking at organic search (also known as natural search). Are independent hotels optimising their websites so that they appear high up in the Google search rankings?

We tested each hotel using their location and a phrase that they themselves had used – for example a hotel might have described itself as a ‘luxury spa resort’ and was located in Wales, so we tested “luxury spa hotel in Wales” to see where they appeared. We searched for the hotel using a different browser so that any previous visits to the hotel website did not affect its position in our Google search.

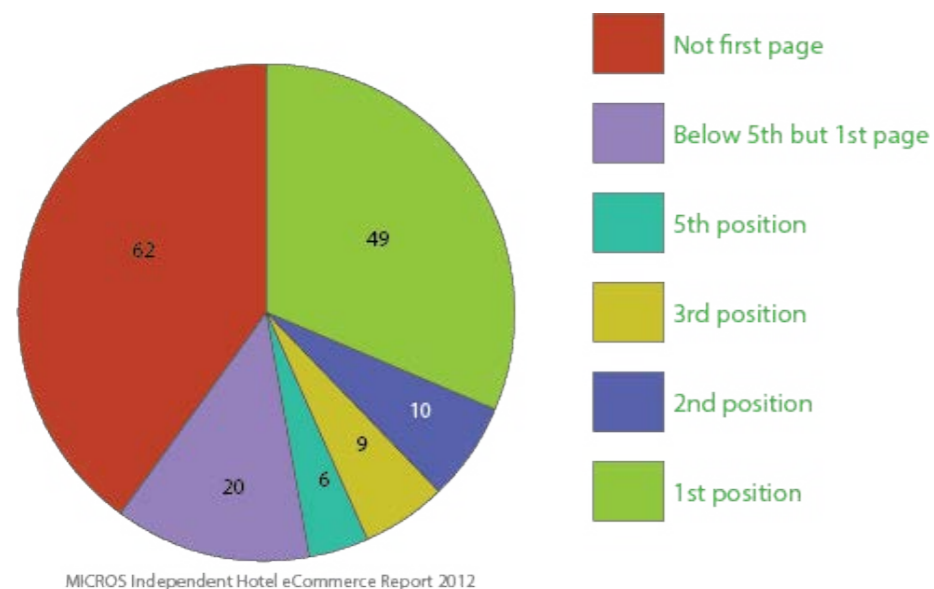
Our findings were very interesting:

- **40% of the hotels did not appear on the first page of results**

If you consider that only 7% of searchers bother to click on the 2nd result on the first page of results, then it’s clear that anyone not appearing on the first page of results will struggle to attract attention and clicks. And yet over a third of the websites we tested were not shown on the first page of search results for their phrase.

- **31% of hotels appeared at the very top of the results**

On the more positive side, almost a third of the hotels managed to secure the number one position for the phrase tested:

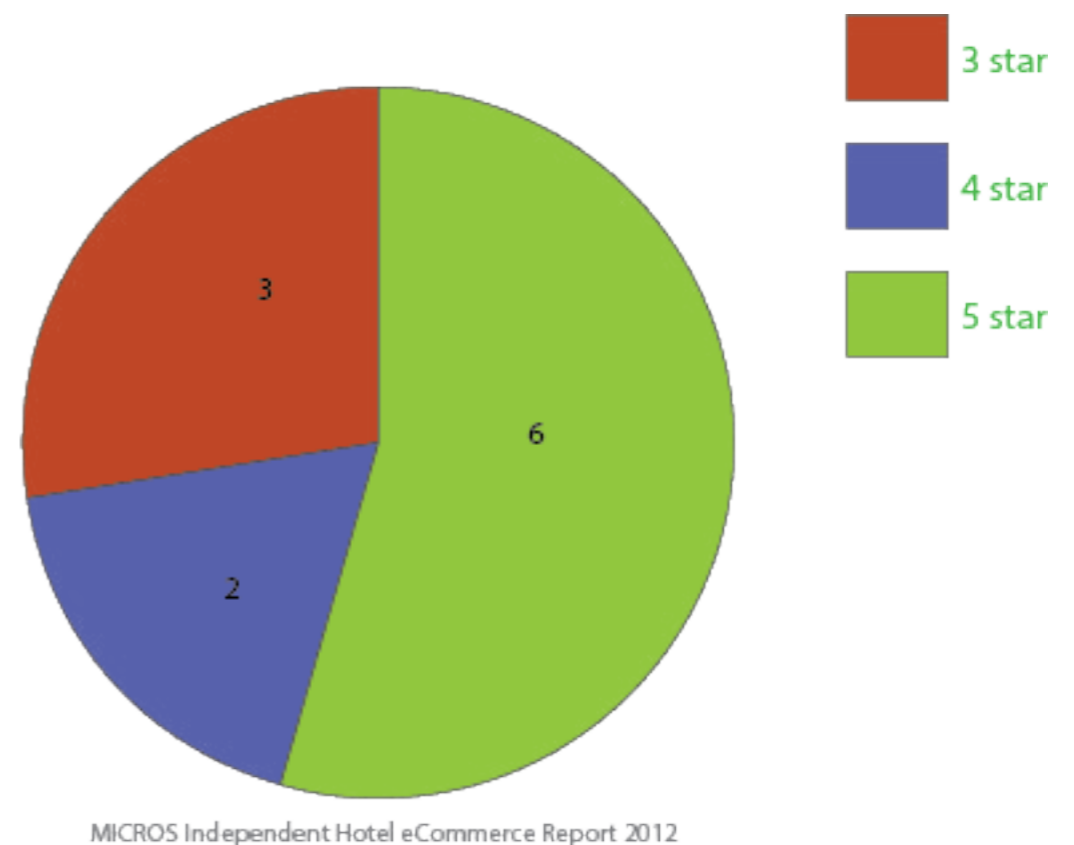


B. ARE HOTELS OPTIMISING THEIR WEBSITES FOR SEARCH ENGINES?

To appear higher in Google’s natural rankings, hotels need to focus on the content of their websites. This can be done in a number of places; for example, the title of a webpage is very important to Google, as are the headings within the copy on the pages.

We ranked all of the hotels on whether they were optimising their web content in all of the right places with the right words. Each hotel could achieve a maximum score of nine.

Only eleven hotels scored the full nine points. Interestingly, while six of these were five star hotels, three were three star hotels, which shows that search engine optimisation is not something that only the larger hotels can afford to do:



C. HOW MANY TIMES HAD THE HOTEL'S HOMEPAGE BEEN SHARED ON FACEBOOK?

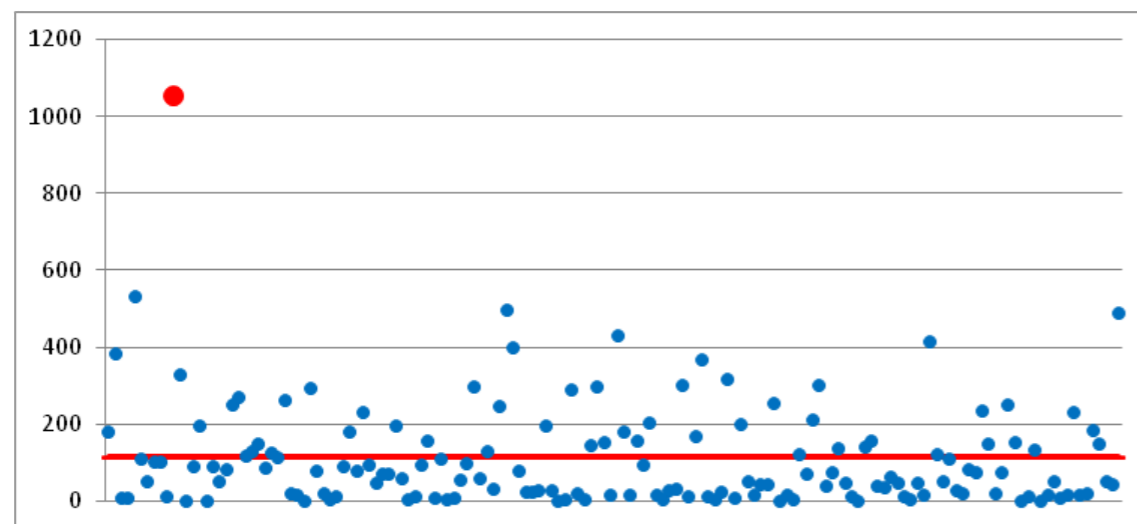
Incoming links are very important to Google – if someone has linked to your website, then Google will decide that a) your site is popular enough to be linked to and b) the words used in the link are likely to be a reliable description of your content.

At the same time, social media is increasingly being used by consumers to share opinions and links.

To gauge how well the independent hotels were using the power of social media linking, we measured the number of times a hotel's URL had been posted on Facebook.

As the graph below shows, there was a lot of variation. The hotel with the most shares on Facebook had had its URL posted 1053 times. At the other end of the spectrum, plenty of hotels hadn't had any posts on Facebook at all.

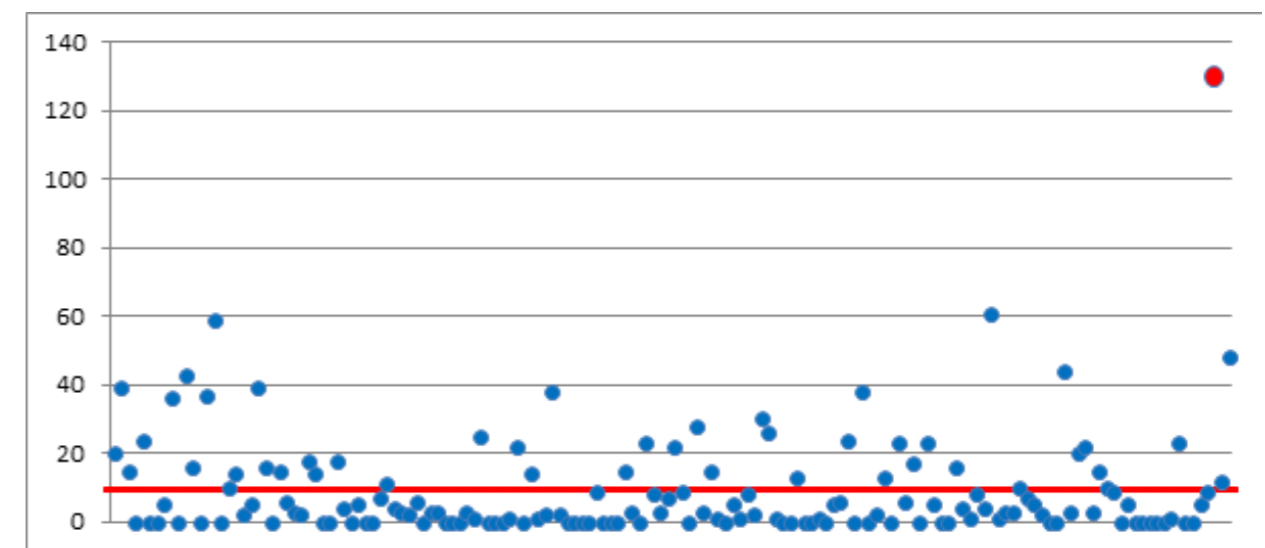
Again, the star rating of the hotel didn't seem to matter; of the seven hotels that achieved more than 400 shares on Facebook, three were five star hotels, two were four star, one was a three star and one was two star:



D. HOW MANY TIMES HAD THE HOTEL'S HOMEPAGE URL BEEN MENTIONED ON TWITTER?

We then tested how many times the hotel URL had been tweeted within the previous seven days.

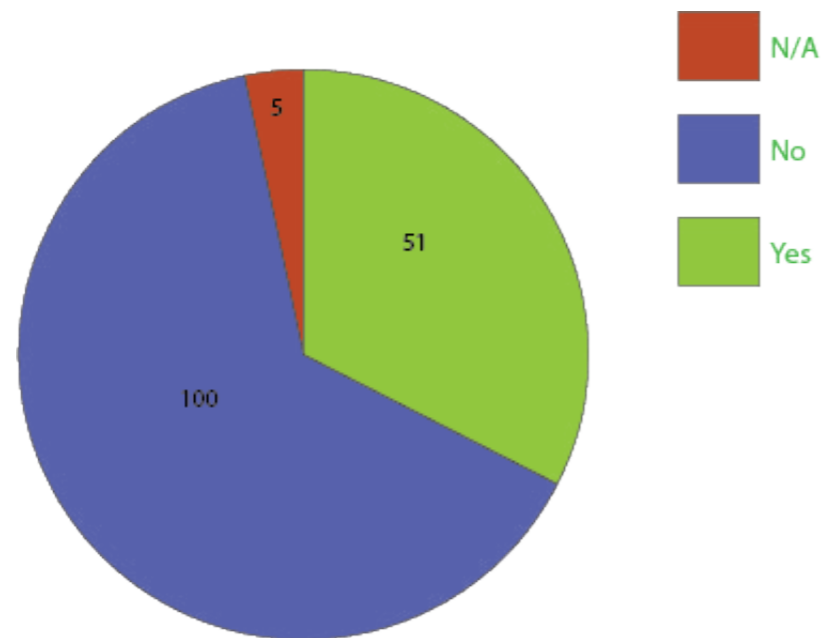
As you can see in the graph below, there was a huge variation. The hotel with the most tweets had had 130 mentions. When we investigated this, we discovered that the hotel had been tweeting photos of their location and these images of sunsets and other attractive sights had been retweeted extensively.



E. WERE THE HOTELS ADVERTISING ON GOOGLE?

Having looked at organic search, we then turned our attention to paid search. Google runs its advertising on a 'pay-per-click' basis – as an advertiser you only pay Google if someone clicks on your advert. It is therefore often referred to as 'PPC'.

Our research showed that only a third of the independent hotels tested were using pay-per-click advertising on Google during July and August 2012:



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Should hotels bid on Google for the name of their hotel – eg, should the ABC Hotel pay to be shown when a user searches for 'ABC Hotel'? Marketers are often torn on this matter: if your site is appearing at the top of natural rankings, then why waste your money? However, by not advertising are you allowing competitors and online travel aggregators to sneak in and take the traffic that could be booking direct with you?

We found that only 25 of the hotels (16%) were advertising on Google for their own hotel name.

2. WEBSITE DESIGN & USER EXPERIENCE

90%

of the hotels had their telephone number on the website homepage

10%

of the websites had text that was difficult to read

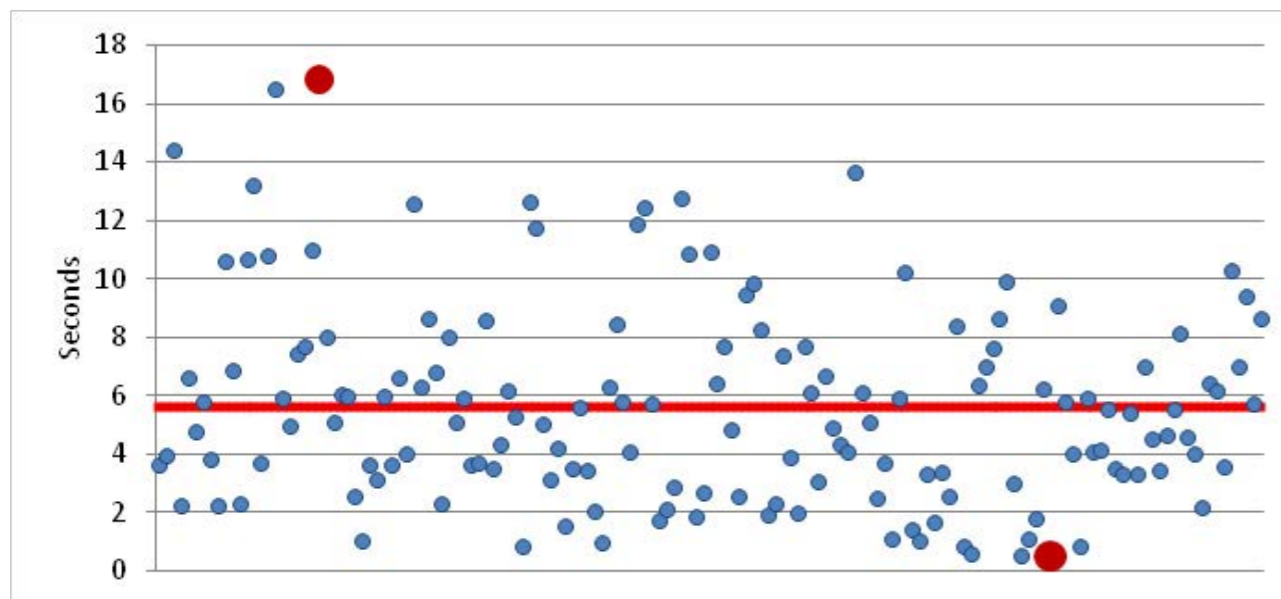
10%

of the hotels had a mobile optimised website

A. HOW LONG DID THE HOTEL HOMEPAGE TAKE TO LOAD?

Web users are notoriously impatient – research suggests that if a home page takes more than 2 seconds to load, then the user will be likely to give up and move on. So how speedy were the websites of the hotels in our research?

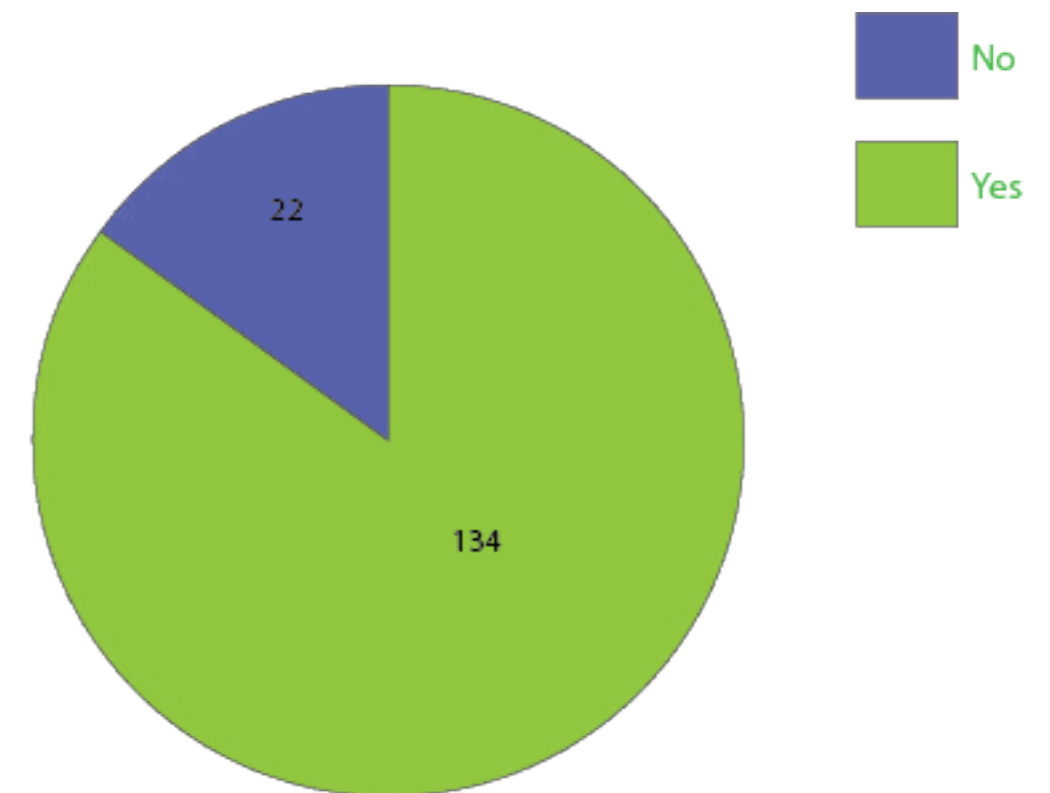
We measured each hotel’s homepage, looking at how long it took for the page to load fully. As you can see from the graph below, the longest load time was 16.8 seconds while the quickest was just 0.48 seconds.



B. DID THE SITE REFLECT THE BRAND IMAGE OF THE HOTEL?

Here we focused on the look and feel of the hotel’s website. Did the site accurately represent the hotel in terms of its type and star rating?

This was a subjective question but in all we found that 86% of the websites reflected the brand image of the hotel:

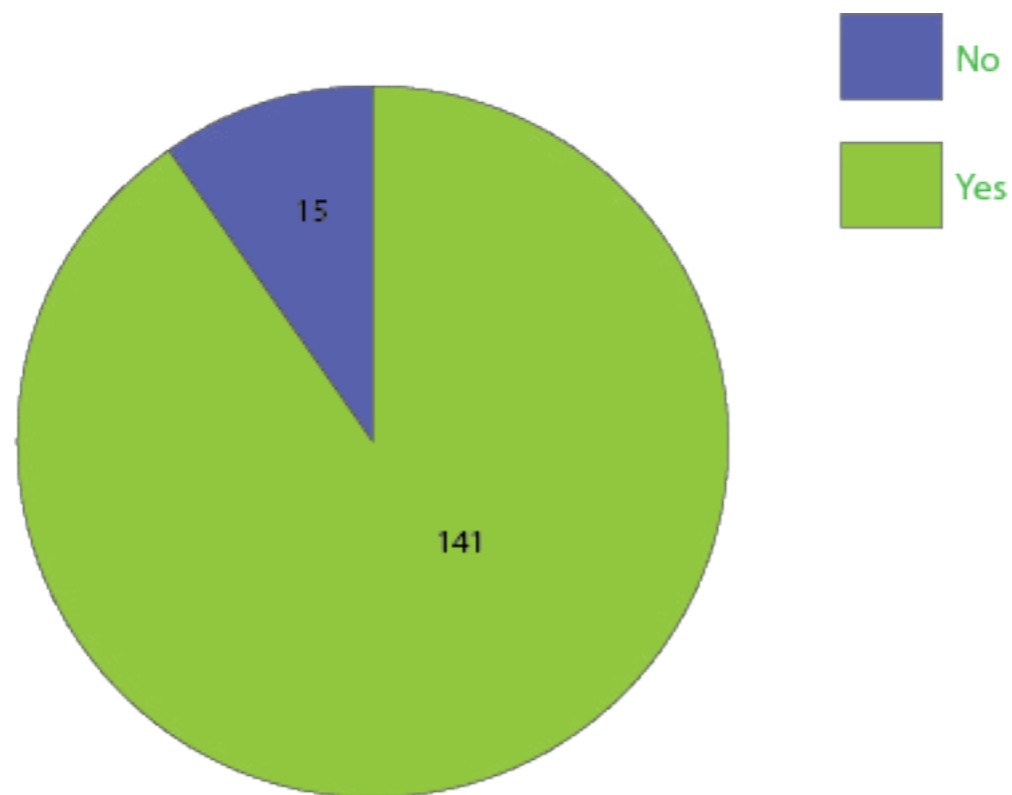


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C. WAS THE TEXT ON THE WEBSITE LEGIBLE?

We looked at how easy it was to read the text on the website. This may have been affected by the colour scheme, size of the text or the quality of the resolution.

We found that the text was legible on 90% of hotel websites. However, 10% of hotels had text that was difficult to read, using similar colours for the text and background or using a font that was too small to read.



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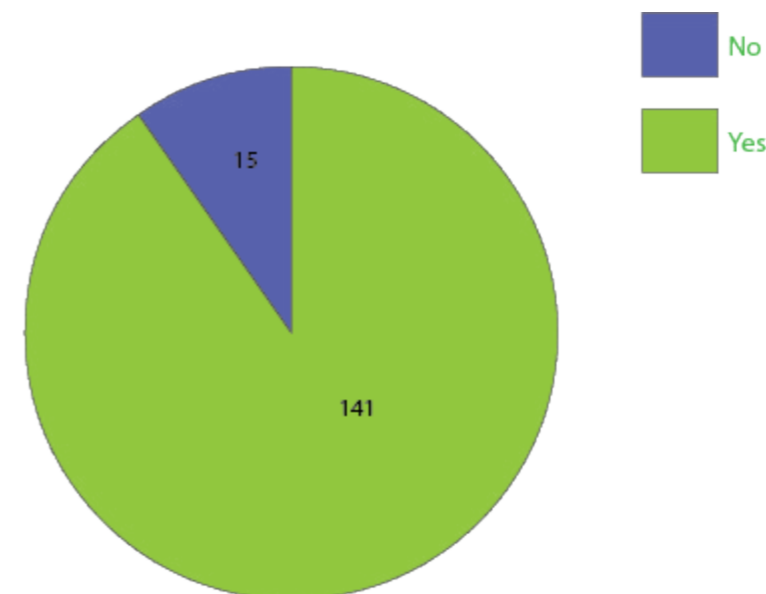
D. DOES THE HOMEPAGE INCLUDE TARGETED CONTENT?

We were interested to know if the hotels had the capability to show dynamic content on their websites - for example, if we did a search for 'spa' (where relevant) did we see spa-related offers on the homepage when we returned there.

This was very difficult to test with 100% certainty but in the tests that we did, we didn't find any examples of hotels using targeted content in this way.

E. WERE THE HOTEL'S CONTACT DETAILS ON THE HOMEPAGE?

How easy was it to find contact details for the hotel on the homepage? For example, if we were driving to the hotel and were lost, would we be able to find the telephone number easily on their website without having to go to the Contact page? Happily, 90% of the hotels we tested had their contact details on the homepage.

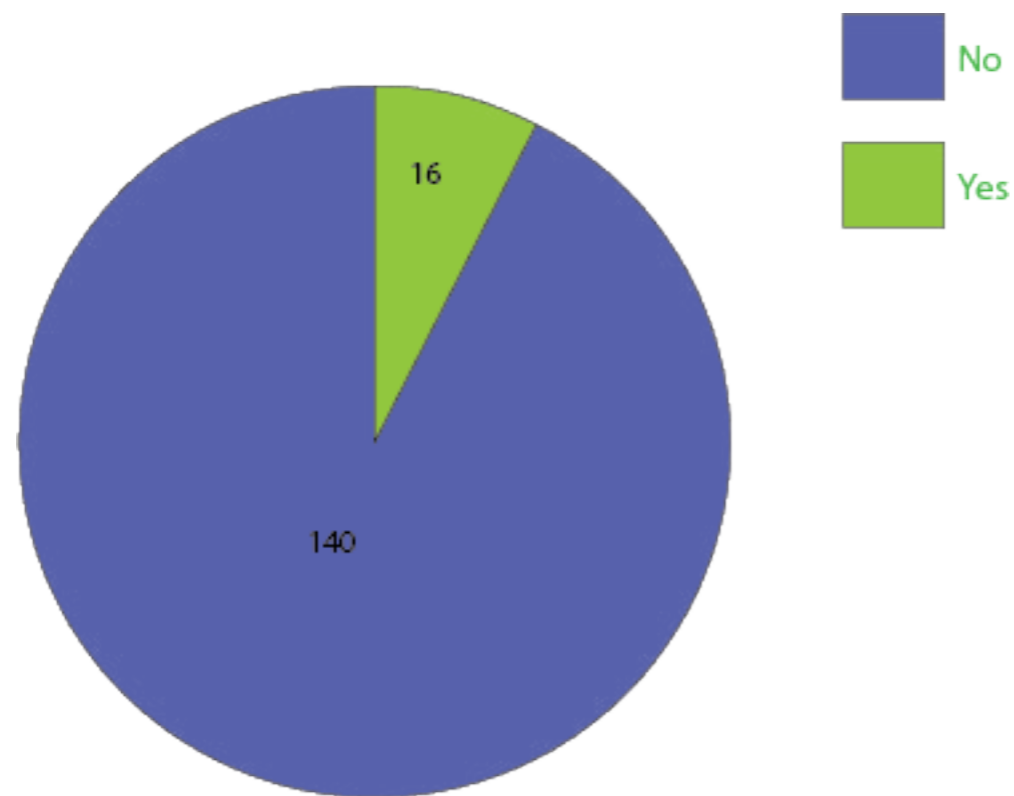


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F. DID THE HOTEL HAVE A MOBILE-OPTIMISED WEBSITE?

We visited every hotel website using a smartphone to see whether we were shown a mobile optimised version, thus making it easier to navigate from a mobile device.

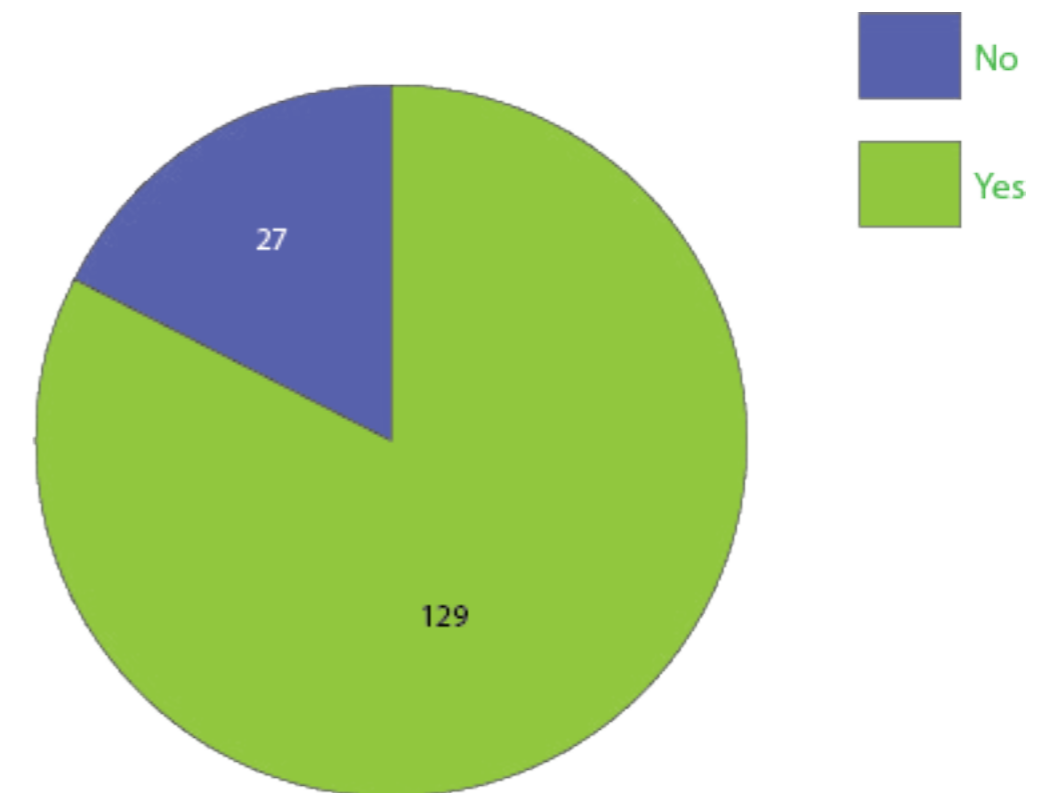
We found that 10% of hotels had optimised their websites for mobiles. Some had only optimised the homepage - if we then tapped the 'Book a Room' button we would return to the usual booking pages. However, others appeared to have optimised the booking process and other areas of the site as well.



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H. DID THE HOTEL WEBSITE PROMOTE PACKAGES OR DEALS ON THEIR WEBSITES?

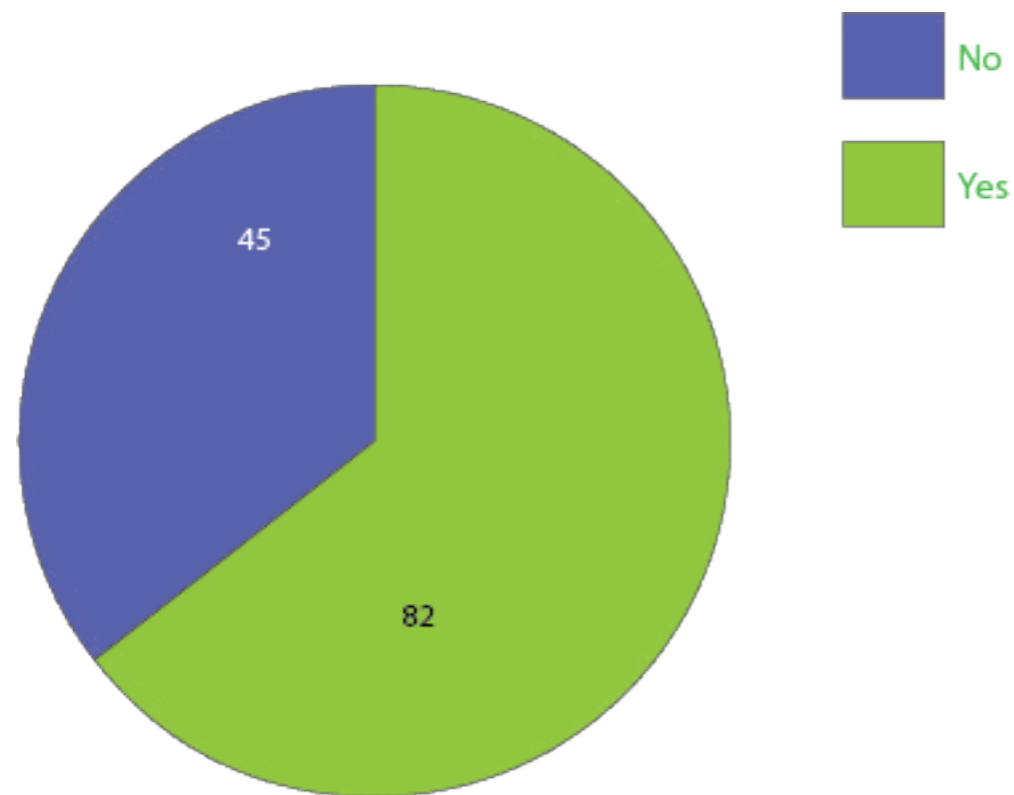
83% of the hotels that we included in the research were using special offers on the homepage of their websites to convert the visitor to a guest:



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G. WERE THE PROMOTIONS TIME-LIMITED?

Of the hotels that were featuring special offers on their website homepages, 65% had imposed a time limit on those promotions - a last minute special weekend rate for example or a summer holiday deal:



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3. ONLINE BOOKING

90%

of the hotels accepted online bookings on their websites

37%

of the hotels offered additional items during the online booking process

57%

of the hotels did not offer any help facility during the online booking process

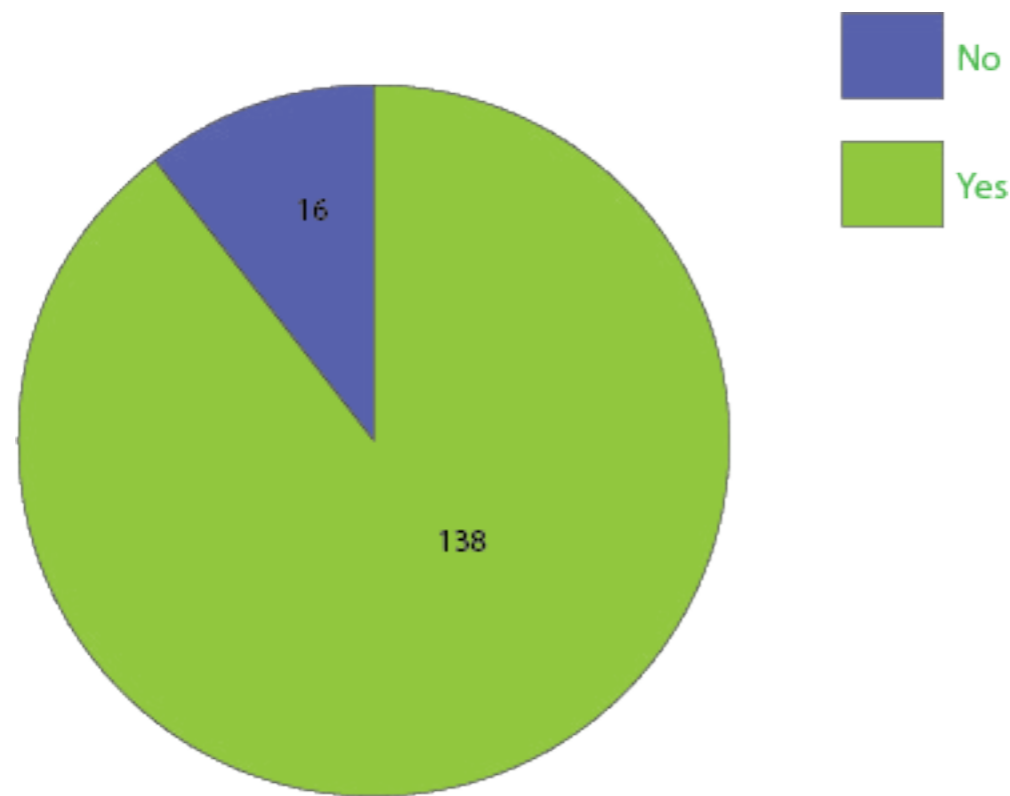
26%

of the hotels only accepted online bookings for the next five months

A. DID THE HOTEL WEBSITE ACCEPT ONLINE BOOKINGS?

We started by looking at how many hotels accepted online bookings on their website. 90% of the hotels evaluated did have a website with an online booking facility.

The hotel had to provide an online booking service on its own website. Links to external websites were not counted, nor were request forms.



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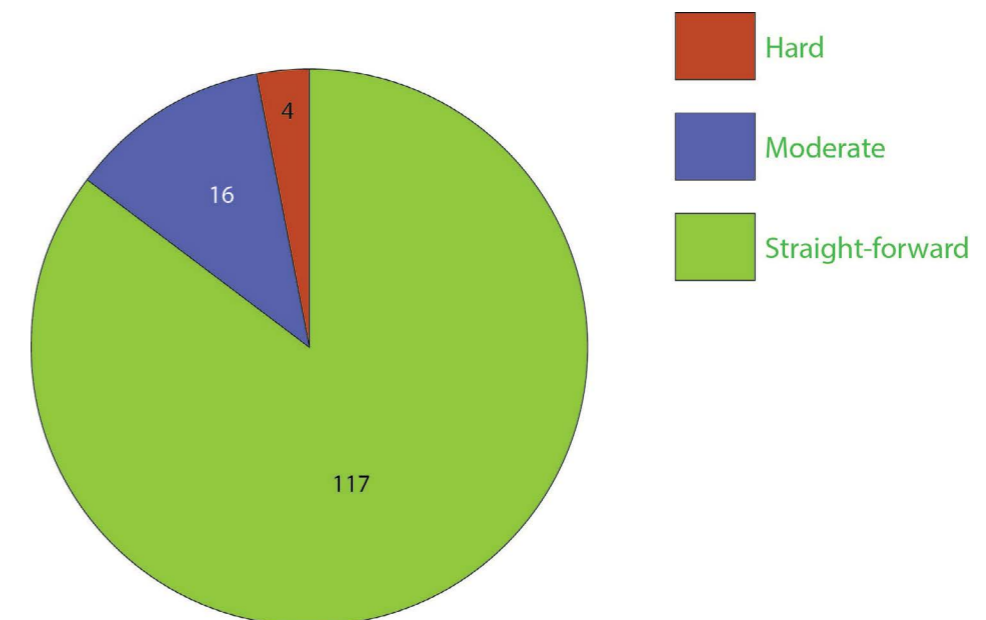
B. HOW EASY WAS IT TO COMPLETE THE BOOKING PROCESS?

Our researchers then tested the booking form on the hotel website. Every step in the booking process is a potential banana skin; any ambiguity or clunkiness and the user could abandon the booking and look elsewhere for their accommodation.

This test was purely subjective, although we did use the following criteria to rank the hotels:

- Straight-forward: The process was clear and the form remembered data, such as how many people were in the party, if we changed our dates.
- Moderate: If we changed dates, the data we had previously entered was forgotten, or there was more than one way to fill out the calendar.
- Difficult: The process was slow, confusing and the form did not remember data if we changed our dates so we had to start again.

We experienced problems on 15% of the hotel websites when we tried to make a simple booking. However, we were pleased that 85% were straight-forward:



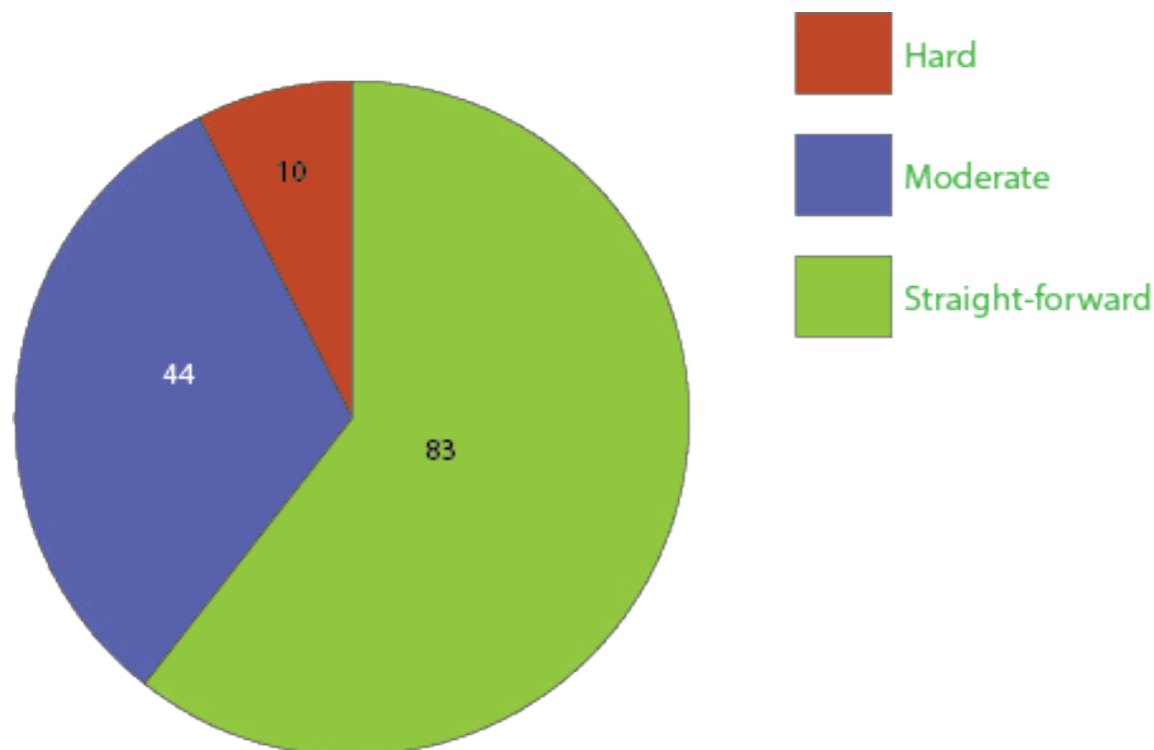
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C. HOW EASY WAS IT TO CHANGE THE DETAILS WE HAD PROVIDED ON THE BOOKING FORM?

Going further, we decided to test whether it was easy to make changes to the booking form on the hotel website when we were half-way through the booking process. We used the following criteria:

- Straight-forward: If we made a change to our booking form half-way through the process, the other details we had entered remained the same (unless we needed to change them)
- Moderate: Some of the details remained, others went blank and had to be filled in again
- Difficult: The form forgot all of the previously entered details and we had to input everything again

61% of the forms were easy to amend, while 7% made it difficult for the user:



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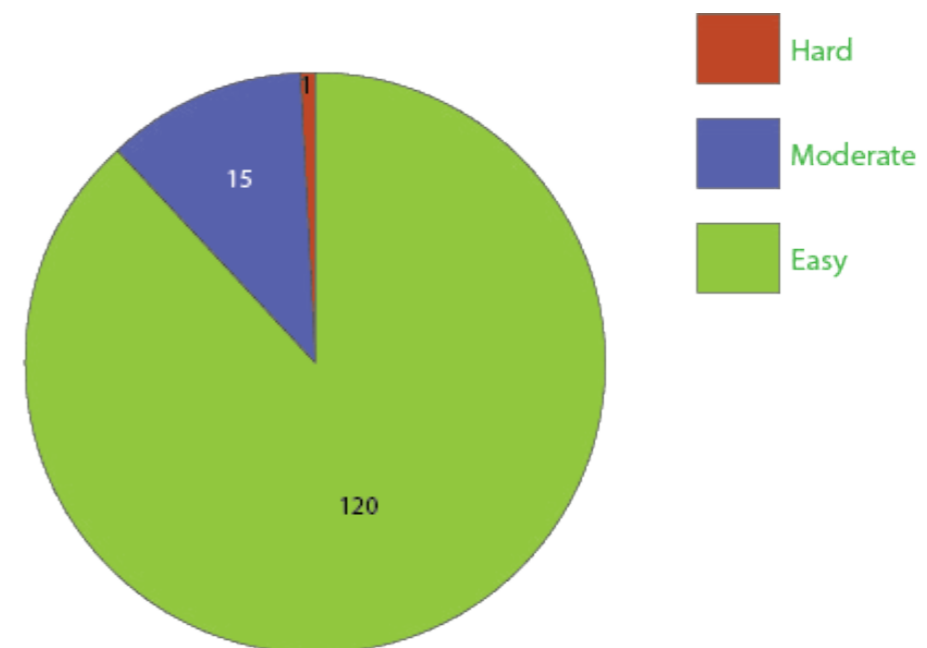
D. HOW EASY WAS IT TO COMPLETE THE GUEST DETAILS FORM?

It is possible to lose customers at any stage of the online booking process. However, the ease in which a customer can type in their personal information, such as name, address, and e-mail address, can have a significant impact on whether the customer completes the transaction or gets fed up and walks away.

Our researchers looked at how the 156 hotels gathered guest information from us. Our scoring criteria this time:

- Straight-forward: The form was well structured and easy to follow.
- Moderate: The form was occasionally unclear or asked for unnecessary information.
- Difficult: The form was poorly structured and requested unnecessary information.

We were pleased to see that only 1% of the websites made it difficult for us to complete the guest details form, while 88% were straight-forward.

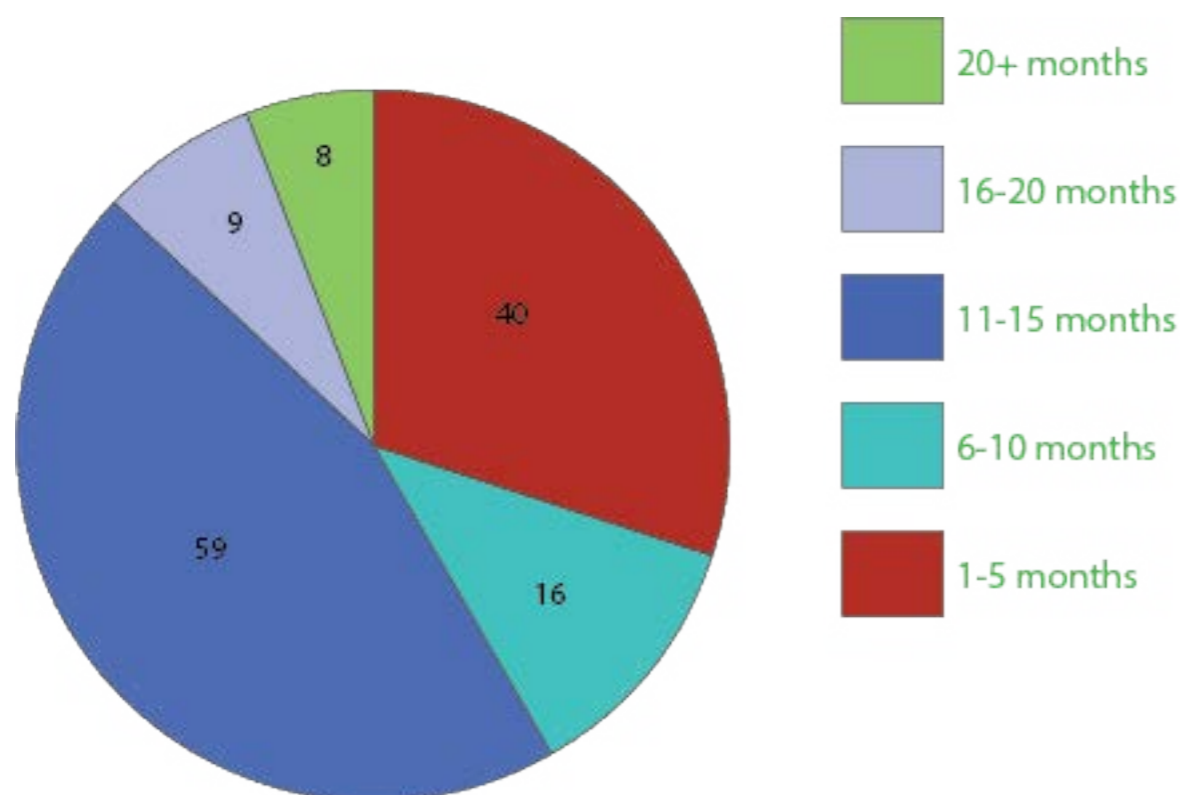


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E. HOW FAR IN ADVANCE WERE WE ABLE TO BOOK ONLINE?

We also looked at how far in advance we were able to book a room using the online booking system on the hotel's website.

The most popular approach (45%) was for hotels to accept online bookings up to 11-15 months in advance. We were surprised that 30% of hotels with online booking only allowed bookings to be made for the next 1-5 months. We suspect that many hotels were only booking to the end of 2012 – our research was done in July and August which meant that December was only 5 months away. If we had tested in May, the results may well have been skewed towards 6-10 months instead. But the fact remains that a quarter of the hotels were not able to accept bookings for Valentine's Day or beyond.

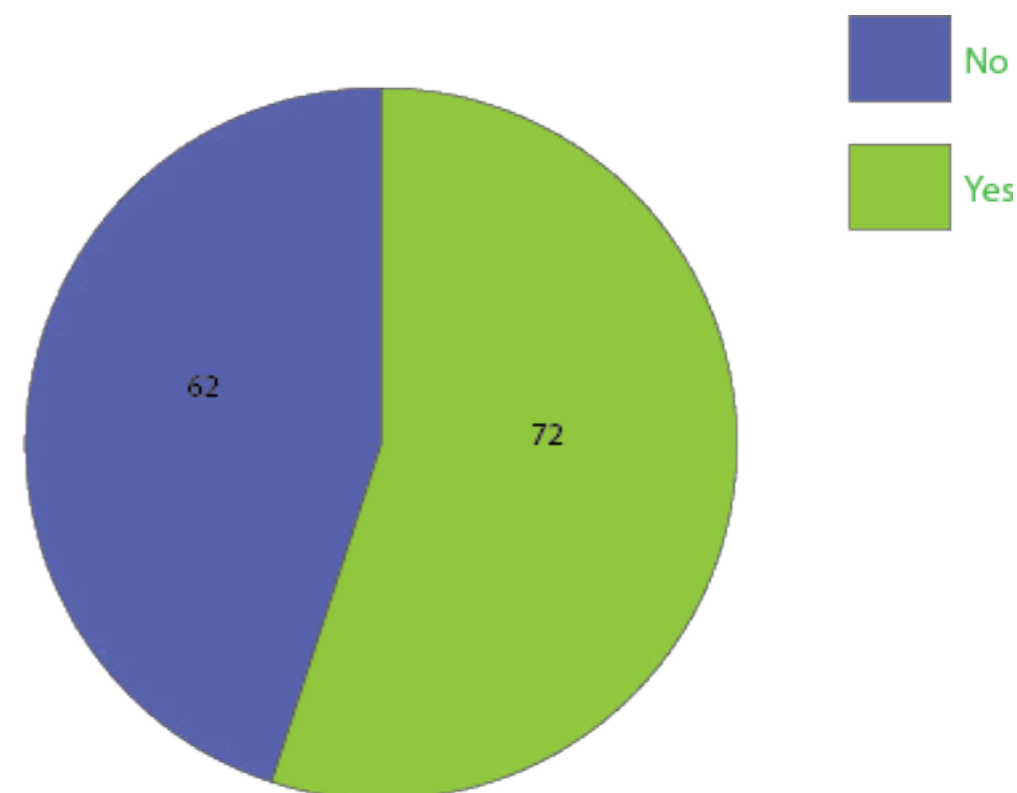


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F. DOES THE BOOKING SYSTEM MAKE A 'QUICK CALL' BEFORE CONTINUING TO THE NEXT STAGE?

If you've ever filled in a form online and pressed submit, only to discover that one or more fields were incorrect and you had to go back to them, you'll know how frustrating it can be. This is why many websites these days make a 'quick call' to the server as you're completing the form – for example, if I accidentally leave out the '@' in my e-mail address, a user friendly website would be able to validate that and alert me with a red asterisk or message before I moved on to the other fields and tried to submit the completed form.

We were pleased to see that 55% of the hotels we tested that had an online booking form were carrying out quick calls to provide a more responsive and helpful online service to the user:

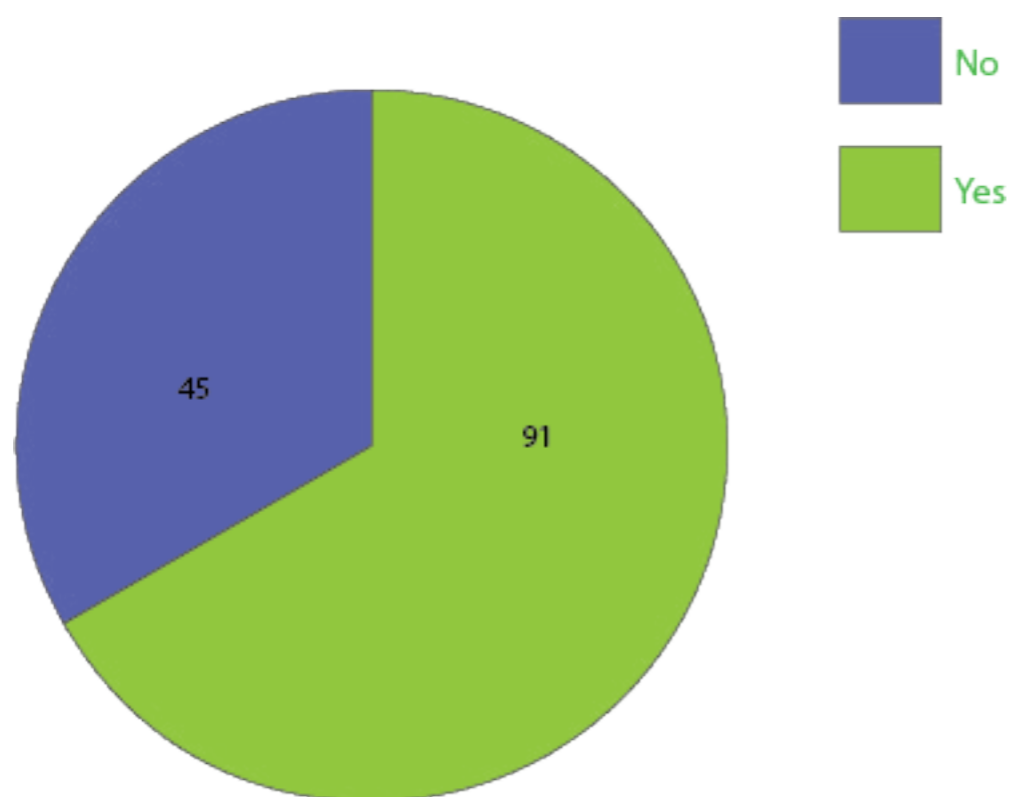


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G. WAS A PRICE BREAKDOWN SHOWN BEFORE PAYMENT?

In this question we looked at whether we were shown a total price breakdown, including tax and other costs, before we got to the payment stage.

67% of the hotels with online booking showed a clear price breakdown on their booking forms:

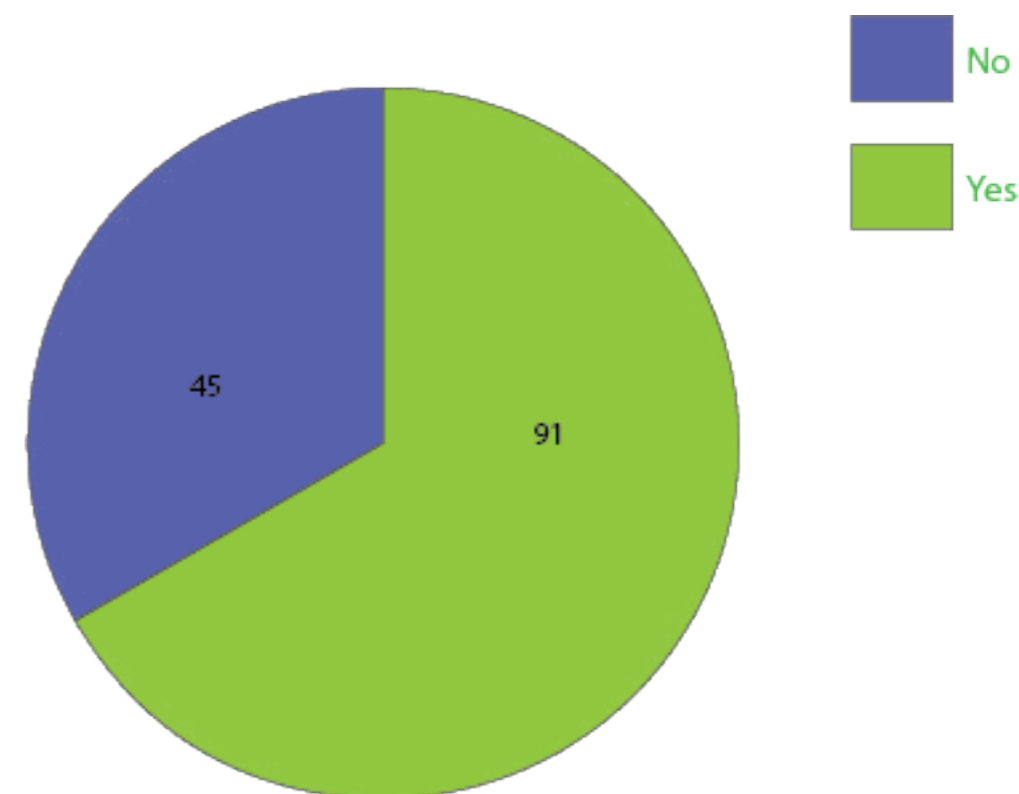


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H. WAS ANY HELP PROVIDED ON THE BOOKING FORM?

Even the most simple booking form can sometimes confuse people. In this question, we looked at whether any assistance was provided during the booking process – for example, did the user have access to any frequently asked questions, a phone number, an instant messaging service, an email address or an instructive pop-up box.

We were surprised to find that 34% of the hotels with an online booking system did not provide any help on the booking form:



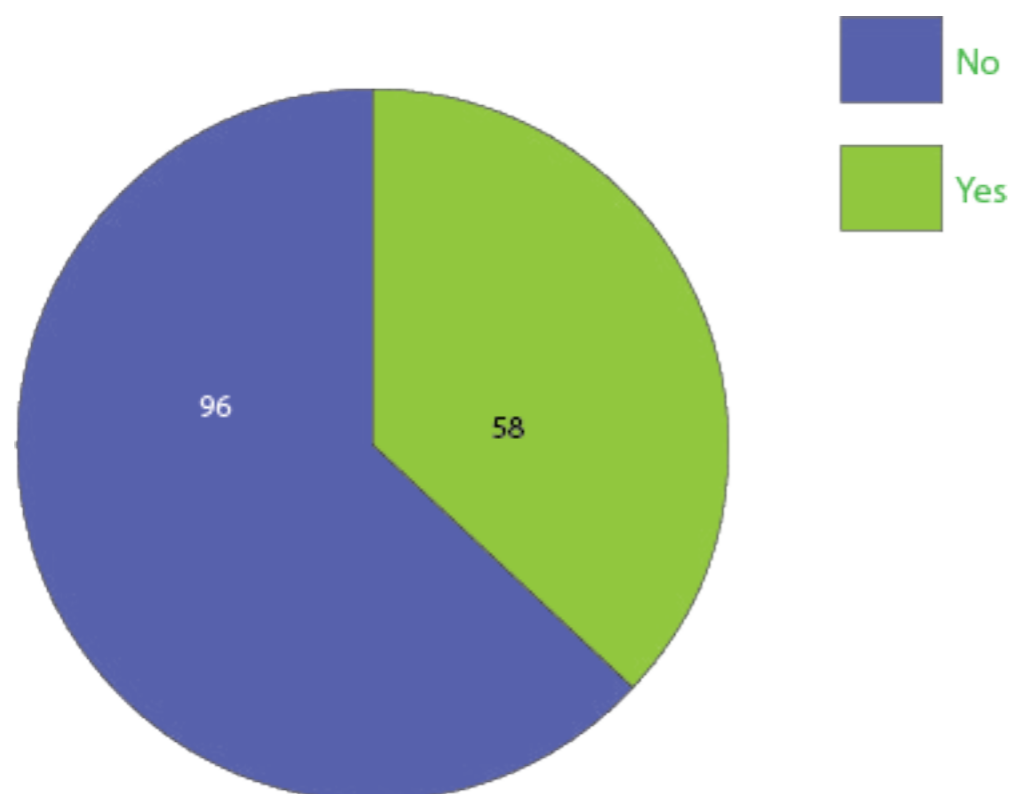
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I. CAN ADDITIONAL ITEMS BE PURCHASED DURING THE ONLINE ROOM BOOKING PROCESS?

Are independent hotels able to offer additional extras during the online booking process? Cross-sells, such as champagne, spa treatments, or meals, or up-selling to a larger room can help to increase revenues if it is done in a way that doesn't impede the booking.

We found that 38% of hotels with online booking gave us an option to purchase additional products during the process. The most popular items were flowers, wine, champagne, chocolates and balloons.

What was also interesting was that the 4 star hotels were most likely to be offering additional products during the online booking process.



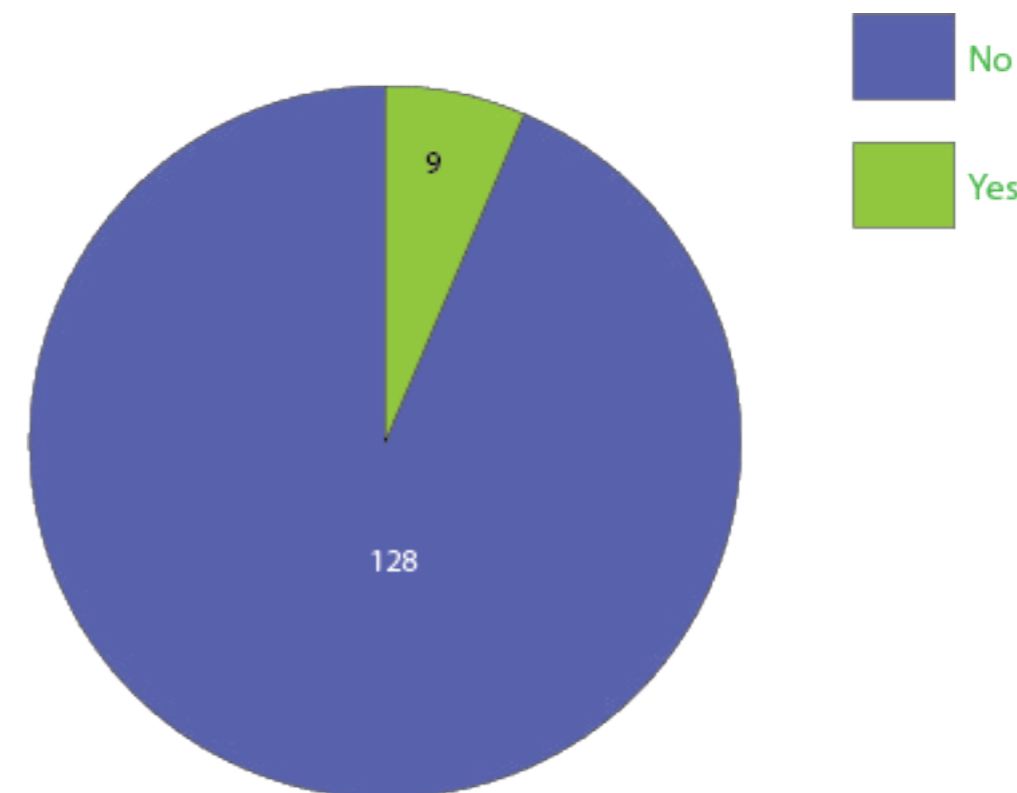
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J. WAS IT POSSIBLE TO MAKE A RESTAURANT RESERVATION DURING THE ONLINE BOOKING PROCESS?

Unlike champagne and balloons, most guests staying in a hotel will require an evening meal. Encouraging guests to use the hotel restaurant is therefore an important cross-selling opportunity.

We tested each hotel website to see whether we could make a reservation in the hotel's restaurant during the room booking process. We had to be able to reserve a specific time – ticking a box to say 'I'd like dinner' didn't count.

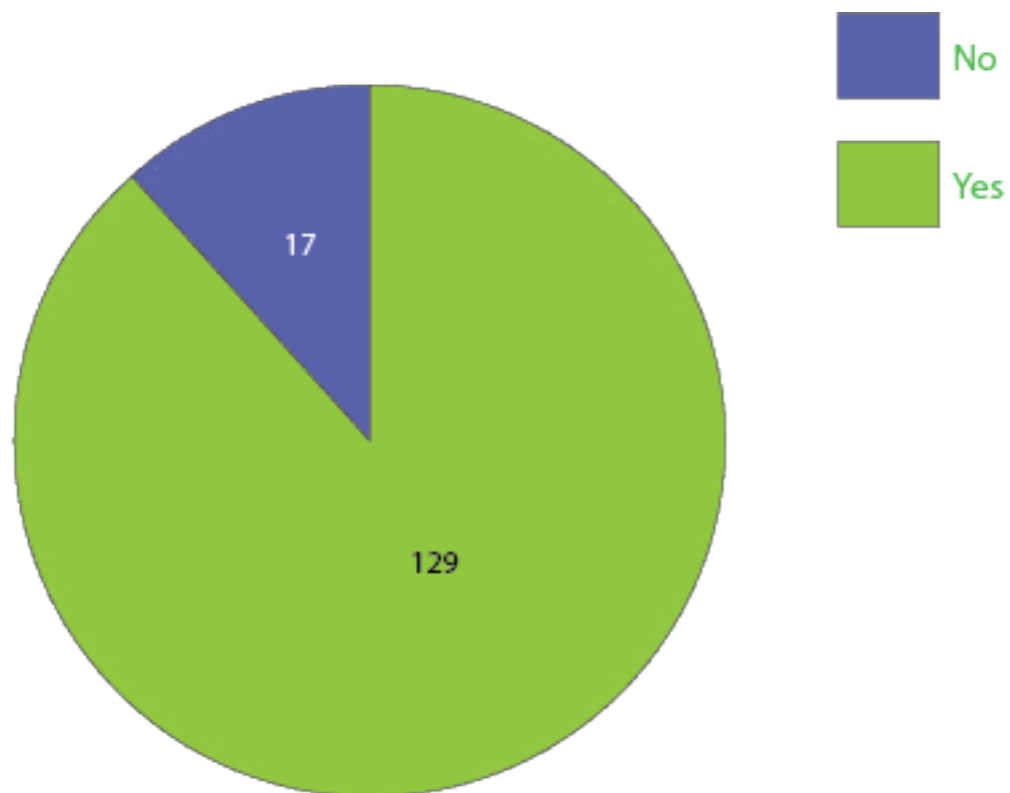
Only 7% of the hotels with online booking allowed us to make a dinner reservation during the booking process:



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K. WAS THERE AN OPTION FOR BOOKING CHILDREN?

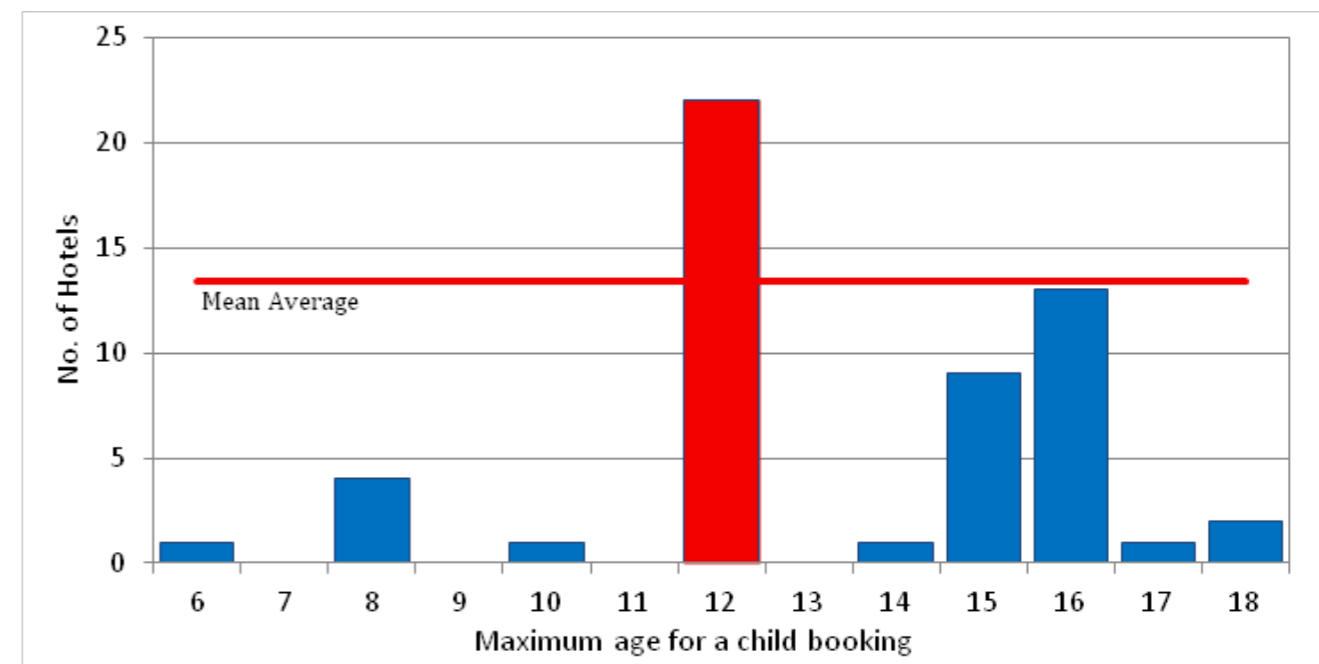
83% of the hotels with online booking on their websites gave us the option to book children in separately online:



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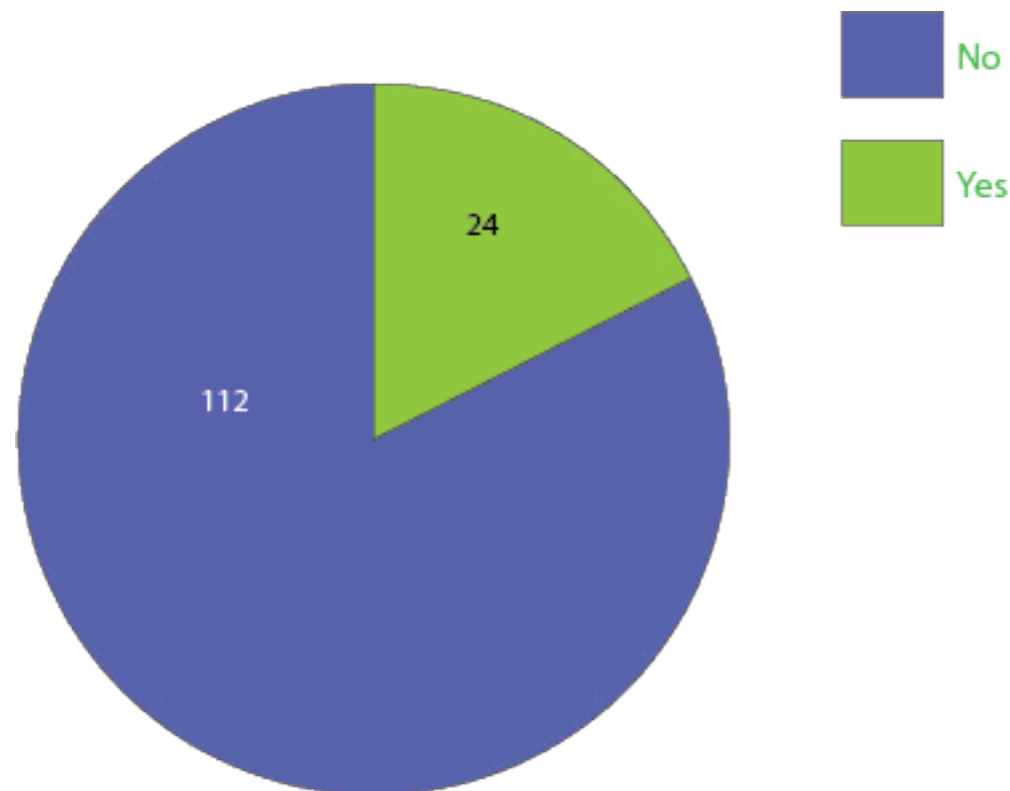
L. WHAT WAS THE AGE LIMIT FOR CHILDREN?

The maximum age for child bookings ranged from 6 to 18 years. The most popular age limit was 12:



M. WAS THERE A DISCOUNT FOR PRE-PAYMENT?

18% of the hotels with online booking offered a discount if we paid for our accommodation at the time of booking. This was usually around 10% of the total price.



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4. SOCIAL MEDIA

85%

of the hotels had a Facebook page

35%

responded to a tweet from us asking them about their hotel

37%

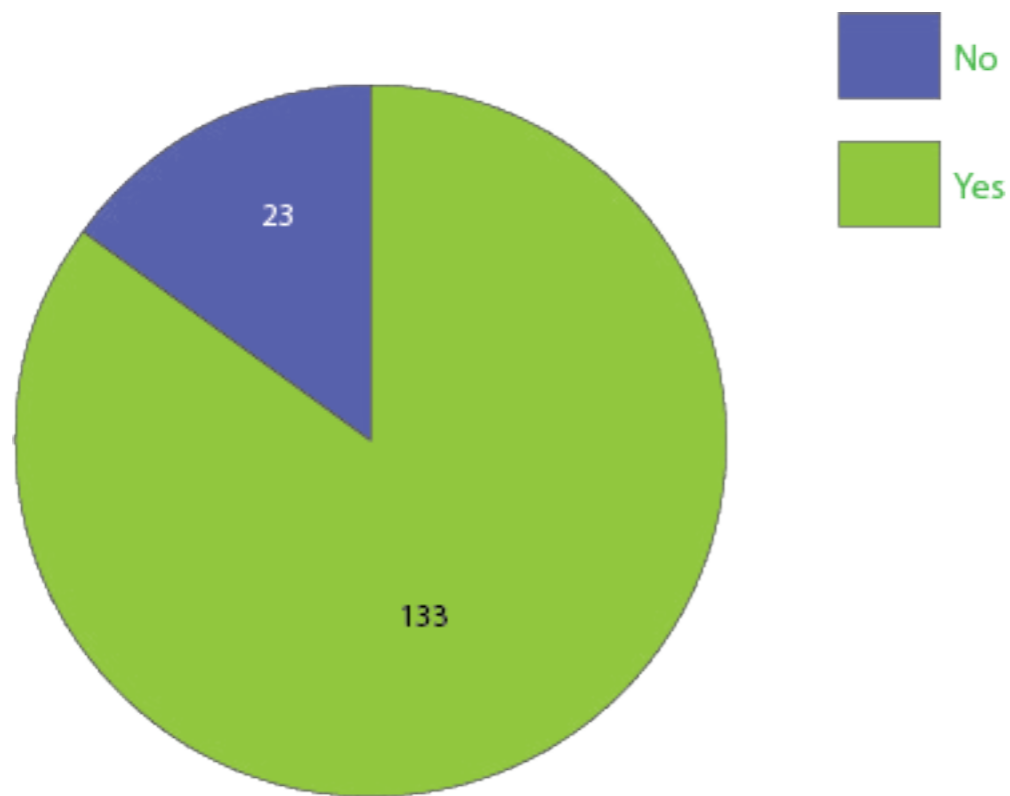
were responding to all reviews of their hotel on TripAdvisor, whether good or bad

39%

of the hotels had an e-mail newsletter

A. DID THE HOTEL HAVE A FACEBOOK PROFILE?

A very impressive 85% of the hotels had a Facebook profile:

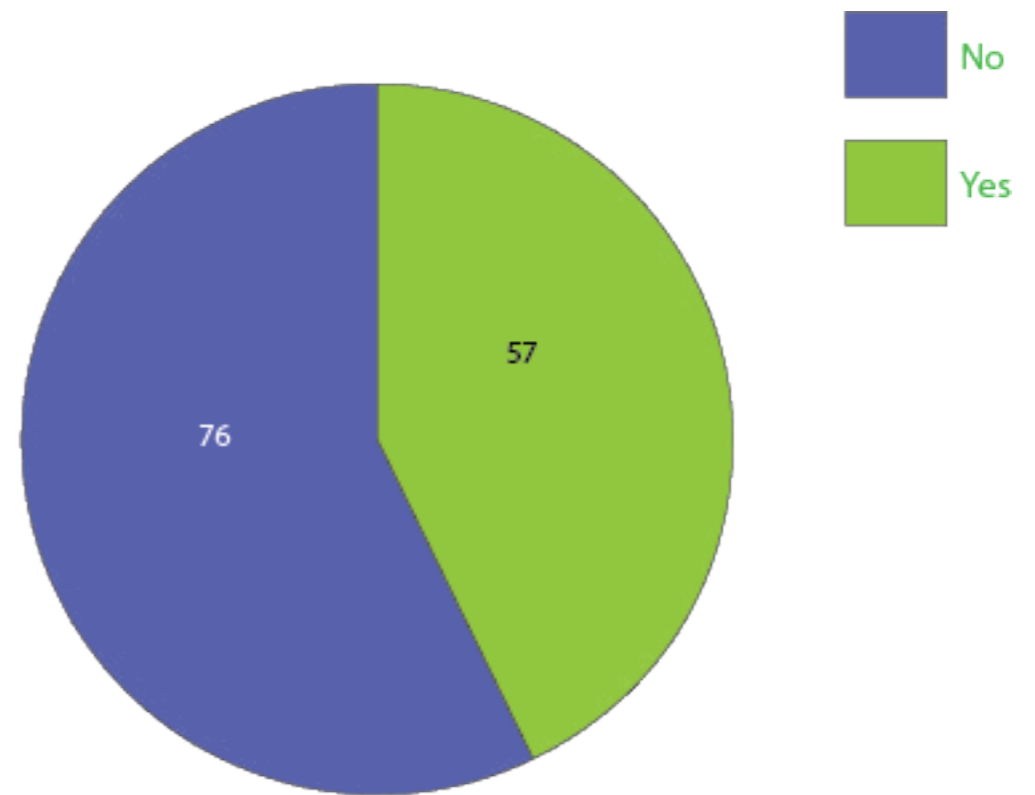


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B. IF THE HOTEL HAS A FACEBOOK PAGE, DO THEY ADVERTISE OFFERS AND PROMOTIONS ON IT?

We decided to look at the hotels' Facebook profiles to see if they were proactively using them to advertise offers and promotions.

Surprisingly, we found that 57% of the hotels that had a Facebook profile did not post details of any special offers on their Facebook pages:

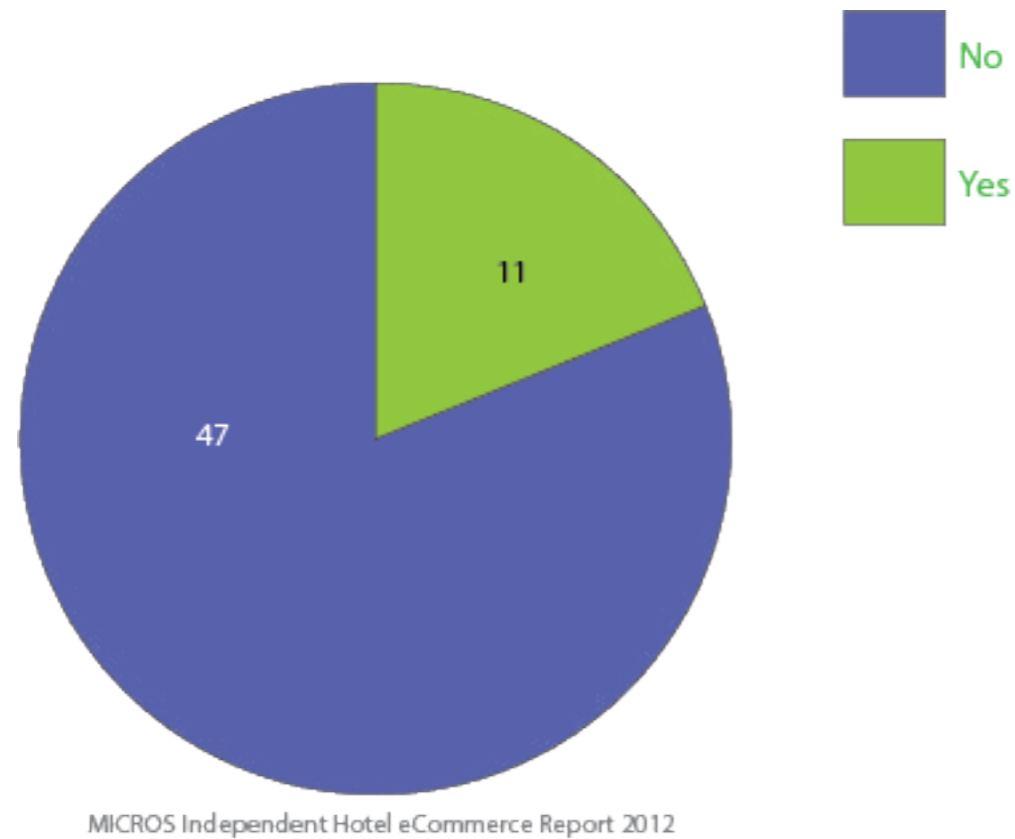


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C. IF THE HOTEL DID ADVERTISE OFFERS ON FACEBOOK DID IT HAVE AN AUTO-POPULATED LINK?

If the hotel was offering a special deal, for example a Halloween weekend offer, and promoting it on Facebook, had the link been auto-populated? So if the customer clicked through, were the dates of 26-28 October already set in the online booking process, or did the guest have to do it themselves?

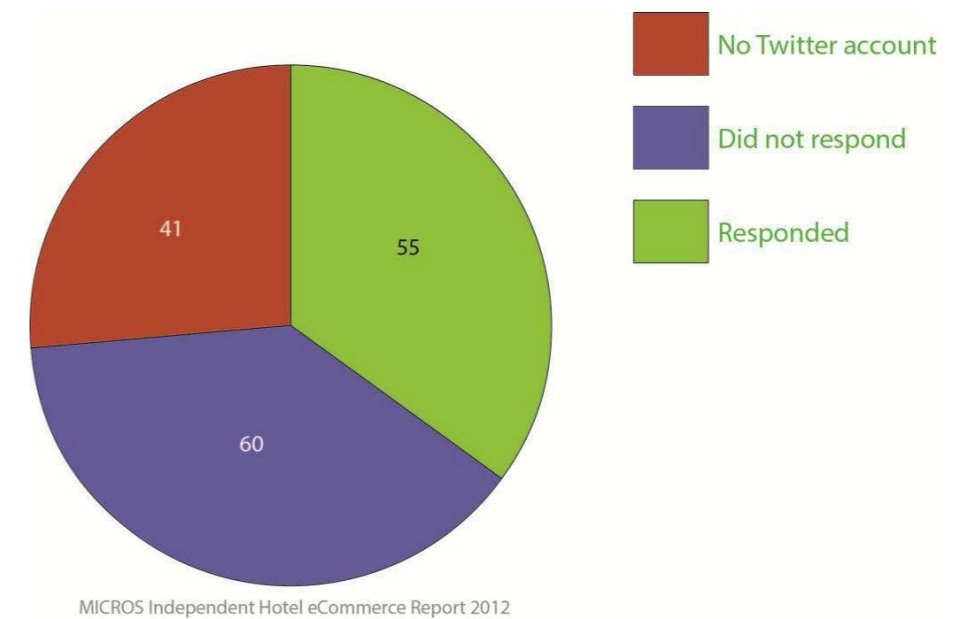
Only 19% of the hotels were using auto-populated links:



D. HOW DID THE HOTEL RESPOND TO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ON TWITTER?

We tweeted each of the hotels with a question, such as 'do you allow children?'

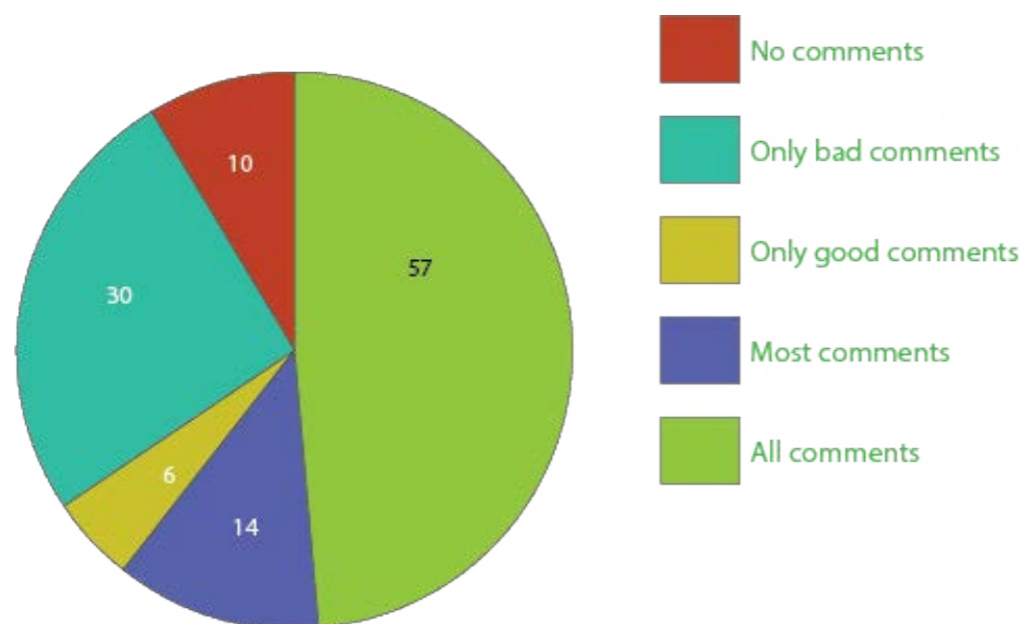
We found that 41 hotels (26%) did not have a Twitter account at all. 35% of the hotels responded in some form, while 39% did have a Twitter account but did not reply to us:



E. DID THE HOTEL RESPOND TO COMMENTS ABOUT THEIR HOTEL ON TRIPADVISOR?

We looked at each of the hotels on TripAdvisor to see how actively they were responding to guest reviews.

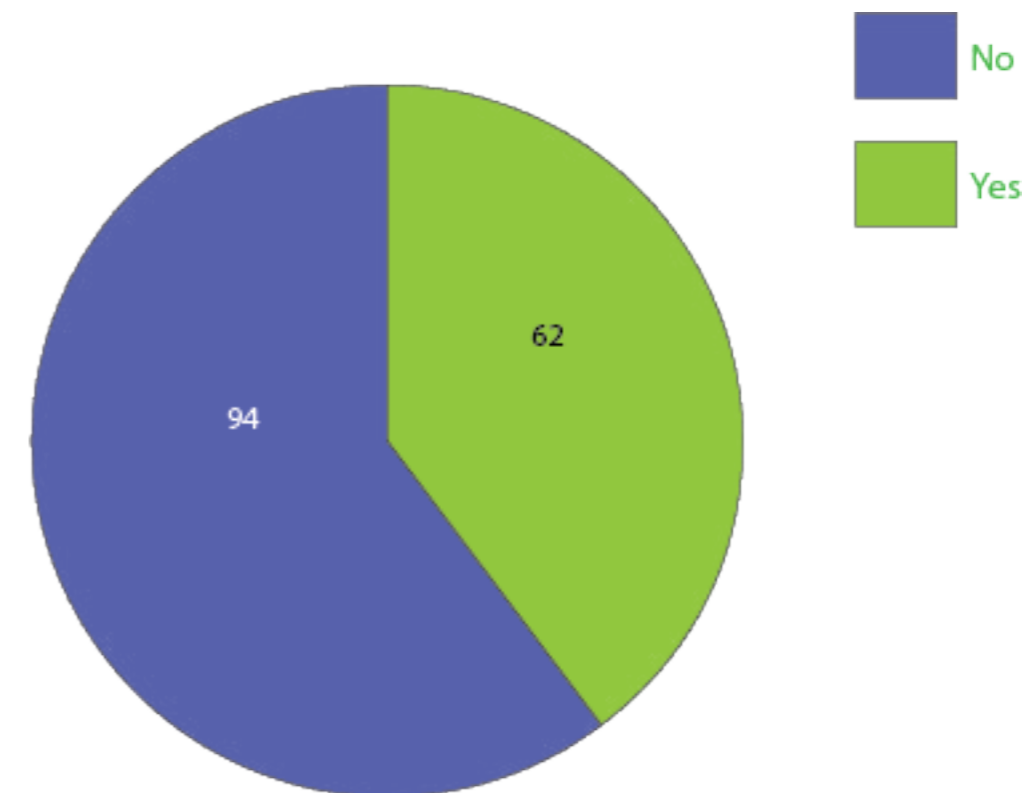
39% of the hotels with a profile on TripAdvisor were responding to all comments, good and bad. At the other extreme, 27% of hotels were not responding to any comments at all. A fifth were only responding to negative comments (the average to terrible categories), while 4% were answering only good comments. 10% made an effort to respond to all categories of comments but were not managing to reply to them all.



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F. DID THE HOTEL HAVE AN E-MAIL NEWSLETTER?

Finally, we looked into whether the hotels were using e-mail marketing to engage with guests. 41% allowed us to sign up to a newsletter, which often included information about activities and events that had or were going to occur at the hotel and also information about offers and promotions. (Other hotels might also be using e-mail marketing for guests that stay at the hotel - we did not place a booking.)

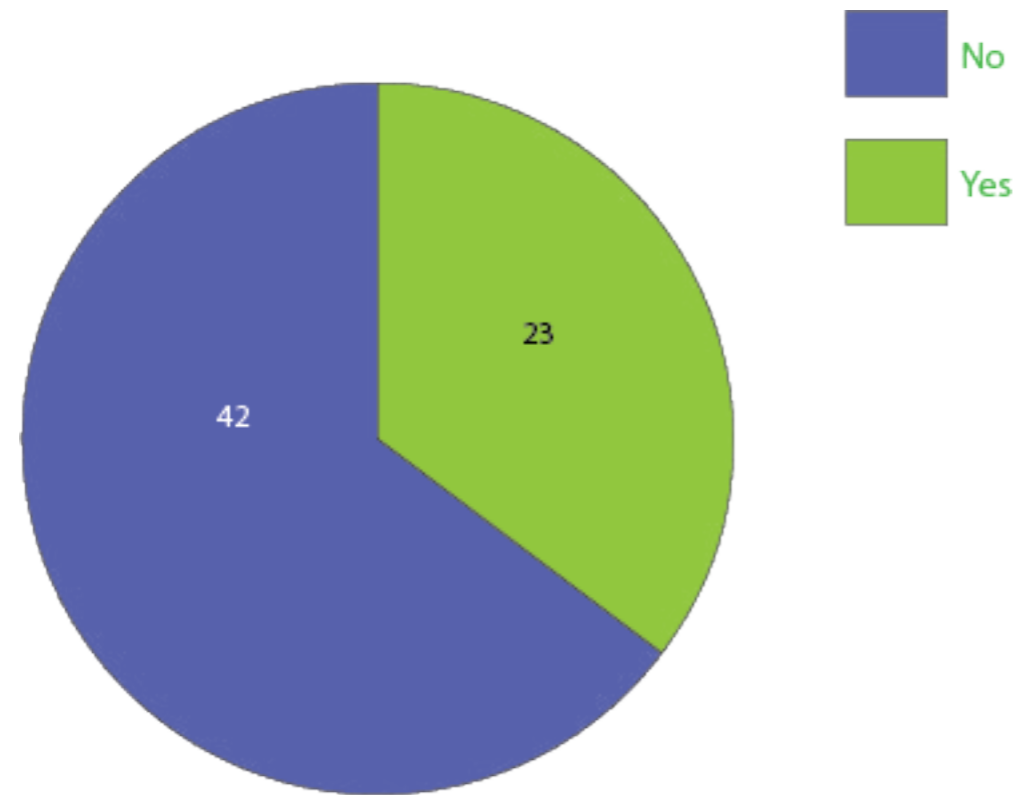


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G. WAS THE NEWSLETTER TAILORED TO THE CUSTOMER?

When we signed up for the e-mail newsletter, were we asked about our interests so that the hotel could tailor the newsletters to our preferences?

35% of the hotels asked us about our preferences when we were signing up to their e-mail newsletter:



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CREDITS

Thanks to Roisin McAteer and the MICROS eCommerce Services team.

MORE INFORMATION

For more information about MICROS and our web and mobile solutions for the hospitality industry:

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Find out more about what MICROS can do for you

For more information about our solutions for hotels please contact us at mfuksales@micros.com or on 01753 501607

About MICROS

MICROS is the world's leading developer of applications for the hospitality and retail industries. We deliver enterprise technology solutions for hotels, restaurants, conference centres, retail, stadiums, theme parks, golf courses, spas, educational establishments, casinos and cruise ships, helping our customers to grow their businesses. We offer a wide range of integrated software, hardware, eCommerce and business technology solutions and services, all delivered with specialist expertise. Working with you, we help to optimise your operation and increase profits by providing your guests with a personalised service.

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