

WORLDHOTELS members predict future tourism trends

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The owners of some of the world's most exclusive hotels have revealed their predictions for the future of tourism. WORLDHOTELS' 500 plus members took part in a survey where they were asked to anticipate new trends in key areas such as business growth, environment, customer expectation, customer booking behaviour, internet booking and customer relationship management (CRM). The results reveal an upbeat mood amongst the hoteliers who expect revenue to continue to increase in the next few years.

A total of 84% WORLDHOTELS members' owners and managers believe that the current positive trading conditions will continue for at least the next three years. In addition, 88% believed their REVPAR will be higher in 2008, due to factors such as improved yield management, advanced revenue strategies or increased demand.

Environmental concerns are currently dominating the media and the survey revealed that Hoteliers see ecotourism as another way of increasing business. When asked, 92% believed that addressing environmental factors would improve business while, 77% felt that this would raise profitability. Working with suppliers to establish a 'green' supply chain was picked out as the issue they believe customers felt the most strongly about.

Looking to meet customers' expectations is a key factor in running a hotel so the survey asked hoteliers what they felt were the most important considerations for business customers. Offering the Best Available Rate topped the list for 82% of those questioned. Other important concerns included free wireless internet access which 78% felt this was important and the quality of the hotel website, 74% felt this was important.

The importance of the internet in helping hotels to grow was again highlighted when looking at customer booking behaviour. A total of 86% of those surveyed believed that in the next three years consumers will use hotel websites in preference to online travel agents and therefore cutting out a third party. While 57% believed the increased significance of internet and online distribution channels will see control over rates inventory shift to the Hotel Industry during the next three years. Compared to 27% who felt it would shift towards distribution channels and 16% who thought there would be no change.

Before or after the stay of any guest CRM, is often seen as a crucial way of guaranteeing customers book repeat stays. This was confirmed in the survey with 86% of those asked agreeing that CRM will be important to the hotel industry in the next three years.

For more information on WORLDHOTELS please visit www.worldhotels.com

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