

New Study Finds GDS Hotel Promotions Have a Growing Influence on Bookings

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Now over 50 Percent of travel agents with ad recall, book the advertised hotel

TravelCLICK, Inc. the leading provider of eMarketing solutions for the hotel industry, today released results from a survey that demonstrates travel agents continue to increase their reliance on Global Distribution Systems (GDS) promotions for hotel bookings. Conducted for TravelCLICK by Phoenix Marketing International, the online, biannual survey included 500 travel agents from 30 countries, representing the four major GDS systems -- Amadeus, Galileo, Sabre, and Worldspan.

The study finds that 41 percent of travel agents worldwide are using their GDS platform more often than in the past, while 30 percent are using the GDS shopping displays more often. When asked about their awareness of GDS promotional messages, 55 percent of travel agents recalled seeing promotional messages in the past three months. Of this group, 52 percent made a booking at a hotel shown in the promotional message they saw, while 68 percent requested more information by looking at the click-through screen attached to the promotional message, and more than 70 percent looked inside the GDS systems for more information.

"Compared to the earlier study, the likelihood that an agent will book a hotel as a result of a promotional message has increased significantly from 40 percent in 2005 to 52 percent in 2007," said David Pluchino, Senior Research Manager at Phoenix Marketing International. "This increase indicates the agents' growing awareness and reliance on GDS promotions to find relevant, high-value choices for their clients."

Among those agents who recalled seeing promotional messages, 80 percent felt that showing the best available rate offered by the hotel -- even if it is not a negotiated rate -- is the best way to get them to book a hotel while they are researching a hotel for negotiated rates.

The survey also sheds light on the effectiveness of display ad content. Those surveyed ranked the details in promotional messages that are most likely to lead them to book a particular hotel. In order of importance, travel agents are most likely to book when the promotion:

1. Shows a rate that they can actually book for the dates they are searching for (43 percent)
2. Shows only the destination they are searching for (16 percent)
3. Shows the hotel's GDS property ID (14 percent)
4. Is competitive, offering a value greater than the hotel's standard available rates (14 percent)
5. Includes information on amenities, travel agent incentives, and other add-ons in addition to price (13 percent)

"Driving over 30 percent of overall hotel bookings, GDS purchase decisions are beginning to mirror the behaviors of shoppers on the Internet -- relevant, targeted promotions help shoppers make informed decisions faster and with confidence," said John Hach, vice president of eMarketing solutions at TravelCLICK. "As a result, we are seeing higher performance from hotel GDS promotional messages as agent adoption increases."

Survey results also reveal that most travel agents worldwide believe GDS systems should offer rate parity: 89 percent of US travel agents and 76 percent of international travel agents said it was very important to see the same rates available on all platforms.

A copy of the study presentation is available at <http://www.travelclick.net/>. Click on 2007 Global Travel Agent GDS Study.

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