

## Technomic finds that foodservice programs can tip the scales for hotel guests

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Most hotel patrons would say that they don't choose a hotel based on foodservice amenities such as complimentary breakfasts, room service programs, or in-hotel restaurants. But recent research by foodservice consultants Technomic found that these and other foodservice components are, in fact, an important underlying driver in hotel selection.

'Many hotel executives say that foodservice is a loss leader that is only provided out of necessity. But in surveying both business and leisure travelers, we found that foodservice definitely shapes their decisions in choosing a hotel,' says Darren Tristano, Executive Vice President of Technomic. 'It's an important component that should not be discounted.' Tristano explained that while all hotel patrons indicated strong preferences for certain foodservice amenities, their needs varied considerably by type of traveler.

These differences will be discussed in detail when Technomic presents its findings on consumer preferences and hotel foodservice trends on September 18 at the Hotel Food & Beverage 2009 Trends and Directions Conference, among the related findings in their recently-published Hotel Food and Beverage Consumer Trend Report:

On average, women say that 81 percent of their hotel stays are for leisure and only about one-fifth (19 percent) are for business. Men also report traveling more often for leisure (59 percent) than for business (40 percent), but display less skewed results.

Complimentary offerings such as breakfast or 24-hour coffee service resonate strongly with all consumers. Fully 72 percent of leisure travelers and 71 percent of business travelers say a complimentary breakfast is important when choosing a hotel.

Consumers attending catered hotel events for business are mostly male, whereas those attending such events for leisure purposes tend to be female.

Business travelers strongly favor hotel restaurants that are open late, well over half (54 percent) say that this is a very important factor in their decision of where to stay.

Thirty-six percent of consumers surveyed said they had cut back on leisure travel over the past one to two years. Of these, 78 percent said they have less money to spend and that value offerings and added incentives at hotels are becoming increasingly important.

When consumers visit a location, whether it is for business or leisure, they want to experience the culture of their destination. Hotel operators that incorporate local culture and cuisine into their foodservice offerings can attract guests who enjoy the convenience of in-hotel dining along with the ambiance of the hotel's surroundings.

Lobby and lounge dining/drinking is gaining popularity, it allows for a great deal of socialization to occur and makes the hotel appear hip and fun.

The Hotel Food and Beverage Consumer Trend Report is an attitude and usage study based on 2,000 U.S. consumers and 250 Canadian consumers who either stayed at a U.S.-based hotel or attended a catered hotel event in the past 90 days.

Technomic also recently conducted a major study for foodservice manufacturers in partnership with Hotel F&B magazine, titled *Understanding the Hotel/Lodging Foodservice Segment: A Strategic Evaluation of Trends and Opportunities*.

For more information on the upcoming conference or other Technomic products and programs focused on the hotel/lodging foodservice segment, please contact Chris Urban of Technomic at 312-506-3929

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