

HOTEL'S TUTORIAL



**HOTELFRIEND®**  
Next generation of Hotel Stay

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# The ultimate guest experience guide

[www.hotelfriend.com](http://www.hotelfriend.com)

# Contents

<b>1. The hotel guest experience landscape .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Mapping the customer journey .....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 What is it? .....	2
2.2 The customer journey in practice .....	2
<b>3. Take action to boost customer journeys .....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1 Where to begin .....	6
Step 1: Book — knowing your guests .....	6
Step 2: Check-in — engaging with your guests .....	7
Step 3: Stay — delighting your guests .....	8
Step 4: Do — empowering your guests .....	9
Step 5: Get help — hearing your guests .....	10
Step 6: Check out — rewarding your guests .....	10
3.2 How to optimize the next-generation guest experience .....	11
<b>4. 360° guest journey: How HotelFriend software improves the guest experience. ....</b>	<b>12</b>

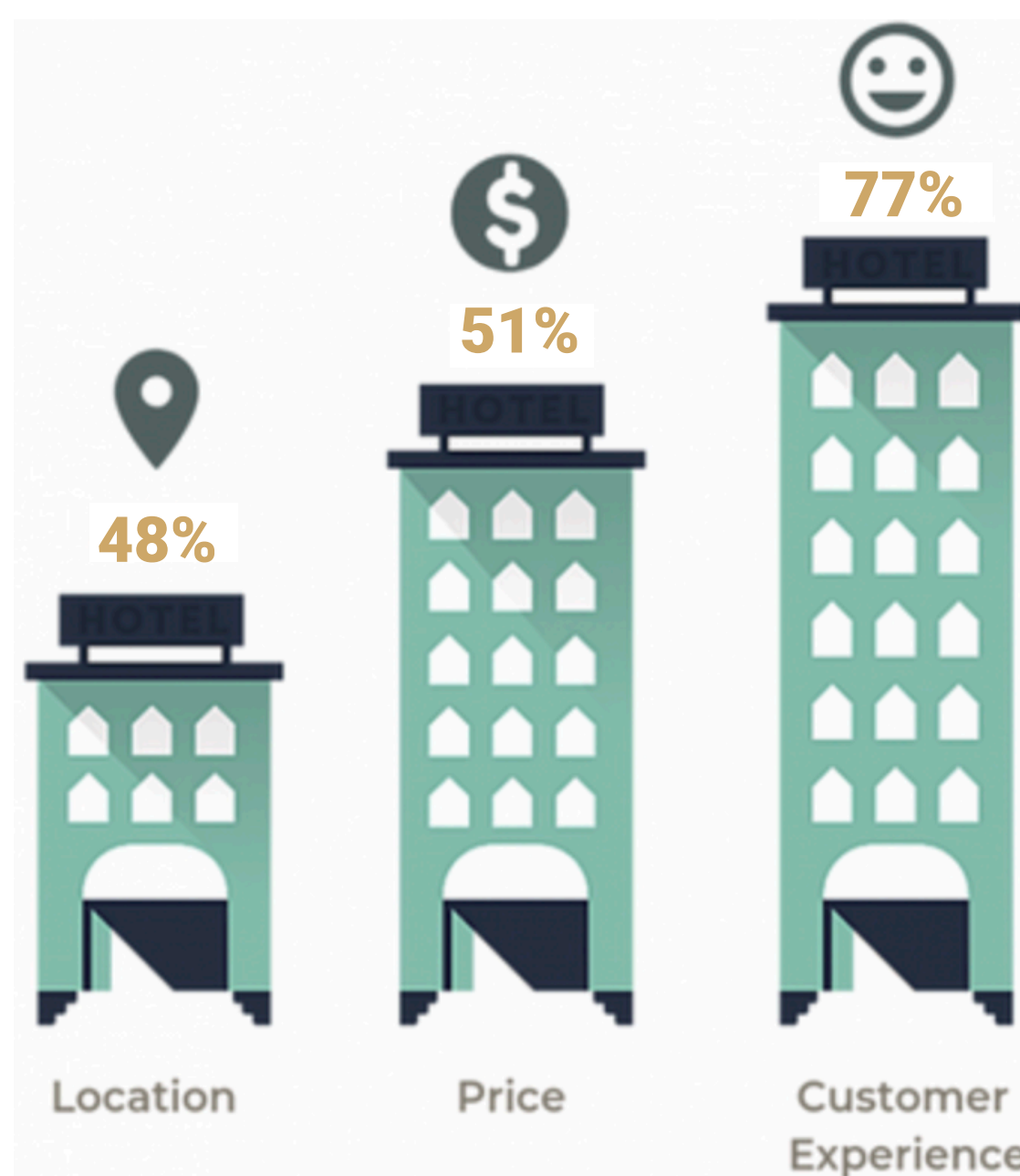
Today, hotel guests want and expect much more from each stay. Keeping this in mind, hoteliers and hotel staff cater to their every need and individual requests. However, they omit one thing: the customer's journey to the hotel starts long before guests book a room and doesn't end when they leave.

So, as a hotelier, how can you tune into your guests' journey to boost loyalty and drive repeat business?

Our hotel guest experience guide taps into how to incorporate customer journey strategies and new technologies into your business to help you meet new consumer needs and differentiate your hotel brand in this ever-changing marketplace.

## The hotel guest experience landscape

Research by [Harris Poll](#) and [Eventbrite](#) found that 78% of guests would prefer to spend their money on experiences rather than things.



Source: [https://eventbrite-s3.s3.amazonaws.com/marketing/Millennials\\_Research/Gen\\_PR\\_Final.pdf](https://eventbrite-s3.s3.amazonaws.com/marketing/Millennials_Research/Gen_PR_Final.pdf)

In hospitality, the shift to experiences has given rise to disruptive business models as travelers seek the authenticity of local experiences instead of the accommodation and activities typically designed with tourists in mind. To adapt to their tastes, innovative hotels are giving more priority to the social spaces and experiences they offer.

Also, technological innovation will continue to reshape the hospitality industry. From chatbots and robots to Internet-of-Things connectivity, smart uses of technology will provide an opportunity for brands to flex their creativity, bridge online and offline channels, and deliver a better customer experience.

Yet, the human touch in building guest relationships will not disappear. Being a people-centric industry, the hospitality business may deliver greater personalization and better service by combining digital with the human touch.

The reality today is that the guest experience has become inseparable from the customer journey.



Mapping the customer journey

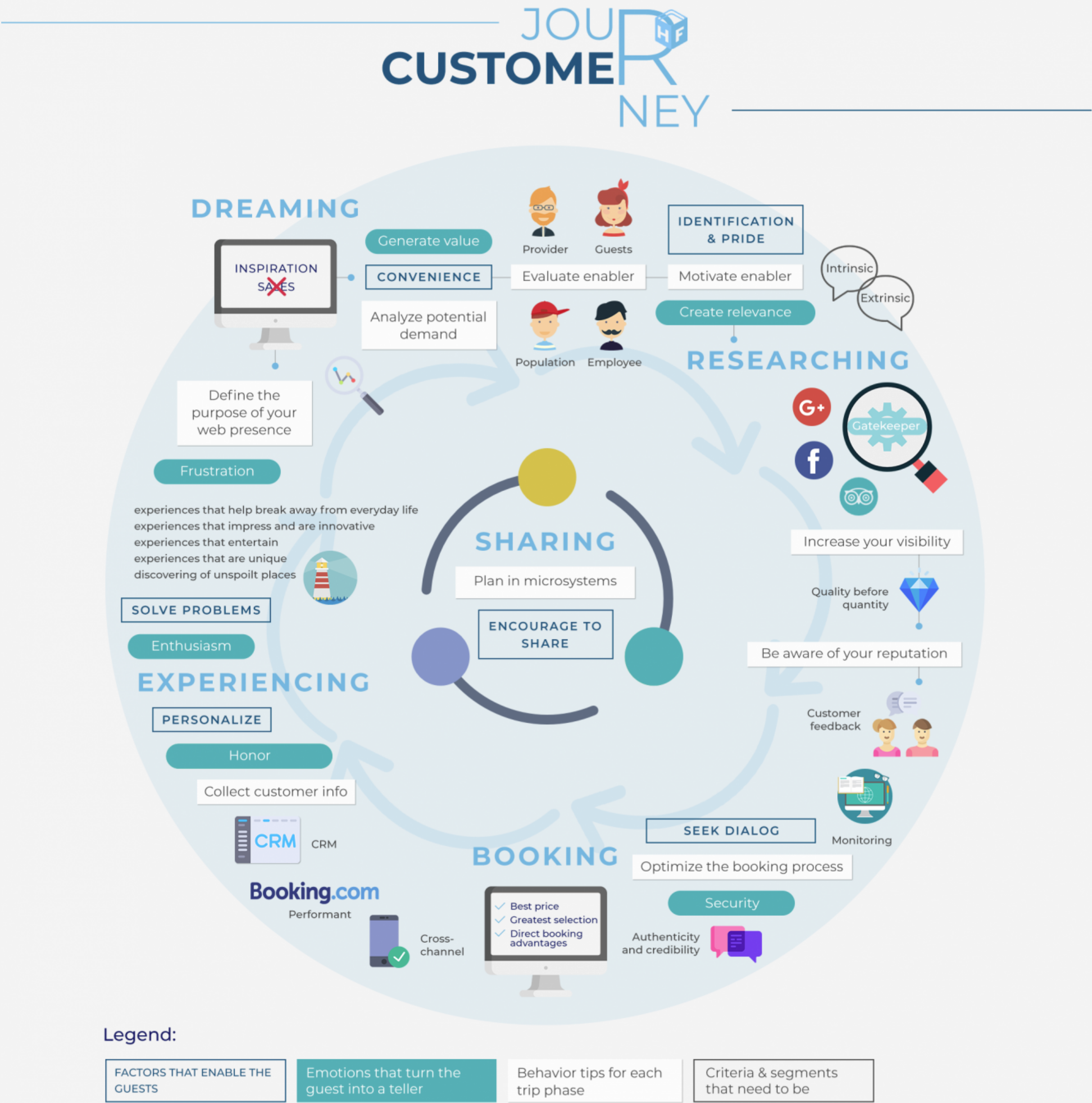
Have you ever thought about how your hotel is perceived by your guests? The truth is that there are differences between how a hotelier sees it and how customers do. Most guest decisions go through stages of the customer journey. So let’s dive deep into what the customer journey is and how to use it to improve the overall guest experience.

What is it?

The customer journey is a way to visualize all the stages guests go through during their experience with your hotel, starting from researching to post-stay and brand advocacy.

The customer journey in practice

The customer journey includes several stages with plenty of micro-moments, starting from researching and decision-making processes to checking-in and post-stay.



Source: <https://hotelfriend.com/blogpost/trip-planning>

We’ll outline each stage below:



## Awareness

At this stage, guests realize that they want to travel or go somewhere. Whether it is a nice picture of the seashore or an upcoming business trip, that's the moment when customers realize what destination exactly they need. Then, the research process begins.

## Researching

This stage involves gathering information, making an inquiry about the trip, as well as analyzing different options and choosing the best one. Travelers look for easier and faster ways to book, check-in, order services, and check-out at their fingertips.

That said, comfort, convenience, and control are the most important aspects to them. Guests do most research online, with 87% happening on a smartphone or tablet. So hoteliers need to leverage mobile to bring more convenience to their guests who want to skip the check-in and out queues without ever talking to another person. Another welcome development is a Concierge app.

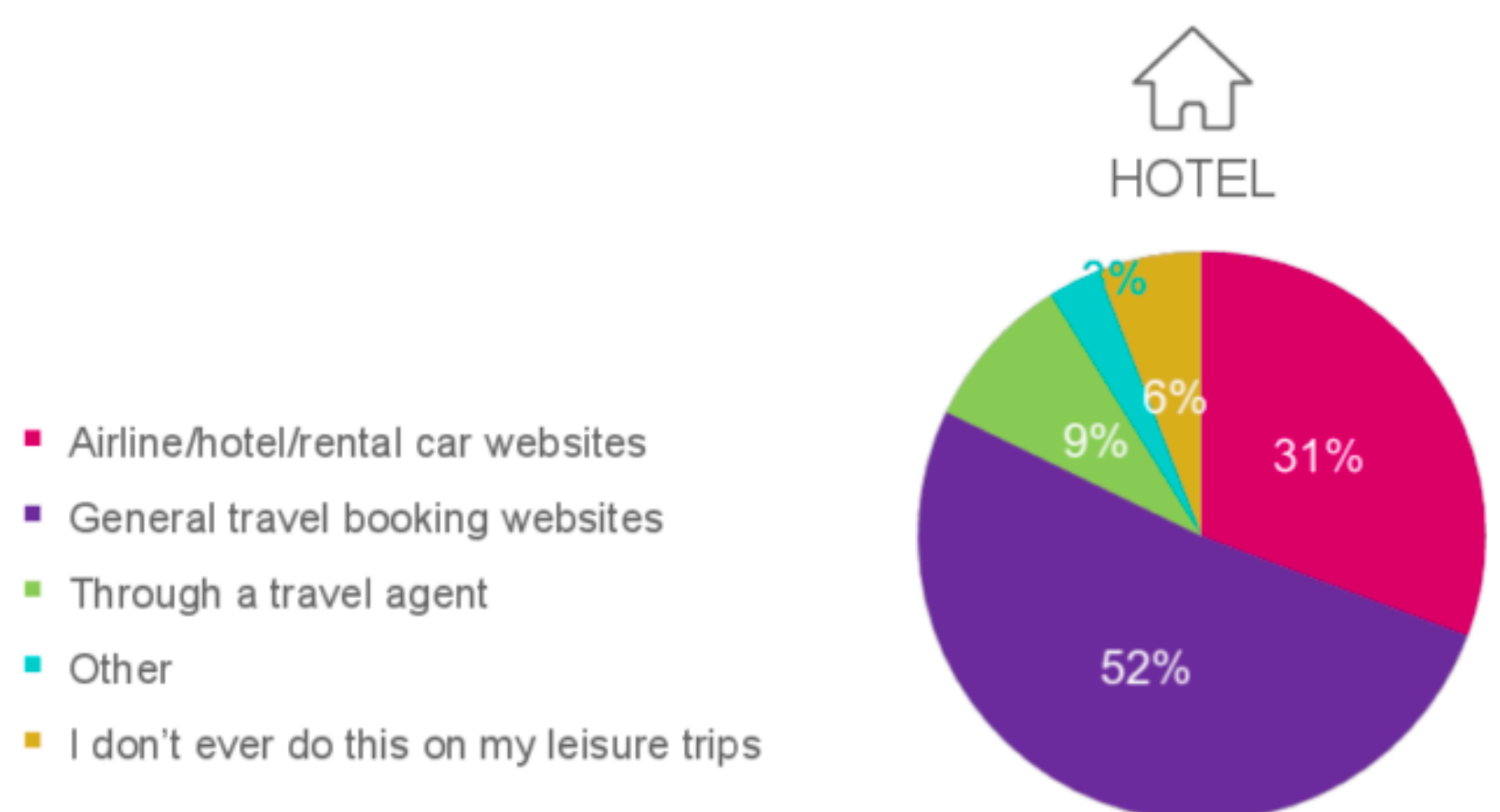
Based on [Booking.com](https://www.booking.com) statistics, 57% of travelers want to use a single app to plan, book, and track travel. Thus, if the hotel understands and resonates with guests to offer what they want, it may obtain a competitive edge.

## Booking

The research by Expedia showed that average customers visit up to 39 websites before booking, most of which are price comparison ones.

In fact, travelers have several choices: book direct, through an OTA or traditional method to speak to a travel agent. According to Skift, 52% of millennials book via OTAs.

Source of Booking Among Millennials



Source: <https://skift.com/2016/05/27/4-charts-showing-millennials-thoughts-on-loyalty-and-direct-bookings/>

Yet, the latter can help hoteliers gain more direct bookings as well. 52% of OTA visitors click on the hotel website to receive more information on the hotel and its offers. However, how does a traveler choose one property over another? Cornell University conducted a study to understand what drives online hotel choice. According to it, during browsing, consumers quickly glance at many hotels to check the names and prices of available hotels.

Then, they identify what hotels they like and review more detailed information about the chosen hotels. When researching, customers primarily focus on the hotel name, images, price, ratings, and location. At the decision stage, they fixate on images, descriptions, prices, and additional offers. So the hotel website may be more appealing to consumers. If the hotel adds high-quality photos to its site, instead of blurry and poor quality images, as well as provide customers with bundled offers and additional services, it has a greater chance of attracting new guests.

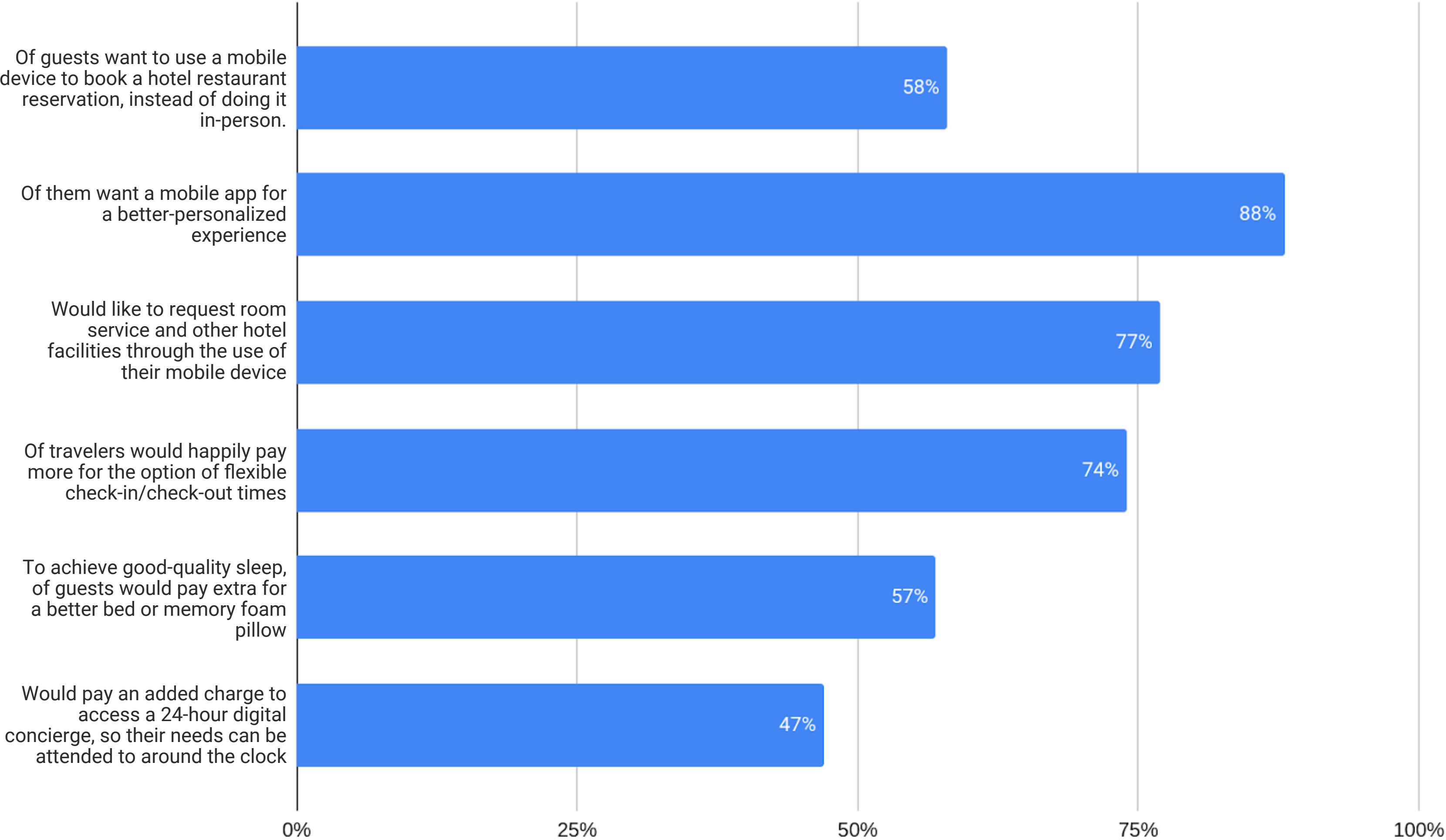
Check-in

Guests want to skip the check-in queues, unnecessary conversations, and focus on more valuable face-to-face interactions. To create real convenience for the guest, hotels need to make changes to their IT infrastructure and build a desirable digital service.

Whether it is a digital key or room service and food orders via a mobile hotel app directly, it’s no longer a choice, it’s a must, or else hotels risk losing guests.

Mid-stay

It’s clear that staff should create an environment when guests can feel comfortable in. Because a positive guest experience is our goal, we need to take action and make this apparent to the guests. So who is today's hotel guest and what are his expectations? Let's look at some statistics by YouGov, Oracle, and Hospitalitynet.



Source: <https://www.hospitalitynet.org/opinion/4095123.html>

To put it briefly, here's what guests expect from hotel stay:

**Fully customized experience.** Guests want customization with every aspect of their stay: from transportation and pillow choice to pre-defined meals and spa visits.

**Smart rooms.** Guests expect the essential amenities in their rooms to become digital: they want access to streaming services, a room key on the smartphone, concierge services, temperature controls at the push of a button or tap of a finger, voice-activated controls, and more.



**Focus on environmental sustainability.** Guests prefer eco-friendly products, services, and integrated green practices like solar panels, F&B menus with more vegetarian and vegan choices, minimized water usage, no plastic, motion sensors, and more.

**Food and beverage landscape.** Sommet Education report showed that guests also seek innovative culinary experiences that tease and delight the senses. Because this trend is driven by health and environmental concerns, we see the changing tastes of Millennial and Gen Z guests who decline strict or extreme diets. Instead, they seek choices with the story behind, namely “naturalness” cuisine with seasonal ingredients, “flexitarianism” with a focus on vegetables, grains, and meat-free proteins. With foodie photography and social media sharing, we’re witnessing culinary aesthetics and flavors like artful pastries and sculptured fruits cakes, which are both appealing to the eyes and sugar-free.

**Instant human assistance.** Even though hotels embrace technology and guests appreciate it, travelers still want help from a human. Thus, omnipresent service lines appeared offering human touch through digital devices like live communication with the hotel staff.

**Providing feedback on the stay at the moment.** Guests don’t want to wait until they checking out. They prefer to express their feelings right now and get the problems resolved immediately and efficiently.

**One ID.** Many guests want to use a single fingerprint for everything, starting from check-in to transactions.

**Unique experiences and so-called hyper-personalization.** Now, guests don’t want to stay at a regular hotel. They seek out the unspoiled places, unique accommodations for a solo holiday, the experience they can’t get at an Airbnb, hostel or traditional hotel.

## Check-out and post-stay

It is the time when hoteliers can add a cherry to the top of their guests’ experience, as well as convince customers they made the right decision. Hoteliers should be consistent with their service, offers, online and offline presentation.

If you provided your guests with both consistency and great service, they will be ready to share their opinions and reviews online and with their friends, family. At this stage, you should also create a lasting relationship with them that incorporates post-stay emails with calls-to-action, promo code and discounts on a future stay, friendly and short text messages with valuable information, etc. Thus, guests will develop a more personal relationship with your brand while hoteliers will enjoy the growth of direct bookings and achieve customer loyalty.

## Take action to boost customer journeys

True, hoteliers should be aware of their customers' needs and services they offer, the latest statistics, and hospitality trends. Nevertheless, it’s also important to take simple and concrete steps to enhance guests’ experience.



## Where to begin

Traditionally, knowing the guest equals top-notch service. To create an even more sophisticated, more customized way to make every guest's visit match expectations, hoteliers should:

- get started by solving customer challenges through data and technology.
- develop the strategy that will advance your ambition while driving measurable impact on key performance indicators.
- adopt and adapt quickly, test and learn to achieve success, then work toward moving high-value proofs-of-concept (POCs) to scale.

Deciding what changes to make is what will ultimately set brands apart from the rest — with an artful combination of human and innovation to create authentic, anticipatory experiences guests don't even realize they want today.

Take a look at the steps below to make guests happy, while employees more organized and stress-free:

## Step 1: Book — knowing your guests

Booking step is the start of the customer journey when it is time to provide guests with valuable information and make their experience both enjoyable and effortless. Here, 3D tours act great. They are exactly like guests are physically visiting and touring your hotel, restaurant, rooms, and facilities at their own pace.

They help capture customer attention with the 360° photos and invite guests to explore and access a quick overview of your hotel, its features, window views, furniture, conveniences, etc. In other words, you show them what to expect. It is also good to add a video gallery with commercials or video assets. Wrap up the customer journey with high-quality content, maps, directions, additional info, and links. This will give guests the details they need to make that final decision in the buying process. We also advise you to include call-to-action, special offers, and deals, a hotel request for a proposal to this section.

Together with 3D, virtual reality, and augmented reality that allows customers to tour a hotel, choose a room and book it, learn information about the area with AR map, hoteliers implement special software. A good example of such software is the Booking Engine by HotelFriend, which helps satisfy guests with fast, smart, and trackable booking solutions.

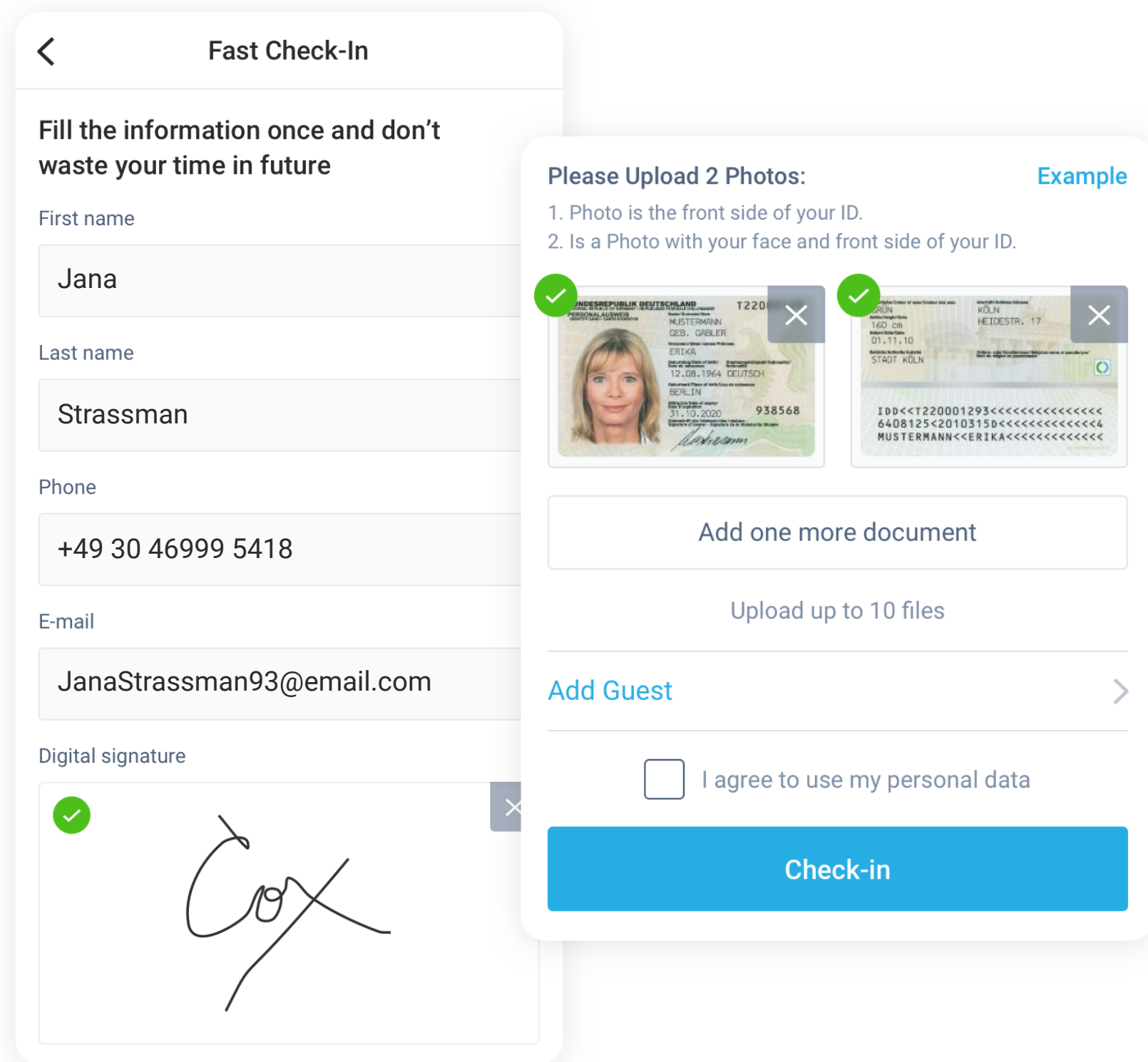
Another benefit is that it fosters direct bookings and reduces OTAs commissions. Also, it simplifies the booking process and makes it more comfortable for visitors. The tool allows guests to check available rooms in a special calendar, book accommodation just in several clicks, and also order the hotel services and deals in advance.

As already mentioned, more than a third of travelers prefer booking with OTAs. With an ever-increasing number of third-parties and online sales channels, there is a need for hotels to manage them efficiently, simultaneously, and in real-time. That is exactly what

HotelFriend Channel Manager offers. By using it, hoteliers can send hotel information to as many brokers as they want and avoid issues such as overbooking and obsolete information on prices and rates, which is also beneficial for guests.

Traditionally, both the Booking Engine and Channel Manager are parts of hotel management software linked to the Hotel Property Management System (PMS).





**Fast Check-In**


Fill the information once and don't waste your time in future

First name  
Jana



Last name  
Strassman

Phone  
+49 30 46999 5418

E-mail  
JanaStrassman93@email.com

Digital signature  


Please Upload 2 Photos:  
1. Photo is the front side of your ID.  
2. Is a Photo with your face and front side of your ID.

Add one more document

Upload up to 10 files

Add Guest

☐ I agree to use my personal data

Check-in

## Step 2: Check-in — engaging with your guests

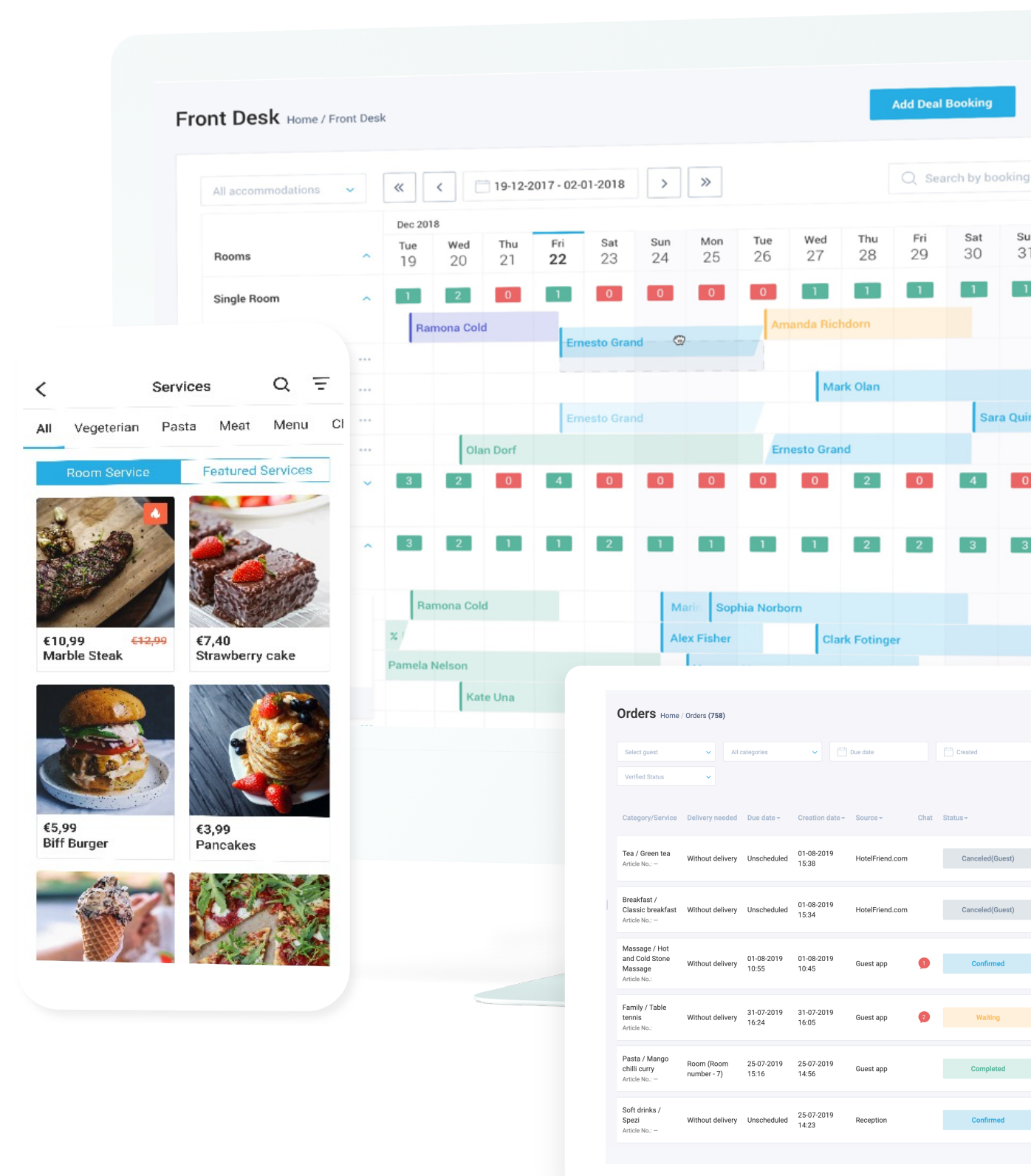
You might have already heard that it is better to start engaging with your guests before they've arrived. Take time to learn who's checking in, find out the purpose of a stay, and prepare the extra touches.

Show your guests that you've carefully prepared for their arrival with, let's say, a bottle of champagne for a couple of newlyweds or extra stationery for a business traveler. Greet each guest by name and smile. Your busy guests will appreciate the use of easy and quick self-check with no queues.

That said, Hotel Management System (PMS) is the only software your hotel needs to manage and control operations, including check-in/out, extend their stay, and more. With PMS, guests can save time and get personalized and engaging service.

## Why management is easier with HotelFriend PMS

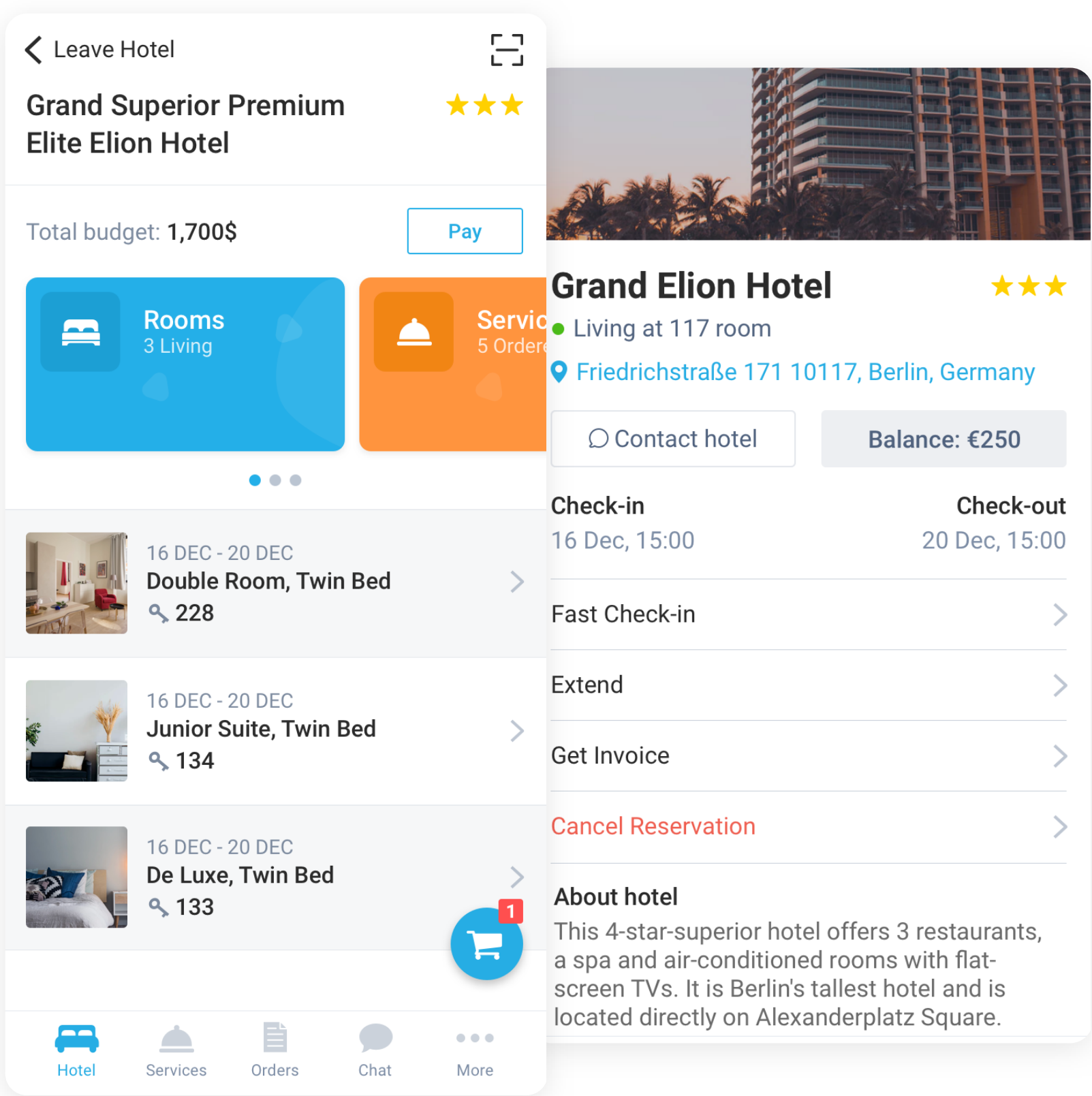
- Reservations handling
- It has plenty of settings, very flexible revenue management tool.
- Department management with the ability to assign responsible employees.
- Housekeeping module
- Advanced invoicing & billing
- Guest profiles with order history and clear booking balance
- Advanced reporting
- Daily activity dashboard
- Integrated payment processing
- Access 24/7 from any device
- Customer support
- Mobile Guest App with fast check-in, service ordering, and payments
- Booking engine with services & deals booking options
- Integrated channel manager
- Integrated payment processing
- Mobile POS
- Live chat
- Ancillary revenue generation
- Multi-Property Management
- Multi-language interface
- Integration with the third-party systems
- Easy data import (with the most popular hotel services)
- Multichannel sales (through the app & their marketplace)





Why management is harder without HotelFriend PMS

- Long waiting time at the lobby while checking-in and checking-out
- Poor interactions between the housekeeping staff and the Front Desk
- Overbooking and double-booking issues
- The Front Desk is harder to be reached
- Miscommunication, poor or delayed communication between the staff and guests
- Management process becomes more hectic



Step 3: Stay – delighting your guests

True, a longstanding hotel tradition to leave a sweet on the pillow is still a token of hospitality.

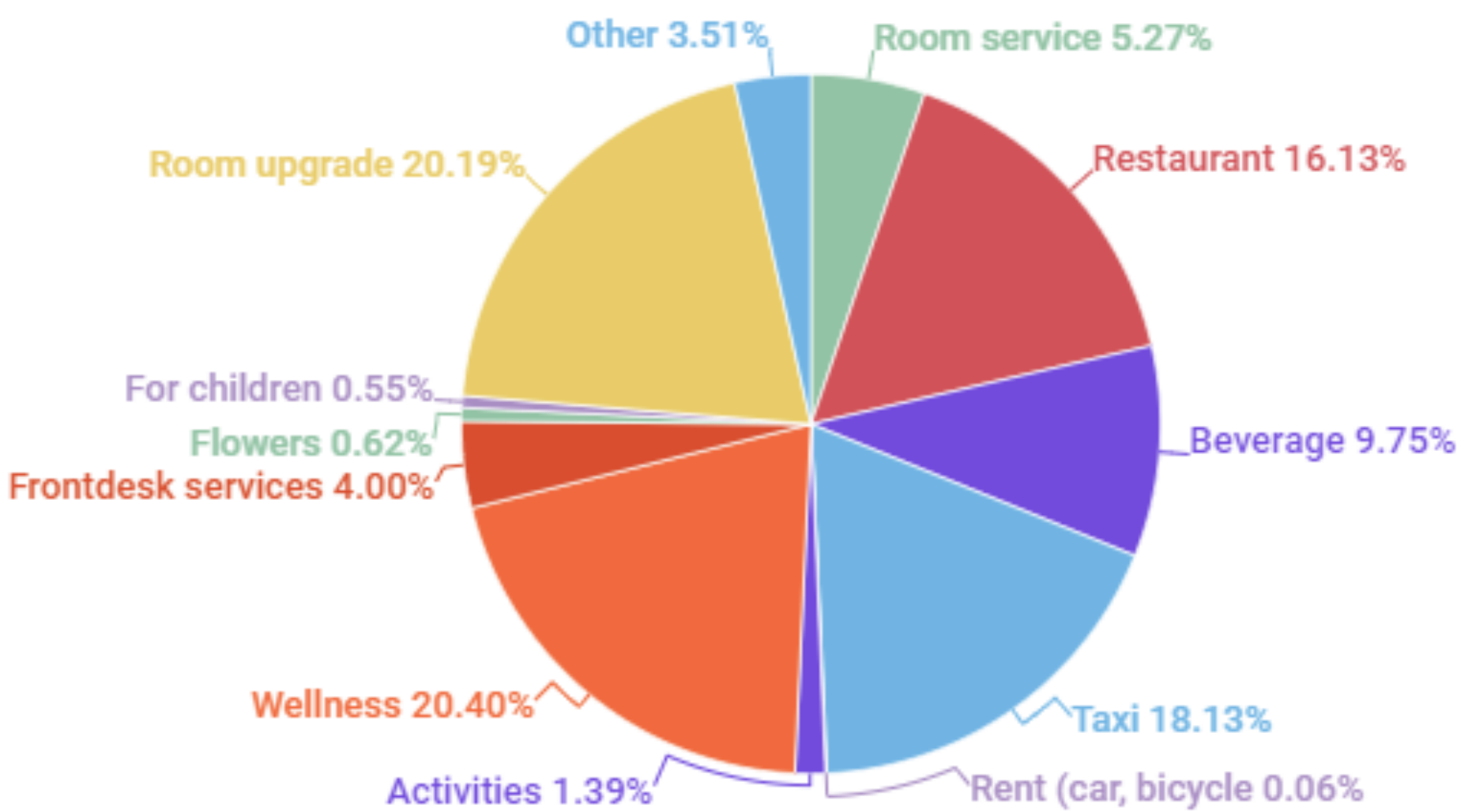
Nevertheless, today’s guests expect much more. Hoteliers need to combine a personal touch with innovations. To keep up with modern standards, hoteliers need to update the most important room amenities with:

- Smart controls for temperature, light, and power.
- Soundproofing technology to minimize noise from traffic, airplanes, or loud music to minimize noise complaints.
- Digital key or an app on a smartphone to eliminate the need for physical room keys and streamline the check-in process.
- Smart TVs to select guests’ favorite streaming services.
- Concierge app for better engagement.

Concierge apps for better customer satisfaction experience

Whether it is restaurant reservations, tour bookings, area information or room service order, mobile concierge apps provide guests with everything they want, including instant answers, real-time services, orders, and recommendations.

Share of total orders



Source: <https://www.hotelspeak.com/2020/02/hospitality-upselling-report/>

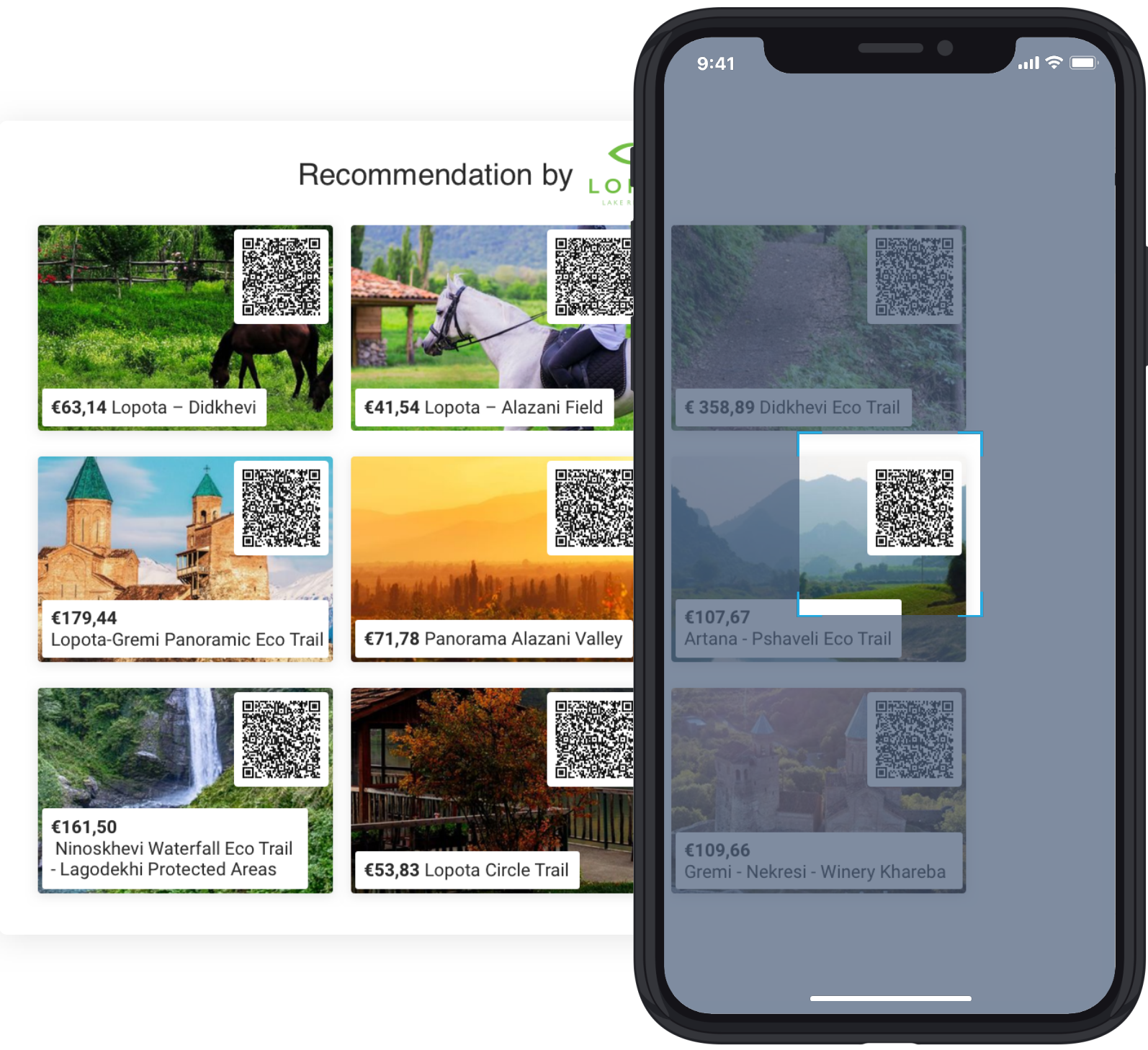
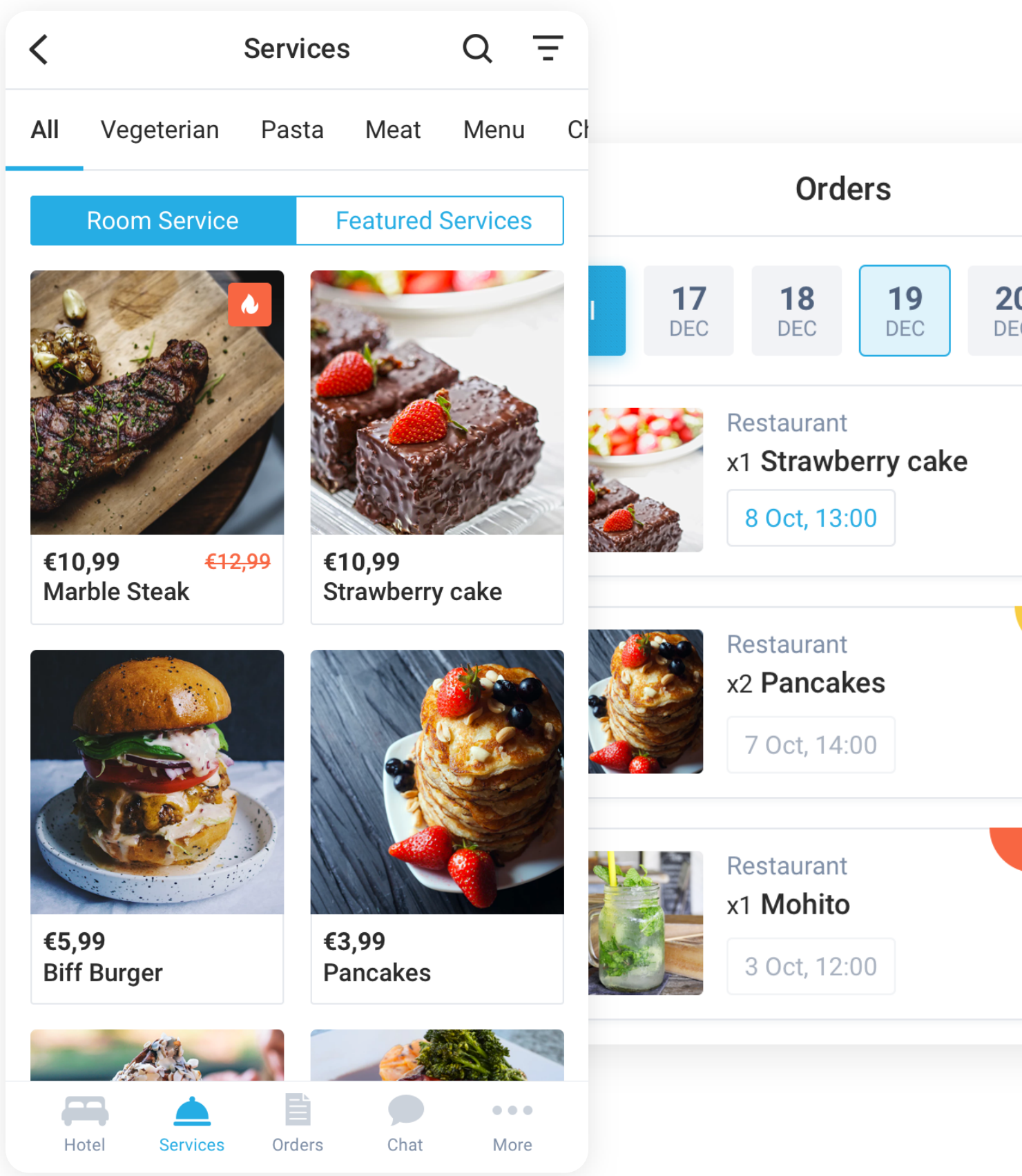


## Why HotelFriend Concierge app helps you sell better

- Mobile check-in and no need to fill in papers.
- Instant service orders with payment and detailed reports.
- Direct access to the reservation and canceling a booking.
- Track the balance and manage the travel budget.
- Online payment solution for hotel services.
- Real-time chat with hotel staff.
- A portfolio where a guest may discover upcoming hotel events and view live entertainment schedules.
- Hotel digital service card generator.
- Guests may extend their stay while the hotel may approve it through the app.

## Why selling is harder without HotelFriend Concierge app

- Long check-ins and outs
- Fewer orders
- Order delays
- Lower customer satisfaction
- Human errors are more likely
- Less convenience for guests
- Customer disloyalty
- Less revenue and increased costs



## Step 4: Do – empowering your guests

At this step, you should customize your guest experience, recommend offerings, and activities based on their information from profiles, preferences, and previous stays.

Take a survey to learn what customers enjoy about your hotel and what needs work. As of now, robot butlers and concierges meet guests in hotels. Room service robots clean the rooms, deliver on-demand, and even entertain guests. Chatbots are also used to provide customers with useful information, personalized recommendations, and rapid response times.

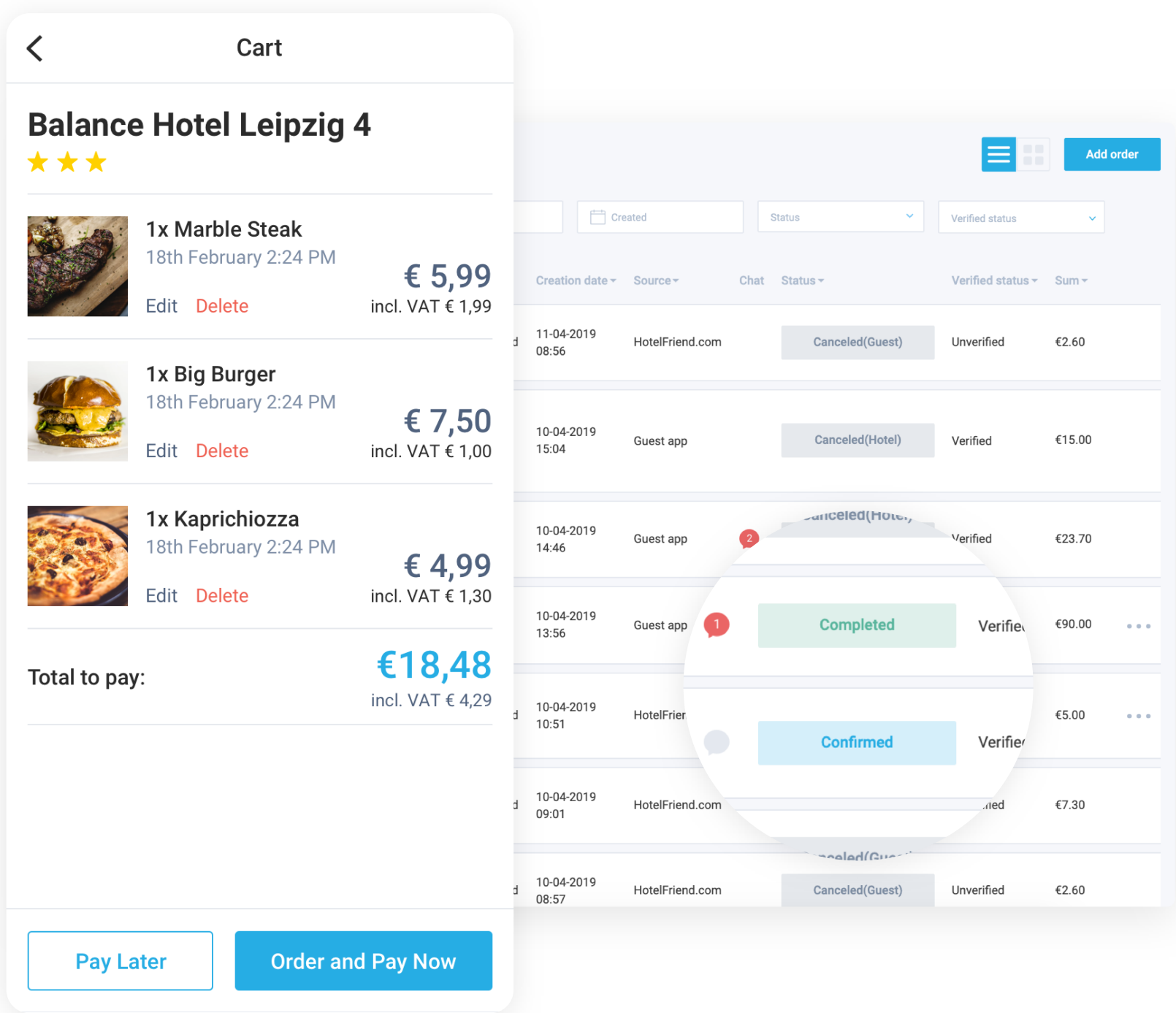
Traditionally, hotel breakfasts are the services included in the room price. However, what can make breakfast the competitive advantage of your hotel? For today's guests, food forges new frontiers and should delight. Consumers want to know the story behind what they eat and drink, seek eco-friendly, fresh, and healthy cuisine, and innovative culinary experiences. So make sure to include “light”, “organic”, “healthy”, and “gluten-free” options.



Even though the hoteliers are sure they have built the perfect breakfast menu, it is good to guide your guests to help them choose the right things. Your guests are likely to

enjoy their stay more if they can choose the dishes and order breakfast with flexible food options to their rooms through a Concierge app. Some hoteliers turn this classic service into a more specialized experience by providing personalized in-room breakfast that can be served without time restrictions.

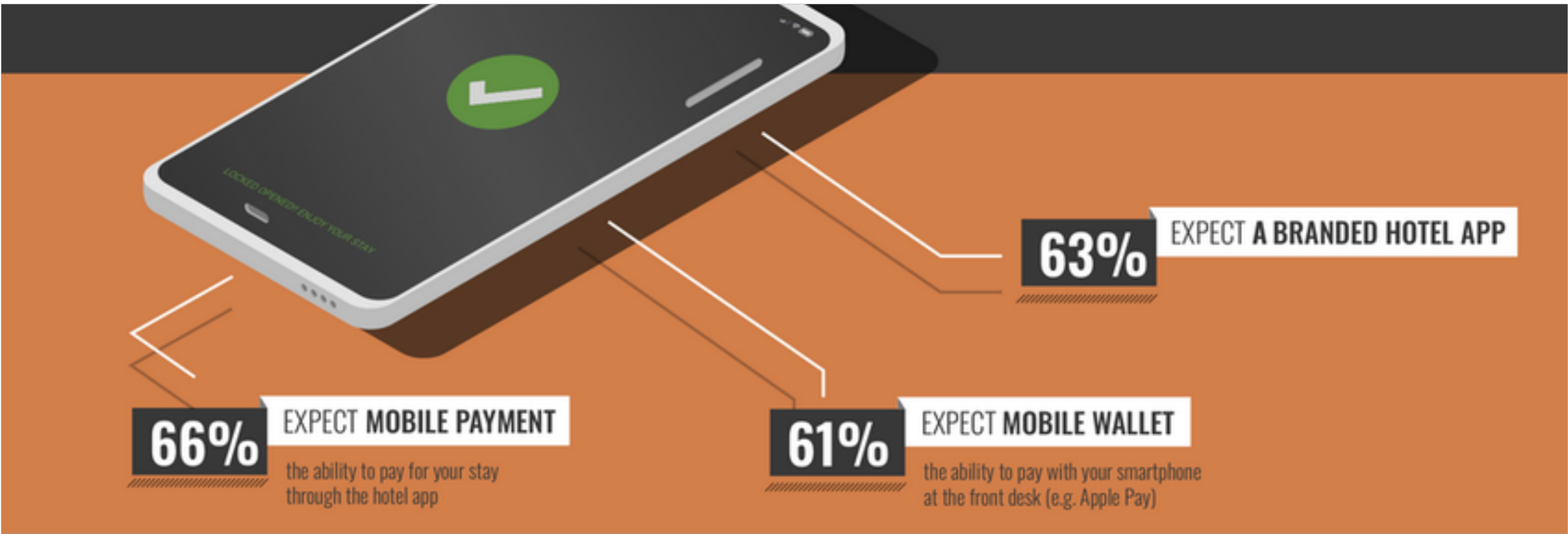
With the Concierge app, the customers can get the service wherever they desire with no delays and pay instantly, starting from meal orders to spa booking and special requests.



## Step 5: Get help – hearing your guests

There are some basic requirements that all hotels should meet to make their guest experience more comforting. They are as follows:

- Clean rooms. The condition of the room is one obvious thing to check. Neither the latest technology nor upgraded bedding and expensive-looking soaps will make your guests look the other way when they see that the room is dirty or they find mold in the bathroom.
- Plumbing. Customers expect clear, potable water, proper and continuous hot running water in the shower, and no leaks.
- Clear and attentive answers. Sometimes, "answer the phone in three rings" policy doesn't work. No matter how your hotel is classified, staff should react immediately to any guest's questions or concerns and offer a solution. Still, most issues may be solved via Concierge mobile app as guests want to use their smartphone for everything.
- High-speed Wi-Fi as 98% of customers take it for granted.
- Easy payment. 66% of guests expect to pay for their stay and other services through the hotel app, while 61% – with the smartphone at the front desk (mobile wallet, Apple Pay, etc.).



Source: <https://openkey.co/2018/12/05/guest-expectations-for-hotel-tech-in-2019-2/>



## Step 6: Check out — rewarding your guests

As convenience becomes a competitive advantage, hoteliers should create fast and useful check-out experiences to meet customers' "right now" expectation. This means they must understand what guests want so profoundly that they optimize every check-out phase to deliver real-time value and experiences at the moment. While talking about expectations, customers reckon on several check-out related amenities, namely electronic check-out, late check-out, and boarding pass printing exhibiting, and more.

Some hoteliers still believe that they should delight customers to gain loyalty. However, any sweet or another gift on arrival cannot outweigh customers' frustration with bad service experience when leaving. In fact, delighting guests just creates "feel good" moments, but has a low impact on loyalty or repeat business (based on Gartner's research). Consumers expect hotel staff to solve their issues, instead of delight.

So how to identify what your clients want and need? To learn more about guests' expectations, hoteliers can leverage customer information from a PMS or CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system.

**That said, hoteliers are among the top users of CRM.** And it's not surprising. The system provides a range of useful services, such as:

- Email campaigns
- Customer satisfaction system
- Customer database
- E-reputation tools (surveys, follow-ups)
- Retention strategies, etc.

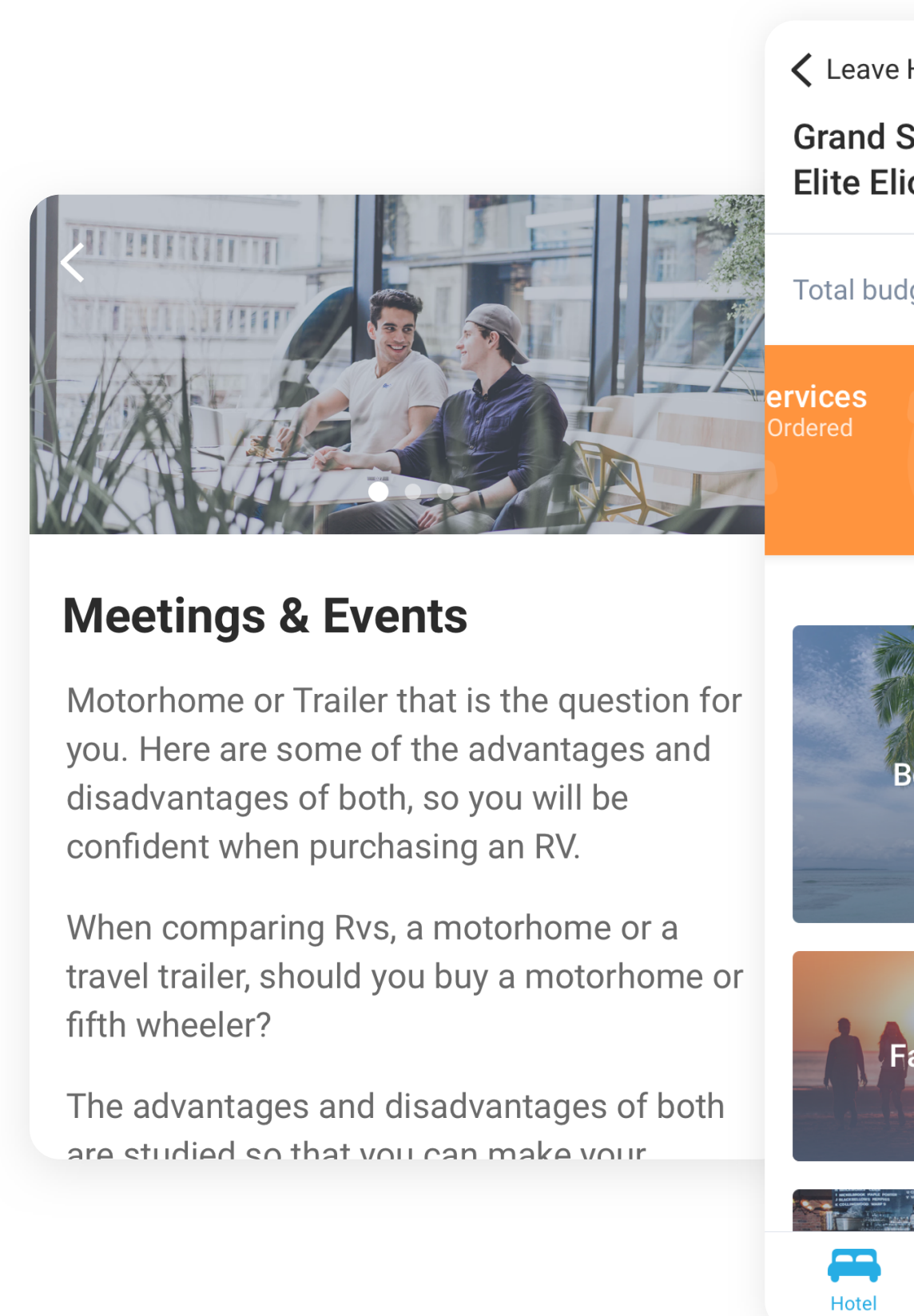
CRM system is aimed at creating and maintaining lasting relationships between the guest and the hotel, bringing them together. It's all about knowing and understanding customers through exploring their behavior, booking history, preferred services, payment methods, and means of communication. Thus, hoteliers gather the information above in a customer database.

Also, CRM is used to manage guests, potential clients, and partners' contacts, as well as create targeted communication and email campaigns.

Hotel staff can send personalized text messages based on guest preferences and use that data to automate messages. This can help hotel staff better serve guests through more individualized communication. To build longer-term relationships with guests, hoteliers usually send "thank you" emails on departure. Traditionally, these letters are aimed at encouraging guests to provide feedback about their stay and may include links to the feedback form, Facebook Page, Tripadvisor Page, promotional offers and special deals, etc.

In addition, hoteliers can build out targeted email campaigns for transactions, birthdays, newsletters with information on ongoing events and seasonal activities, welcome back letters, etc.

Once you implement hotel management software and add a personal touch when communicating with your guests, promoting loyalty and return stays at your hotel will be much easier.





## How to optimize the next-generation guest experience

To adapt to the tastes of guests, hoteliers are giving more priority to customer experience, which starts with guest knowledge and depends on the actions the hotel business is ready to take. For most accommodations, this process involves two key themes:

- Hoteliers need to combine big data technologies with cognitive computing to enhance the guests' experience and enable the hotel to better serve them.
- The development of a partnership ecosystem and the new world of data-driven guest experience can power digital engagement: quick orders, delivery from local restaurants, and schedule a fitness class through a mobile app in seconds. Thus, guests can engage with their preferred vendors. This partnership ecosystem helps hoteliers both provide the experience guests want and reduce hotels' total cost to serve.

## 360° guest journey: How HotelFriend software improves the guest experience

The right hotel management software is critical to ensure a smooth guest experience. Such software is going way beyond basic features like booking or checking-in creating a 360-degree view of the customer journey. It allows to meet their needs and keep a hotel on top of tech trends and revenue, as well as ensure your hotel guests come back for another stay.

Hospitality Technology survey reported that 72% of customers are ready to return to a hotel when the technology they want is available.

HotelFriend product is all about delivering an excellent guest experience. The platform is an efficient all-in-one solution, suitable for all kinds of properties. HotelFriend PMS system offers an array of features to help hoteliers successfully organize the hotel business processes and improve guest experience:

- Cost and staff saving business processes management
- Eco-friendly automated system - less paper in business
- More revenue due to multichannel services sales (App, marketplace)
- Widen your target audience - more diversity in rate management
- Integration with WuBook Channel Manager, which allows to improve online distribution and bookings.

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[Get 14-days Free Trial](#)