

2015 Hospitality Consumer Report

Get ahead of the biggest trends in the lodging and dining industries





Welcome to Our 2015 Hospitality Consumer Report

If you've got customers or guests, it's likely you agree with 3 in 4 business employees: Your customers' best interests, not profits, are your #1 priority.*

But through our research, **we learned that only half of consumers are inclined to agree with you.** In this report, you'll get data on consumer behaviors and attitudes towards the hospitality industry. And what we found will help you rethink your advertising, marketing, and guest service strategies.

**Data from a February 2015 SurveyMonkey Audience survey of 813 people who work full-time at a for-profit organization.*

How we got the data

For this report, we surveyed 558 people 18 and older using SurveyMonkey Audience, which is home to a diverse pool of millions of people waiting to take surveys. The people we surveyed represent a balanced sample of typical consumers in the United States.

Of the consumers who completed the survey, in the past 12 months:

- ✓ **72%** said they were a guest at a hotel
- ✓ **97%** said they visited a restaurant or bar

To ensure the accuracy of our data, we disqualified the nearly 9% who reported that they'd neither been to a hotel nor visited a restaurant or bar in the past 12 months.

Run Your Own Consumer Study

We've got millions of qualified respondents ready to give you their opinions on your brand, new concepts, services, and so much more.

[Get Started](#)

Travel, Lodging, and Dining Habits

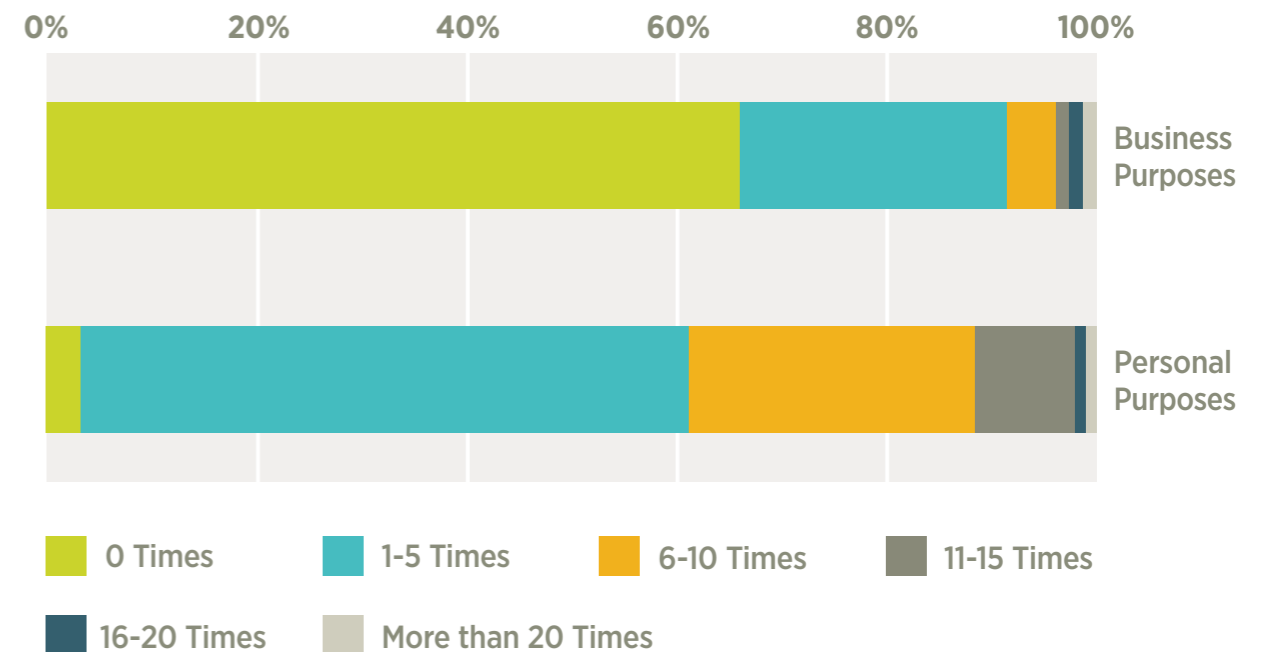
In general, the consumers we surveyed were **most likely to say they both traveled and stayed in hotels 1 to 3 times in the past 12 months**, and of those consumers:

- 59%** traveled for pleasure
- 56%** stayed in a hotel for pleasure
- 25%** traveled for business
- 21%** stayed in a hotel for business

Here are some travel habits by key demographic:

- ✓ **People aged 45 to 49** travel for both business and pleasure more frequently than any other age group
- ✓ **Men are more likely to travel for business** (45%) than women (35%)
- ✓ **Women and men are equally likely to travel** for pleasure at least once a year

And here's what consumers had to say about **how frequently they're dining or visiting restaurants and bars** for business and personal purposes in an average month:



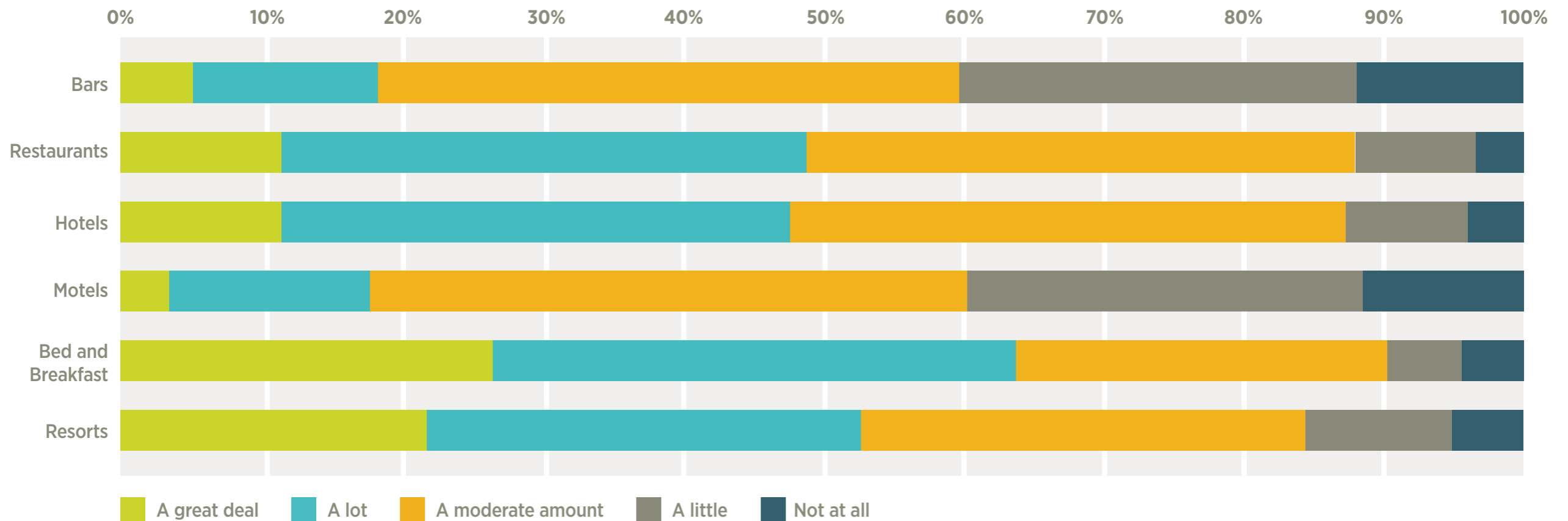
Consumers are nearly 3 times more likely to go to a restaurant or bar for personal reasons rather than business reasons. Of those who say they dine for personal purposes, nearly 60% say they're going out only 1 to 5 times a month.

You and Your Guests Aren't Seeing Eye to Eye

Remember how 3 in 4 businesses say they put their customers first? We found that only half of consumers agreed with the statement, "Most establishments have their guests' best interests in mind, even if it means less profits."

And here's what we found when we broke up consumer trust by establishment type:

How much do you trust the following types of establishments to act in your best interest?



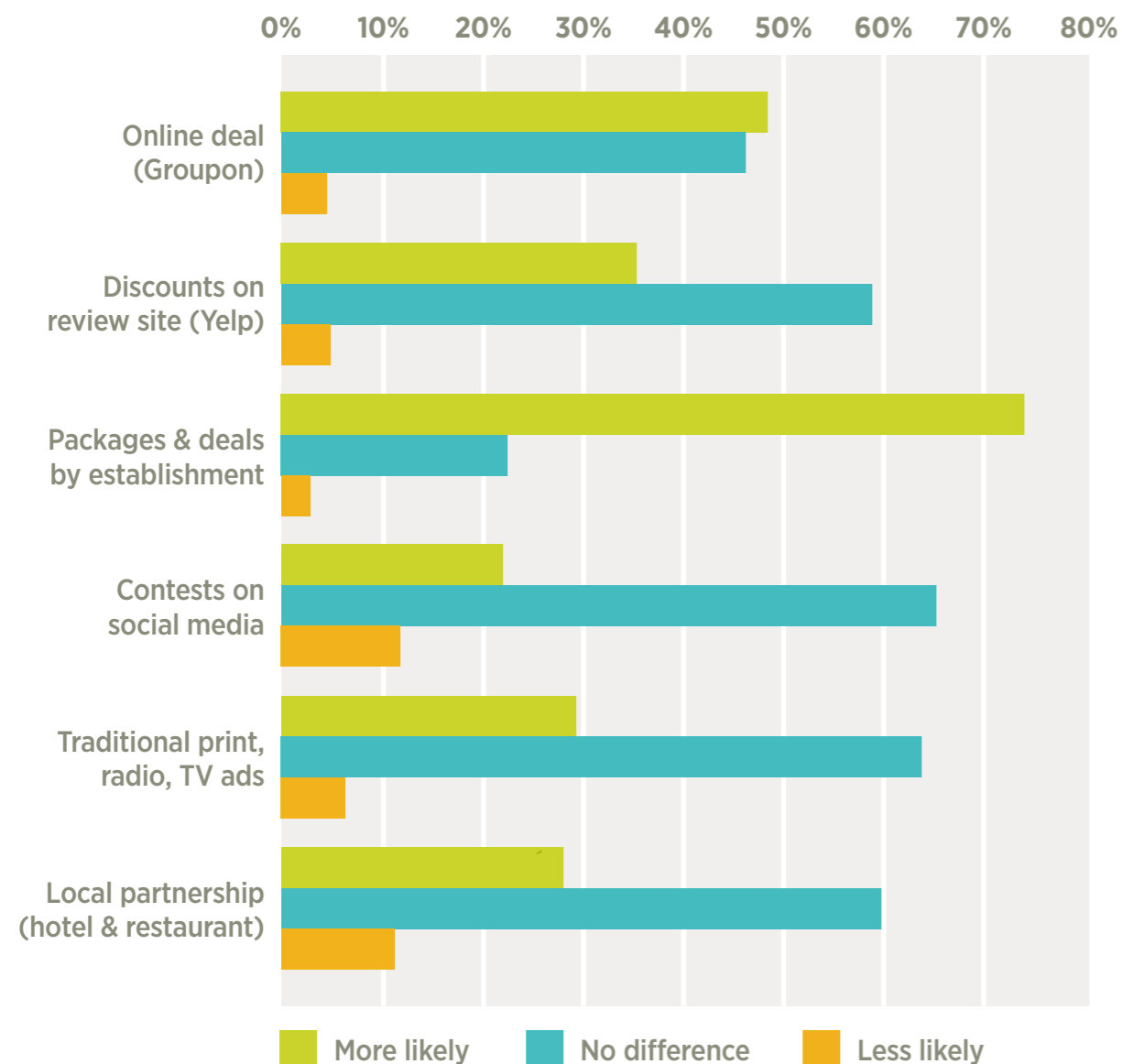
As you can see, when it comes to lodging, consumers are more likely to trust bed and breakfasts a great deal over other establishments (27%), followed by resorts (22%), hotels (11%), and motels (3%).

Meanwhile, restaurants earned 6% "a great deal" more trust than bars, though only 12% of consumers say they put a great deal of trust in restaurants overall.

Here's the Deal on Your Promotions, Offers, and Contests

What kinds of deals are you offering consumers? And where are you trying to reach them? Our results reveal that consumers aren't as interested in social media contests as you might think:

Would each of the following make you more likely to visit a hospitality establishment, less likely, or make no difference?



For both lodging and dining establishments, **here are the 3 top promotional efforts that consumers say make them more likely to visit an establishment:**

- ✓ 3 in 4 said packages and deals hosted by an establishment directly
- ✓ Half said deals found on sites like Groupon or LivingSocial
- ✓ More than a third said discounts on review sites like Yelp

However, consumers say social media giveaways and contents aren't tipping the scale in an establishment's favor. In fact, those social media promotions aren't making much of a difference at all. **12% even said seeing those social media promotions makes them less likely to give an establishment their business.**

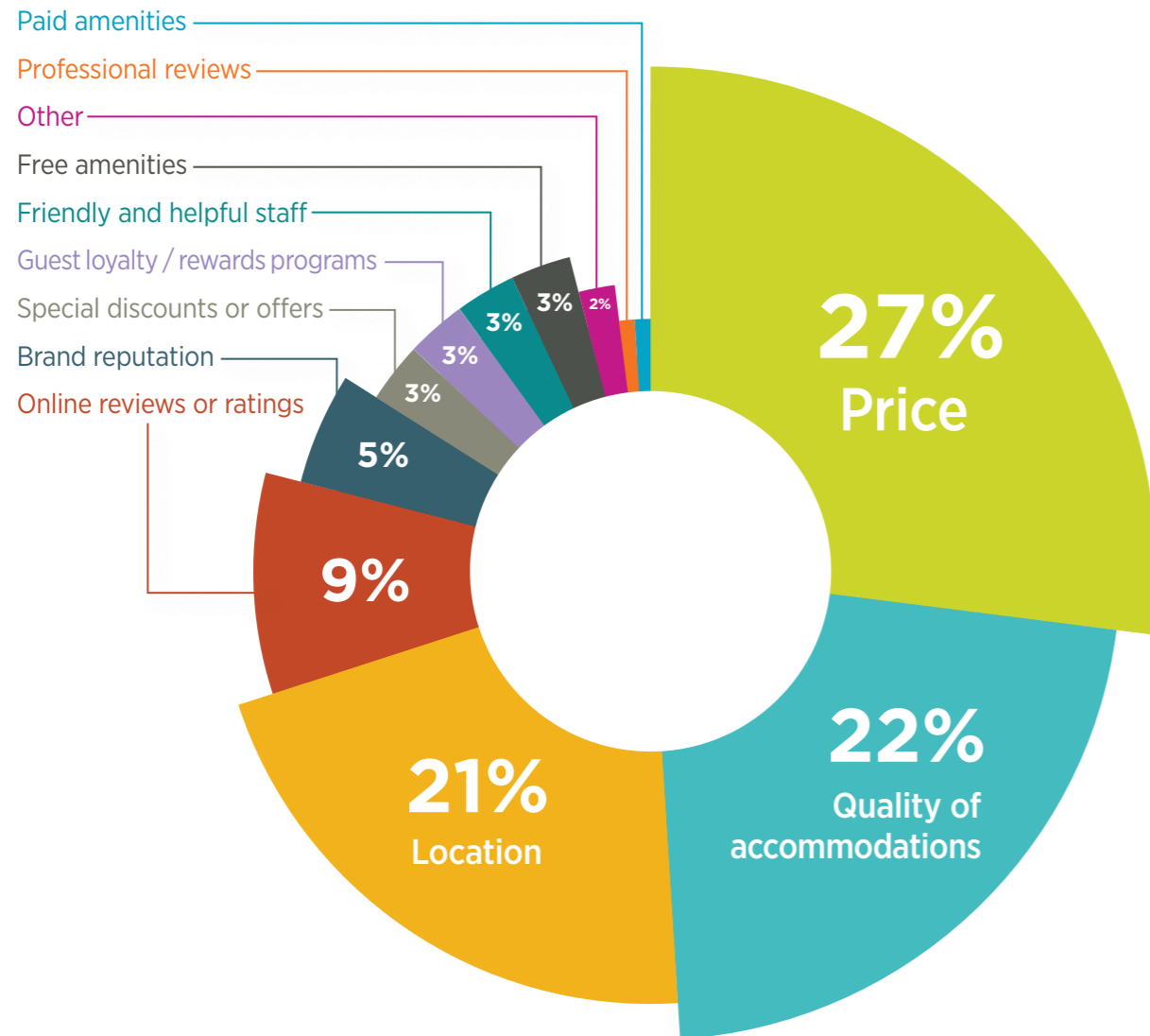
Speaking of social media, **77% of consumers say it's only somewhat to not at all important that a hospitality establishment has a social media page** on sites like Twitter or Facebook.

Here are the 2 most important places consumers think it's very or extremely important that an establishment have an online presence:

- ✓ Its own website (83%)
- ✓ Online reviews (61%)

The #1 Factor That Makes or Breaks Your Occupancy Rate

Here's what consumers say is **the most important factor when choosing a place to stay:**



Price is king (27%) with quality of accommodations not far behind (22%). But once you get someone to stay in your hotel, what can you do to keep them coming back?

For those who have stayed in a hotel at least once in the past 12 months, 42% said they currently participate in a guest loyalty or hotel rewards program.

And here are the benefits they'd most like to have:

1. Discounted rates or pricing (77%)
2. Earn points towards free product or stay (63%)
3. Special perks and amenities like free meals or WiFi (49%)

The same goes for those who are staying in hotels for business purposes 1 to 3 times a year. But those who stay in hotels for business purposes more than that (4+ times a year) tend to prefer earning points towards a free product or stay.

As for restaurants, perhaps unsurprisingly, **68% said that the most important factor when choosing a place to eat is the quality of food and drinks**, followed by:

- ✓ Location (9%)
- ✓ Competitive prices (7%)

Think the quality of service keeps customers coming back to your restaurant or bar? Think again. **Only 5% said that they choose to visit a restaurant or bar because of the friendly and helpful staff.**

And the Most Trusted Online Review Site Is...

Even though consumers say it's important that an establishment has its own website, they also think it's important they have a presence on online review sites. But how do you know which ones they're visiting or which reviews they're using to make purchasing decisions? We learned:

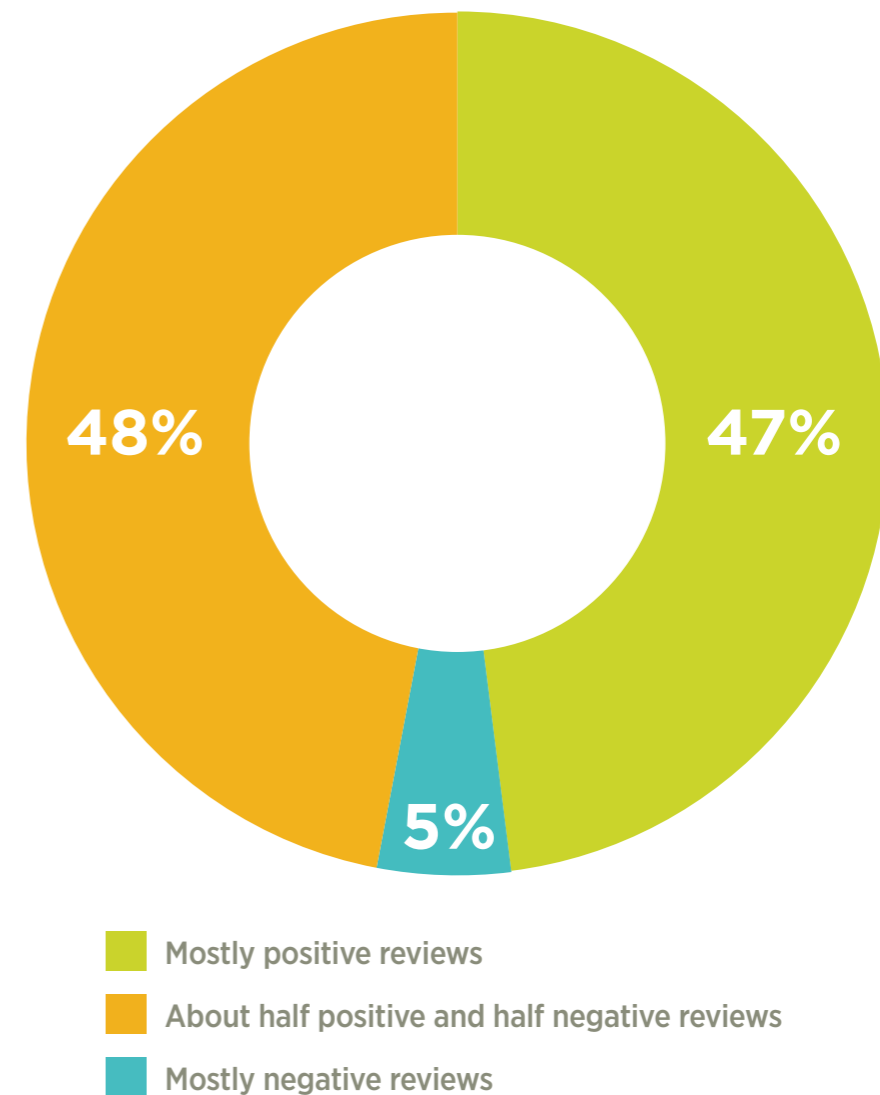
- ✓ In general, **consumers reported checking an average of 4 websites** before they make a lodging reservation.
- ✓ For both lodging and dining, **78% said they look at online reviews before making a reservation or visiting an establishment at least half the time.**
- ✓ Of those who say they do look at online reviews before deciding on a place to dine or stay, **80% said they look at both positive and negative reviews equally.**

But with so many review sites out there, which should you be paying attention to most? Here are the top 3 online review sites that consumers said they trust for accurate reviews of dining and lodging establishments:

- ✓ TripAdvisor
- ✓ Yelp
- ✓ Google+

And half of the consumers we surveyed reported that they have written an online review of an establishment. But are they writing mainly positive, negative, or both types of reviews equally?

When you leave an online review, do you generally leave mostly positive reviews or mostly negative reviews?



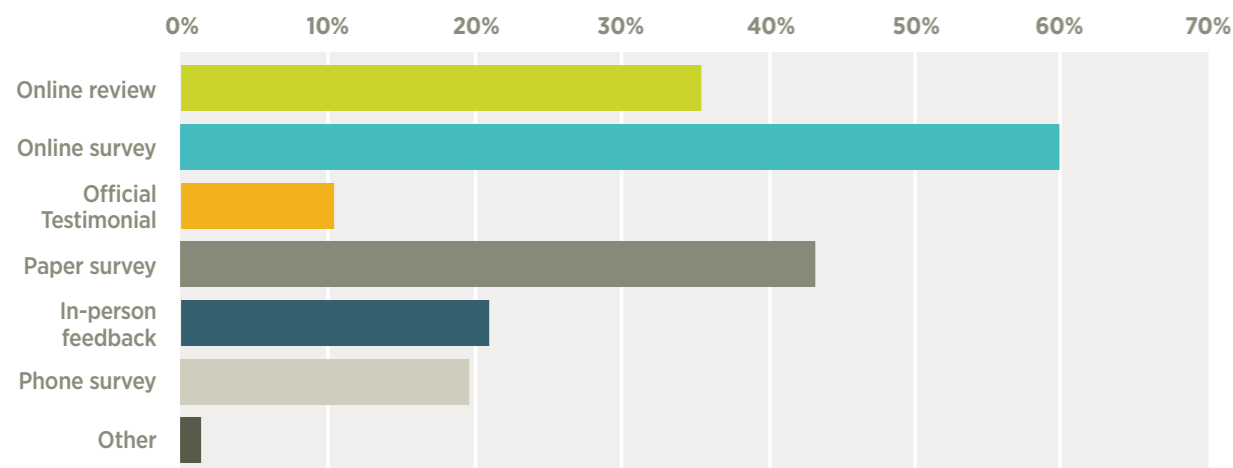
Your Guests Want to Talk to You Online. Are You Listening?

According to a hospitality industry study by Software Advice, **guests who are most likely to give feedback are the ones who are either the most (or least) satisfied** with their experience.* Even though it's a good idea to pay attention to both positive and negative reviews, you should be going out of your way to encourage all of your guests to give you feedback.

Why? Think about it. If one of your guests has a mediocre experience, they're probably not going to feel compelled to give you feedback one way or another. But that means they may be less loyal to your brand--and more likely to choose a different establishment next time. The worst part? You won't know why.

When we asked consumers about how easy hospitality establishments make it for them to provide feedback, **42% said establishments make it only somewhat easy.**

Then we dug a little deeper to find out what kinds of opportunities establishments are giving guests to submit feedback--**and which methods of giving feedback guests prefer:**



60% reported receiving an online survey, which is good, considering what we learned when we asked consumers how they prefer to submit feedback on an establishment:

- ✓ **Nearly all of the respondents indicated that they'd prefer to submit feedback online**
- ✓ 55% said they'd prefer to provide feedback on a review site like Yelp or TripAdvisor
- ✓ 43% said they'd prefer to provide feedback in person
- ✓ Only 13% said they'd be willing to fill out surveys in the mail

And in a consumer study we ran in September 2014 we found that a whopping **97% of customers are likely to tell their friends, family, or coworkers about a "very good" or "excellent" customer experience.**** When you make it easy for guests to tell you what they think--and respond to them no matter their experience--they have the potential to become your biggest brand advocates.

* Read about the Software Advice study [here](#).

** Read about the SurveyMonkey study [here](#).

The Best (and Worst) of the Big Brands

Remember how 3 in 4 businesses say they put their customers first? We found that only half of consumers agreed with the statement, “Most establishments have their guests’ best interests in mind, even if it means less profits.”

And here’s what we found when we broke up consumer trust by establishment type:

“When you think of a **great** guest experience, which brands come to mind?”



“When you think of a **bad** guest experience, which brands come to mind?”



Interestingly enough, Holiday Inn made both the best and worst lists for guest experience. Because consumers were able to name them without any sort of help, Holiday Inn has a higher level of brand awareness than unnamed brands, but the perception of their brand seems to be very polarizing.

How Does Your Brand Stack Up?

Find out why your brand made the list (or why it wasn’t among top responses at all).

[Learn More](#)



4 Tips for Boosting Guest Satisfaction and Loyalty

Millions of people and 99% of the Fortune 500 trust us to get them actionable results. So before you check out, here are 4 ways we can help you get the data you need to make smarter business decisions.

1. Get feedback from the right people

Remember: Make it easy for all of your guests to provide feedback so you get a comprehensive understanding of how you're performing. You need the full range of feedback, not just the most positive and negative reviews.

But collecting guest feedback only gives you part of the picture. Get in touch with your target market to find out how consumers view your brand--and what you could be doing to encourage them to give you a try. We've got millions of people ready to tell you what they think. Choose from 30+ criteria.

[Survey your target market >](#)

2. Give your employees the tools to do a better job

Did your brand make the top (or bottom) 5 in terms of a great guest experience? Whether you're an international brand or a local establishment, make sure you and your employees are working together to create a consistent experience for your guests. Collect survey feedback, share resources, and manage customer data all in one place.

[See how SurveyMonkey Enterprise can help >](#)

3. Get context for your results

Repeating surveys over time will help you monitor your guests' behaviors and attitudes towards your establishment. Plus, you'll see if the changes you're making are improving guest loyalty.

But to get a true understanding of how you're performing, you've got to compare your scores against those from similar organization. We have many available benchmarks, including the industry standard [Net Promoter® Score \(NPS\)](#), so you can view your survey results in context.

[Check out the SurveyMonkey benchmarks >](#)

4. Ask the right questions to get reliable answers

"How satisfied are you with our hotel?"

Satisfied with what? The décor? Price? Service? If you want to get the most out of your feedback, you've got to make sure you're asking the right questions. When you sign up for SurveyMonkey, you get access to thousands of pre-written questions and customizable survey templates, vetted by our survey scientists.

[Get started with SurveyMonkey today >](#)