



The Importance of Reviews & Reputation

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Methodology

This report is based on a survey of 5,000 adults in France, Germany, Poland, Spain and the UK. All of them stayed at a hotel or resort at some point during the 12 months leading up to December 2023 and booked those trips themselves.

Online research was conducted on behalf of Accor by **OnePoll** between December 8th and December 19th 2023 in all five markets.

OnePoll



Foreword

Antoine Dubois

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“
Accor is committed to creating the hospitality of tomorrow.”

We are engaged in a constant effort to innovate and to improve our services to keep meeting that goal. One way to achieve this is by tracking guest reviews, which serve as the starting point for improvement and action by directly reflecting guest satisfaction and opinions. The research upon which this white paper is based complements that work, as we investigate the growing importance of guest reviews and ratings to our industry in general.

To that end, we have surveyed 5,000 people living in five countries (France, Germany, Poland, Spain and the UK) who all stayed at a hotel or resort at some point during the past 12 months. We asked them a series of questions to find out when and how they use guest reviews.

The results of our research should be required reading in our industry – particularly for anyone who doubts the extent to which guest reviews now influence buying decisions and perceptions of hotels, resorts and brands. They include the fact that 97% of respondents across all five countries say they read guest reviews at least some of the time, including more than one in three (38%) who do so every time they book a hotel or resort.

They show that guest reviews are not just a useful reference point, but a decision-making tool: many people use them to set the scope of their search; and a majority use them to help decide between shortlisted options. In addition, almost six out of ten people (57%) write reviews themselves after at least half of their visits to hotels or resorts. Our guests pay close attention to each other – we must pay attention to them too.

Taken together, the contents of this document show that guest reviews are people power in action. It is up to us as an industry to harness that power and keep improving everything that we do, to benefit our own businesses, as well as the people we serve.

I hope you find this document both interesting and useful.

Main Findings

The Importance of Reviews & Reputation



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3. MAIN FINDINGS



Guest reviews are the second most important criterion for guests when choosing a hotel/resort to stay in...



All Loyalty programme members are significantly more likely to write reviews than guests who do not participate in a loyalty programme



Finding the right hotel/resort

Right at the start of their search...

39% use reviews as an important filter



63% try to look at a range of reviews and not just read positive or negative reviews

Reviews are much more important for couple and family holidays than for solo and business trips



Respondents read an average of **9 reviews** per hotel/resort

The more recent, the better



71% appreciate it when hotels/resorts respond to reviews

1 It shows guest feedback is important to hotels and that they are endeavouring to improve their offering



52% want to know the most about cleanliness when reading guest reviews for hotels/resorts

53% say cleanliness is where they find it hardest to overlook negative reviews

Market Insight

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Adagio Paris Bercy Village - France

Almost every hotel or resort customer reads guest reviews

Nearly all (97%) potential hotel or resort customers in all five countries covered by our survey read guest reviews at least some of the time before making a booking decision. Almost four out of ten (38%) read reviews every time they book; and a further 38% do so “most times”.

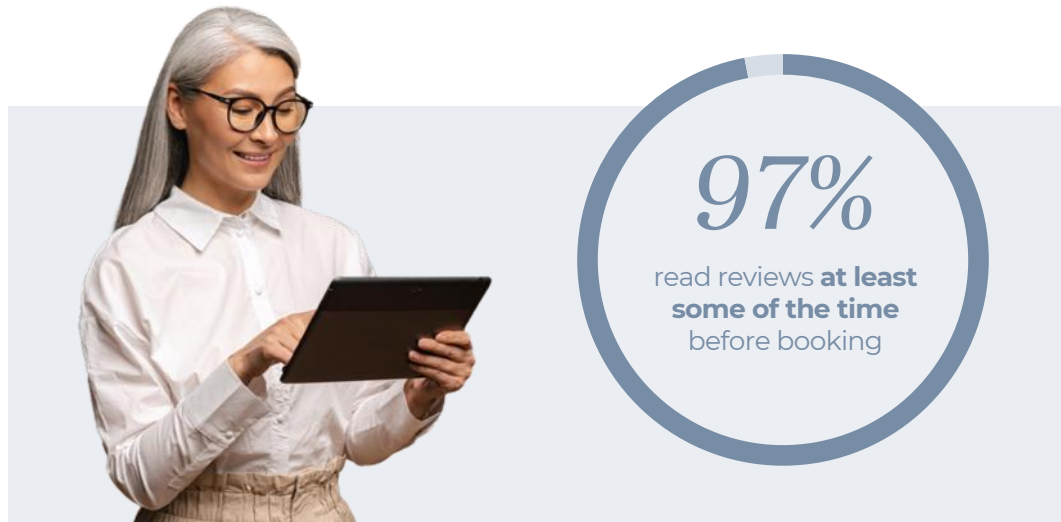


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Women are slightly more likely to read guest reviews: just over nine out of ten (91%) do so either every time, most times or half of the time; compared to 84% of men.



Guest reviews and ratings are the second most important factor in booking decisions

Reviews and ratings were the second most popular choice from a list of 13 criteria from which respondents were asked to select up to three “most important” options. Reviews and ratings were cited by **more than one in three** people (36%), behind only information about rooms and amenities (selected by 44%).

Women are more likely to say reviews are one of the three most important criteria influencing their choice of hotel or resort, with 39% choosing this option, compared to 31% of men.



Apart from price & location, which of the following are most important when choosing a hotel/resort?

Reviews and ratings are a filter at the start of a search and decision-making tool at the end

Almost four out of ten respondents (39%) across all five countries start their search for a hotel or resort by looking at those with review scores at or above a minimum level. More than half (56%) use reviews and ratings to decide between hotels or resorts once they have narrowed their choice down to a shortlist. Only 11% of people don't do either of these things.



39% use review scores as a filter
at the very start of the decision-making process



Respondents read nine reviews for each hotel or resort

On average, respondents across all five countries read about nine reviews (8.63) for each hotel or resort. People in Poland read the most (10.58, on average), while those in Germany read the fewest (7.87). Women tend to read more reviews – 9.23 on average – than men, who read about eight (7.73).

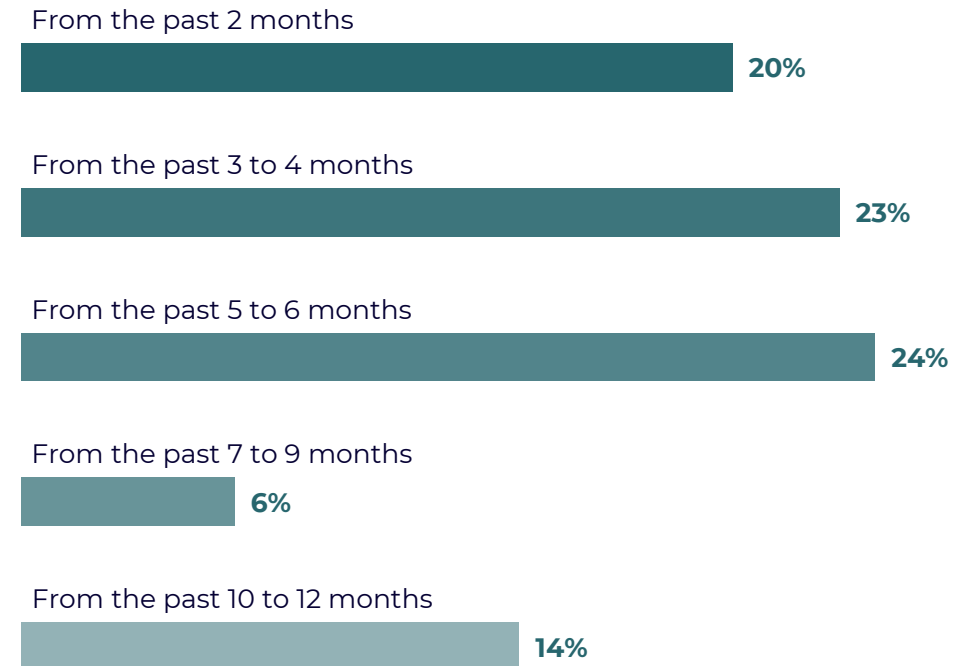


Recent reviews are crucial

More than two-thirds (67%) of people who read reviews won't bother with those that are more than six months old. One in five only look at those written by guests within the past two months; while only 24% look at those left within the past five to six months. These findings confirm the importance of recent reviews, but also show that it is possible to escape the legacy of negative reviews in the past.



How far back would you look at guest reviews for a hotel/resort?



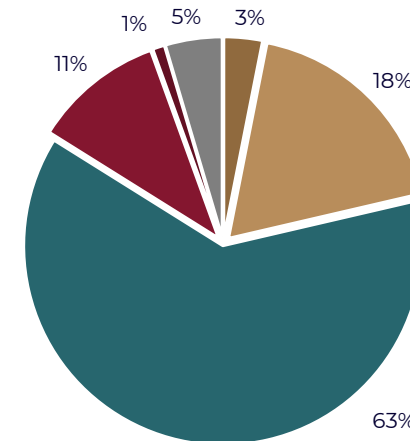
Respondents in France seem keenest to use the most up-to-date views: one in three (33%) would only look at reviews from the past two months.



A majority of people try to take a balanced view of positive and negative reviews

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of people who read reviews say they try to look at a range of both positive and negative reviews. 18% mostly read positive reviews and some negative reviews, while 11% say mostly read negative reviews, plus a few that are positive.

When looking at guest reviews do you tend to look at positive or negative reviews?



3 in 4

respondents in the UK are most likely to say they try to **read a balanced mix of positive and negative reviews**



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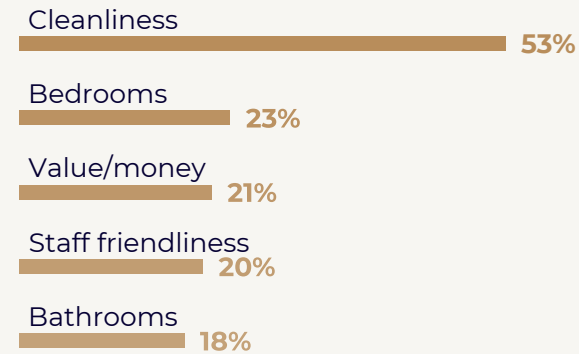
- I will only read the positive reviews
- I will mostly read the positive reviews, and some negative ones
- I try to look at a range of reviews
- I will mostly read the negative reviews, and some positive ones
- I will only read the negative reviews
- N/A - I just look at the overall review scores

People are most interested in what reviewers say about cleanliness

The information in which respondents are most interested is how clean a hotel or resort is. Asked to select up to three areas they would most want to read about, 52% chose “cleanliness”, far ahead of value for money (cited by 27%), bedrooms (26%), location (21%) and staff friendliness (19%).

Review readers in the UK are keenest to learn about how clean a hotel or resort is, with 57% specifying this. Respondents in France are most eager to learn whether reviewers thought a hotel or resort was value for money, with 39% choosing this option. Across all five countries, hygiene appears to be more important to women than men, with 55% citing it, compared to 47% of men.

Which areas would you find most difficult to overlook in negative reviews?



A lack of cleanliness is the failing that we find most difficult to ignore

We also asked respondents which three negative aspects of a hotel or resort experience they would find it most difficult to overlook in a review. Again, cleanliness was cited most often, by 53%. The other areas where people say they would find it most difficult to overlook negative comments in reviews are bedrooms (cited by 23%), value for money (21%), staff friendliness (20%) and bathrooms (18%).



Most people appreciate it when a hotel or resort responds to reviews

More than seven out of ten respondents (71%) who read guest reviews say they appreciate hotels or resorts taking the time to respond to reviews, as this shows they care about guest feedback and about improving their service. Respondents in Spain are most likely to appreciate this – 78% say they do.



71%

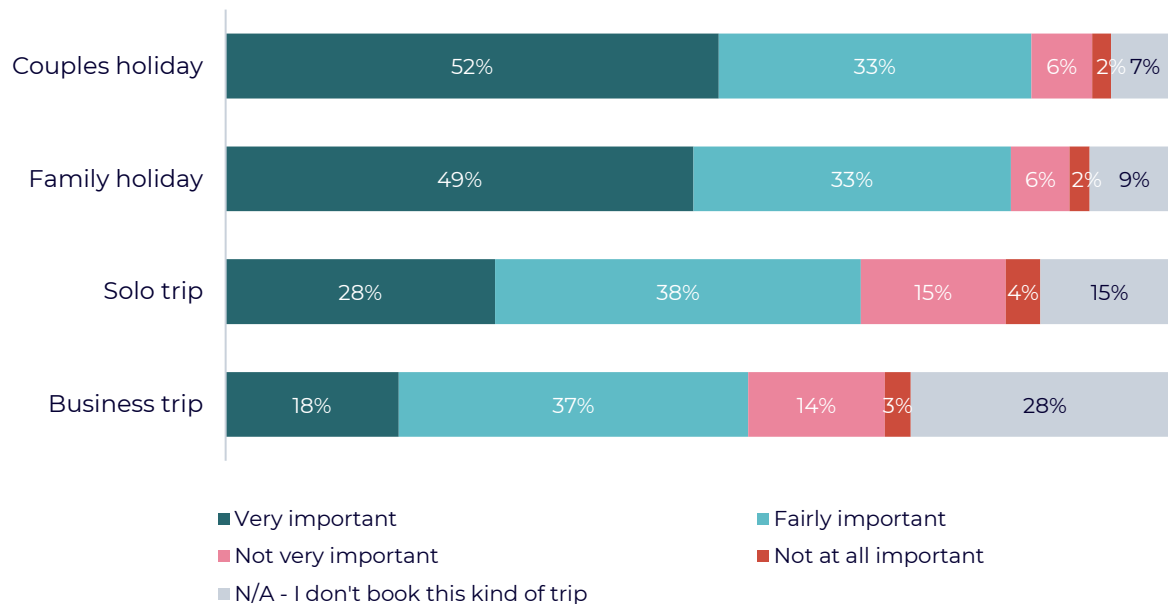
who read guest reviews say they appreciate hotels or resorts **taking the time to respond to reviews**

By contrast, 12% agreed with a statement saying they were “not particularly” in favour of hotels or resorts responding to reviews, as this “can sometimes seem insincere or like a standard business requirement”. 15% of respondents in Poland agreed with this, compared to 10% in Spain, and 12% in the other 3 countries.



Reviews are seen as more important for couples and families than for solo travellers

How important are the reviews of a hotel/resort?



More than eight out of ten (85%) respondents who read reviews say they are important if they are booking a holiday as part of a couple. Respondents in Poland (90%), Spain (88%) and France (84%) are most likely to say this.

Almost as many (82%) say reviews are important if they are booking a family holiday, including most respondents in Poland (90%), Spain (87%) and France (85%).



But while fewer respondents think reviews are important if they are travelling alone, it is important to remember that two-thirds (66%) still do so; and **55% say they are important when they are travelling on business.**

Even if someone is looking for somewhere functional to rest while travelling on their own or when away for work reasons, a review may still be crucial in securing their booking.



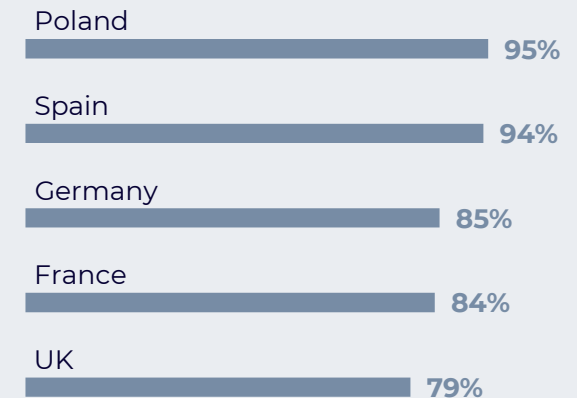
About six out of ten people write reviews of at least half their trips to hotels or resorts

Nearly six out of ten people (57%) write reviews of at least half of their stays at hotels or resorts, including 10% who do so after every stay and another 30% who do so “most times”. Another 31% do so “rarely”, so in total almost nine out of ten people (88%) sometimes write reviews.

Women are more prolific review writers than men: 90% of women write reviews, including 10% who do so every time and 31% who do so most times they stay at a hotel or resort. 84% of men write reviews, including 9% who do so every time and 27% who do so most times.

Respondents from Poland are most likely to write reviews: 95% saying they do so. But those in Spain are most likely to write reviews either every time they stay (15% do so), or most times (a further 40%). People in the UK are least likely to write reviews: but 79% still do so, including only 5% who do so after every trip.

Those more likely to write reviews?



Loyalty programme members are more likely to write reviews

Loyalty programme members are more likely to write guest reviews than are other respondents: 94% of loyalty programme members write reviews, compared to 79% of non-members.

Those more likely to write reviews?

94% With loyalty programme

79% Non-members

58%

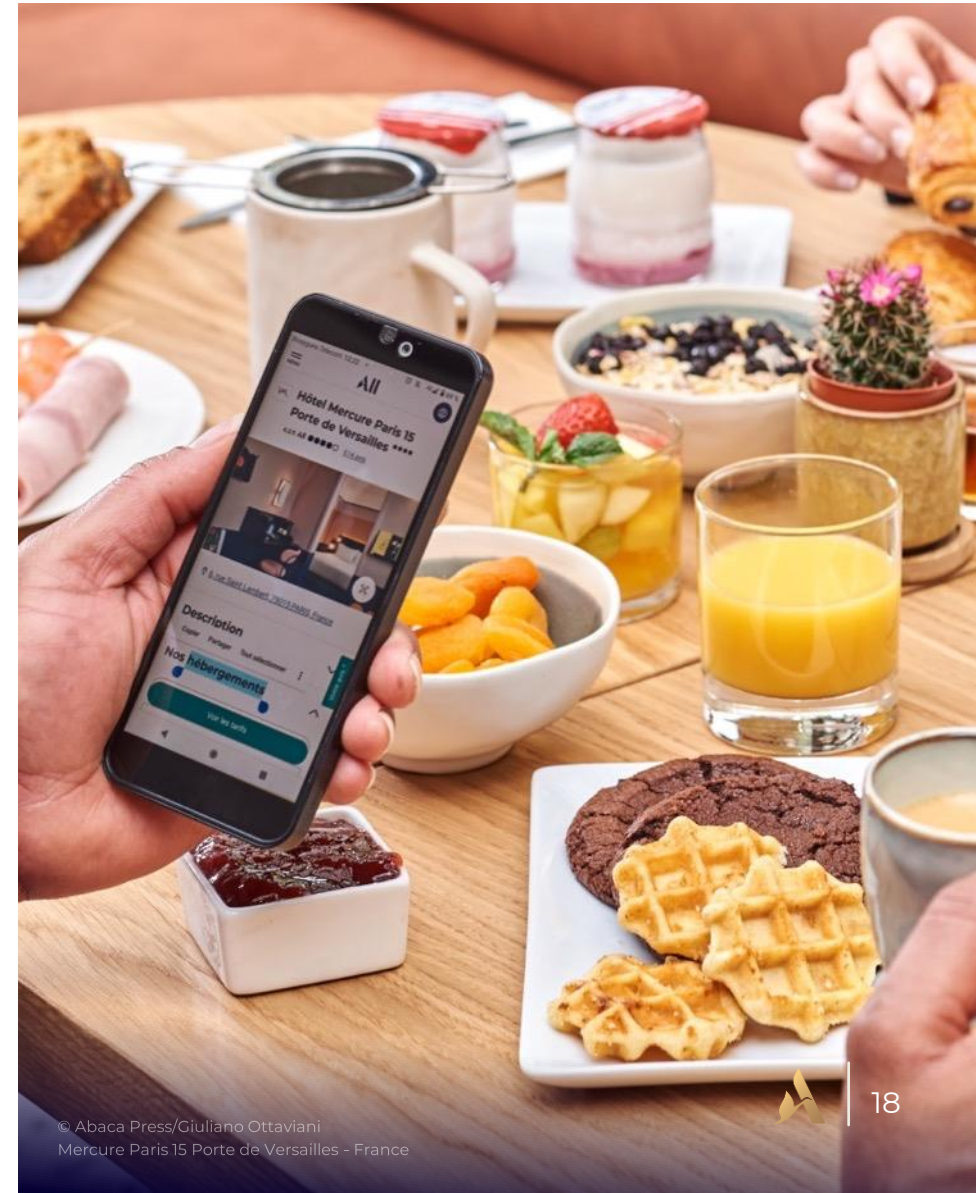
are members of at least one **loyalty programme**

Almost six out of ten of all respondents (58%) are members of at least one travel loyalty programme.

That figure rises to 70% among respondents in Poland and is lowest in the UK (47%).



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Summary

The Importance of Reviews & Reputation



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The findings of our research confirm the huge importance of guest reviews in the hospitality industry today.

Guest reviews are now arguably as important as any element of hotel or resort's marketing strategy. This is the case because, unlike marketing materials, they are read by most potential customers across all five of the countries in our study. Almost all respondents (97%) read guest reviews at least some of the time, with almost four out of ten (38%) saying they read reviews every time they book a stay at a hotel or resort.

 **2 in 5**

read reviews every time they stay at a hotel/resort

Across all five countries, respondents see guest reviews and ratings as very important: among criteria they use to choose where to stay, outranked in importance only by information about rooms and amenities. Almost four out of ten people (39%) say that when they start looking for a hotel or resort they restrict their search to those with review scores at or above a minimum level; and more than half (56%) use reviews and ratings to help decide between shortlisted options at the end of their search.

Respondents look at reviews in depth: on average they read about nine different reviews for each hotel or resort; and most focus on more recent reviews: more than two-thirds (67%) don't read reviews that are more than six months old. Almost two-thirds (63%) say they try to look at a mix of both positive and negative reviews.





Our research also shows that the single most important characteristic of an establishment described in a review is how clean a hotel or resort is; and that most respondents would find a negative review of hygiene in an establishment more difficult to overlook than any other failing.

Reviews clearly matter to potential customers – but most of them also think that hotels and resorts should care about them. More than seven out of ten respondents (71%) who read guest reviews say they appreciate hotels or resorts taking the time to respond to reviews as it shows they are trying to improve their services and take feedback seriously.

More respondents think reviews and ratings are important to people booking holidays for couples or families (more than eight out of ten in both cases) than for solo travellers or business travellers. But in each of the latter cases a majority think reviews are still important: two-thirds say this is true for people travelling alone and 55% say reviews are important for business travellers. This tells us that those reviews are likely to be of greatest relevance to each of these different types of traveller. The issues raised in those reviews and the way a business reacts to them all demand our attention.

Finally, our findings reveal that almost six out of ten people (57%) in all five of these countries write reviews themselves after at least half of their visits to hotels or resorts. One in ten people write a review every time; almost nine out of ten (88%) sometimes do so; and loyalty programme members are more likely to write guest reviews than are non-members.



57%

write reviews themselves after at least half of their visits to hotels or resorts

In the hospitality industry, it seems, it really is the case that “everyone’s a critic”. Whether or not the judgements that guests publish about their experiences at hotels or resorts are always fair or accurate, guest reviewers can exert a strong influence over public perceptions of a particular establishment or brand. The potential of the individual and collective power of guest reviews and ratings makes it even more important that businesses in our industry keep striving to raise standards of service and to meet or exceed customers’ expectations, day after day, year after year.

