

Travel Booking - US - December 2012

Scope and Themes



“Americans are regaining their confidence in the travel market, and finding they have more income to spend on travel overall. However, despite their positive sentiments, travelers are still driven to make travel bookings in the most budget-friendly, convenient way possible. Given their general propensity to be online, travel providers have more incentive to push the internet as the go-to source for travel booking, associating the tool with perks that are unavailable offline.”

Gretchen Grabowski, Travel & Leisure Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- **Can travel providers and consolidators keep up with online innovations?**
- **How can the industry cater to travelers who aren't booking?**
- **Is enough being done to address travelers' cost concerns?**
- **Are travel agents being phased out?**

As Americans' confidence in the travel market continues to grow and more find they have the discretionary income available for personal travel, travel booking is likely to increase. However, while travel booking may be more personally feasible, providers and consolidators may need to introduce more advanced booking technology and continue to present consumers with cost-conscious ways of booking trips that encourage more would-be travel bookers visiting places both near and far to make reservations.

Overall, travel booking methods in the U.S. have evolved as a result of Americans' increasing time spent on—and tendency to rely on information from—the internet.

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This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market.

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Consumers planning travel have direct access to travel providers as well as agents that can help them through the process over the phone or in person. Yet, the fact that web-based booking resources are increasingly available to make finalizing the same reservations faster and often more convenient may encourage travelers to bypass agents altogether. As the internet continues to play a larger role in Americans' daily life, direct travel providers, agents, and third party consolidators will likely compete more for their attention through new and innovative internet and mobile booking tools.

This report builds on the analysis presented in Mintel's *U.S. Travel Market—U.S., January 2010*, as well as *Travel Booking—U.S., April 2007*.

The report covers developments in the U.S. travel booking industry insofar as how consumers are choosing to book travel-related transportation, accommodations, and tours and activities. Transportation includes airline, train, bus, and ferry tickets, as well as car rental. Accommodations discussed include hotels and motels, casino hotels, and bed and breakfasts. Tours and activities encompass adventure activities, cruises, walking tours, and coach tours.

Booking methods covered include online (both direct with providers as well as through third party travel consolidators), as well as offline (in-person or via phone with providers and through travel agents).

The report also includes a discussion of how consumers make travel booking decisions, opinions about, and preferences for booking travel for personal (holiday/leisure or family/friend) reasons.

Value figures throughout this report are at retail selling prices (rsp) excluding sales tax unless otherwise stated.

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