



HOTEL NEWS & INFORMATION FOR TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS

# PREMIER

An ABC Global Services Publication

Winter 2019/2020

## PREMIER

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CONTINUES TO

## GROW

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GO BEYOND BOOKING



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## UpClose 2020

HOTELS  
COMBAT

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING



Premier Newsletter is published and distributed courtesy of ABC Global Services, Inc.

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Access the program via your GDS using the **"AOM" rate code**. Premier Privileges properties are identified with the name "ABC Premier Privileges."

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You can search all participating hotels on the ABC online hotel directory at [www.ABCGlobalServices.com](http://www.ABCGlobalServices.com). Better Than BAR, Premier Privileges and Block Space partners are identified in the directory.

In addition to these features, the ABC Premier Hotel Program comes with our

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Rest assured, you are getting the best program in the industry when you book with ABC!

## 2020 Top Markets

ABC Premier Hotel Program Top Markets Overview	ABC Hotels in Market	Hotels with Discount off BAR	Avg. Discount off BAR	Premier Privileges Hotels	Block Space Hotels
New York	369	144	9.7%	23	16
London	431	213	8.4%	40	3
Houston	320	70	9.6%	7	2
Chicago	138	37	9.7%	10	4
Atlanta	164	23	9.1%	8	1
Sydney	62	21	9.3%	3	3
Melbourne	61	22	9.8%	1	0
Dallas	145	24	10.2%	4	0
Toronto	77	23	11.3%	6	0
San Diego	153	37	10.1%	5	1
San Francisco	104	42	9.8%	6	2
Las Vegas	95	17	7.9%	0	1
Shanghai	190	19	6.3%	17	1
Los Angeles	97	39	10.6%	8	6
Singapore	76	29	11.5%	9	1



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# 2020 PROJECTED TO HAVE LOW LEVELS of **HOTEL OCCUPANCY**

**N**ext year is shaping up to be one of the toughest years in about a decade for U.S. hotels, according to revised forecasts from industry analysts.

Hotel data firm STR in November said it now expects revenue per available room, which measures the combined effects of occupancy and pricing, to be up only 0.5 percent year-over-year. Occupancy will be down 0.4 percent to 65.7 percent in 2020, and average daily rate will decline 0.9 percent year-over-year to \$132.50.



Seattle, along with New York and Washington, D.C., have seen the biggest decline in RevPAR in 2019.

Those numbers all are a bit lower than STR's projected performance for 2019. For the full year, STR said occupancy was down 0.2 percent to 66 percent and ADR down 1 percent to \$131.29, leading to a RevPAR increase of 0.8 percent.

"U.S. hotels have posted nine straight years with RevPAR increases of basically 3 percent or higher, so growth levels below 1 percent will clearly represent the industry's worst years since the recession," according to STR president Amanda Hite.

Earlier forecasts by STR had projected RevPAR growth would be past the 1 percent line in 2020. Supply growth has now outpaced demand growth in the U.S., which has kept average daily rate growth below the rate of inflation for five quarters in a row, Hite said.

Lodging data firm CRBE Hotels Research in December released a forecast with similar projections, saying occupancy growth would decline by 0.6 percent, though it projected a 1.4 percent increase in average daily rate.

The downward trend is due largely to spotty demand from international visitors to the United States, as the domestic travel picture continues to look strong, STR reported.

"Fortunately, demand is going to continue to grow beyond the record levels the industry has already achieved," stated Hite. "Domestic travel continues to increase, with forward-looking domestic air bookings remaining strong. Vacation intentions also are holding above last year's levels."

Many top U.S. markets have had a tough 2019, with RevPAR projected to decline in 14 out of the top 25 markets in 2019, STR reports. Seattle, New York and Washington, D.C., have seen the biggest declines in the metric. A few markets are bucking the trend and seeing RevPAR increases higher than 3 percent, including Atlanta, Denver, Phoenix and San Francisco/San Mateo.

The outlook for the largest markets is a bit better for 2020, with 19 of the top 25



New York is expected to continue to drop at the highest rate of all top markets.

market expected to see RevPAR grow year-over-year. Miami will see the highest rate of growth. RevPAR in New York, however, will continue to drop at the highest rate of all the top markets.

CRBE projects that while 2018 was the peak of the current lodging cycle, the downturn will be short-lived.

"History calls for a downturn in 2020 or 2021," CRBE managing director R. Mark Woodworth said. "However, because the forecast declines in occupancy and real ADR are minimal, we are seeing a slight rollback in performance, which leads to sustained expansion starting in 2022. We expect to see a mini-cycle within the cycle."



In 2020, Miami is expected to see the highest rate of RevPAR growth.



# HOTEL APPS GO BEYOND BOOKING

**T**echnology investment has been a key area of focus for hotels over the past several years, including the development of mobile apps to better engage travelers.

While booking, naturally, is a key function in many of the apps, many of them provide services helpful even to guests who are not booking direct. Most provide simple management for stays and monitoring of rewards accounts, while others provide even flashier features, such as room selection and mobile keys that let guests check in and get into their room without ever needing to meet with a front desk employee.



ACCOR's app can be used for 360-degree tours of the property and access city guides and weather reports.

The following is an overview of some of the key features of each of the major hotel companies' mobile apps.

## ACCOR

With more than 6,000 hotels around the world ranging from budget to luxury, ACCOR has powered its mobile app to enhance guest experience both inside and outside the property.

ACCOR calls its app "a fellow team member in the form of a road book to slip in your pocket." Before arrival, guests can use the app for 360-degree tours of the property and access city guides and weather reports for their destination. Upon arrival, the guests can access numerous services through the app, including online check-in, room service

and taxi bookings, and they also can browse thousands of international press titles. Guests can also book spa treatments, a dinner at the restaurant or manage other hotel services via ACCOR's *My Web Valet*.

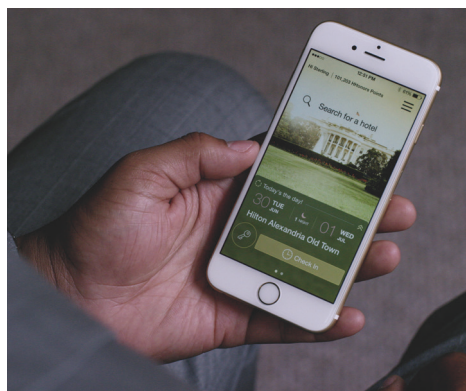
In addition, business travelers can sync the app with their LinkedIn profile to keep their professional network in the know of their stay.

## Best Western

Best Western has recently revamped its dashboard through which Best Western Rewards members can check their points balance and view details of upcoming stays. Select Best Western hotels also have services through the app's *Customer Hub*, with which travelers can check-in, contact the front desk and get a digital key for the room.

## Choice Hotels International

Travelers can manage their reservations and past stays through Choice's app, including finding directions to hotels and viewing



Hilton's HHonors app provides end-to-end services like digital check-in, check-out and remote key features.

invoices. The app also is designed for easy management of Choice Privileges account, enabling travelers to set preferences and redeem points for gift cards and free nights.

## Hilton Worldwide

Hilton's HHonors app provides end-to-end management capabilities for guest stays. Users can check-in, choose their room and use their phone to open their room door via Hilton's *Digital Key* tool. When it's

time to leave, the app has digital check-out capabilities, through which guests can skip the front desk and get their receipt within 48 hours of their stay.

In addition, the HHonors app lets guests manage details of their stay including upgrade requests, destination-specific information such as attractions, weather and arrival requests.



Marriott Bonvoy members can earn extra rewards points with features like, "Green Choice" that opts them out of housekeeping.

## Marriott International

Marriott calls its Marriott Bonvoy app "the perfect travel companion."

Mobile check-in on the app lets users get priority room assignments, notifications when their room is ready and maps to the hotel. The app also features a "Green Choice" option, through which guests can earn extra points by opting out of housekeeping.

Marriott's *Mobile Key* features lets guests lock their room with an iPhone or Apple Watch. The key provides access to public areas such as the parking garage, fitness center and pool as well.

During a stay, the app has buttons for requests such as soap, shampoo, shaving kits and dental kits to be delivered to the room. A chat feature provides additional access to hotel associates for service requests or information such as shuttle service hours or fitness center amenities.

Bonvoy members can access balance and activity through the app and update their



profiles. Platinum Elite members can get confirmation for requests such as priority late check-out via the app.

### InterContinental Hotels Group

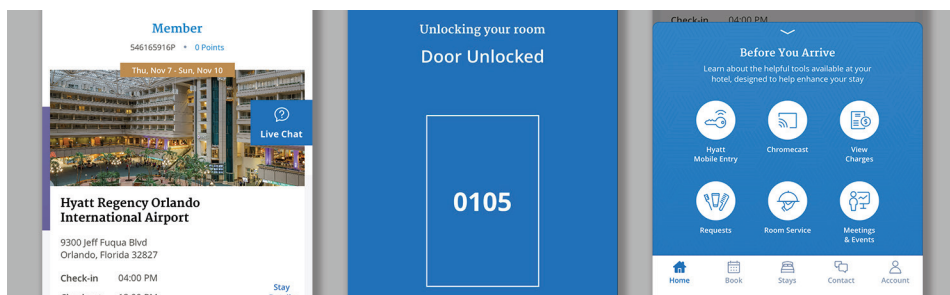
IHG recently improved its app interface to make it easier to manage stays and rewards accounts.

For stays, the app provides information on hotels including directions, services and reviews. Guests can also check-out and manage their bill via the app.

IHG Rewards Club members can access a virtual card and check their activity and balance through the app. Offers beyond hotel stays are available to purchase with points via the app, including merchandise, gift certificates and digital downloads.

For global travelers, one special feature of IHG's app is its translator tool, which offers over 50 phrases in 12 languages and a voice-to-voice translator with access to 10 translations. The feature also includes a 10,000-word offline dictionary, currency converter and tip calculator.

For a fee, users can access premium content through the translator tool, including 2,000 phrases, unlimited translations and a live translator for 180 languages. Club and Gold Elite members can access premium content at a 50 percent discount, and



In addition to other features, the World of Hyatt app allows guests to bypass the front desk upon check-in.

Platinum, Spire and Ambassador members get complimentary access.

### Hyatt

The World of Hyatt app provides a gateway to services and features at more than 900 hotels and resorts around the world.

Within the app, travelers can check-in, view room charges and check-out without going to the front desk. Select hotels also provide *Mobile Entry*, which, when enabled on the app, lets travelers unlock doors by tapping a key icon and holding their phone against the lock.

Other features of the app include buttons to request items to the room, order room service, view messages and manage meetings and events. In addition, users can

cast shows from their device to the room television via Chromecast.

### Radisson Hotels

Radisson's app provides simple management for Radisson Rewards members. Through the app, they can monitor their accounts, check balances, view bookings and access their *Digital Rewards* card. The app is customizable by language, currency and other geographic-specific details such as miles versus kilometers for distances.

### Wyndham Hotels & Resorts

The Wyndham Rewards app also simplifies management of rewards accounts. Users can store credit card information for easy checkout, view point totals and request a phone call when they need help beyond the app.

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# HOTELS STEP UP EFFORTS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**H**uman trafficking is a massive global criminal enterprise, and unfortunately, hotels can easily find themselves at the epicenter of these criminal operations. Many hotel chains, however, are actively stepping up their policies and training to combat human trafficking.

The International Labor Organization estimates that there are more than 40 million victims of human trafficking around the world, and 25 percent of those victims are children. Because they can be an anonymous, “neutral” ground, hotels can make easy bases for these criminals to conduct business. In recent years, the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline reported that 10.5 percent of sex trafficking cases came from hotels. A more recent report by Polaris, a nonprofit organization that fights human trafficking, indicated that 75 percent of victims had used a hotel at some point while they were being trafficked.



ECPAT-USA, the leading policy organization in the United States, is seeking to end the commercial, sexual exploitation of children.

Contrary to what one might expect, it's not just at seedy, dingy hotels, according to ECPAT-USA, a network of organizations fighting to end sexual exploitation of children. These cases have happened at the full spectrum of properties, from budget hotels to luxury properties.

This also means, however, that when equipped with the proper training, hotels can be uniquely positioned to stop human trafficking, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and every hotel employee can play a part. Housekeeping staff, for example, might notice requests for services such as more towels or linens but continuous denial of staff entry to the room, or a housekeeper might note excessive amounts of sex paraphernalia in a room. Front desk staff could note reservations that seem odd, such as a single person renting multiple rooms, or guests traveling with little luggage and clothing. Food and beverage staff might notice a guest soliciting male patrons in a hotel's bar.

Training goes beyond just noticing these warning signs, however. For example, a victim might not be immediately willing to speak up if something is wrong, so staff need to know how to handle various situations. Hotels also want to avoid drawing wrong conclusions that lead to over-reporting, which also can be tinged with racial biases.

As such, hotels have been stepping up their efforts to make sure their staffs are equipped to play their part in human trafficking. **Marriott International**, for example, has partnered with ECPAT-USA and Polaris to develop a training program for its staff, and it made that training mandatory for all of its associates in early 2018.

“We want the associates in our hotels to be aware of the scale of human trafficking, our commitment to stopping it, to learn the many indicators or unusual behaviors of traffickers and to report suspicions to management, who in turn alert local authorities,” Marriott CEO Arne Sorenson said in a 2018 USA Today editorial on the company's efforts. “As a global hospitality company, with nearly 700,000 people wearing a Marriott badge around the world, we can create a force for good in thousands of communities.”

As of the middle of 2019, Marriott estimated that it had trained more than

600,000 of its 730,000 hotel workers globally. Marriott also partnered with the American Hotel & Lodging Association to make its training accessible to all AHLA members, including translations into multiple languages for use worldwide.



Hotel companies like Choice Hotels International, Hilton Worldwide, Hyatt, Marriott International, Radisson Hotel Group, Wyndham Destinations and more have all signed ECPAT-USA's code of conduct.

More recently, **Radisson Hotel Group** announced in November it also was partnering with ECPAT-USA, including signing its Tourism Child-Protection Code of Conduct. As part of its newly released training program, Radisson will be training its staff on detecting human trafficking at its more than 1,100 hotels and will be using ECPAT tools, such as posters and videos, at its hotels.

**Hilton Worldwide** has a long history of implementing measures to combat human trafficking. It signed ECPAT's Code of Conduct in 2011 and implemented an education program for its team members. It also partnered with the Global Fund for Children in 2014 to create the Hilton Anti-



Trafficking Fund, which has supported global efforts to fight human trafficking. From 2014 to 2017, the programs helped about 1,500 children in Nigeria, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey and the United Kingdom, according to Hilton.

**Hyatt** was an early signer of the ECPAT Code of Conduct as well. The company includes human trafficking training as a brand standard, and the training is mandatory for key functions at its managed properties. Hyatt also works with programs to train young adults vulnerable to exploitation with skills to gain employment in the hospitality industry.

**Wyndham Hotels & Resorts** has a mature training program for combating human trafficking, having partnered with Polaris in 2014 to develop training and education tools for hotel owners, franchisees, property level staff and employees at corporate offices and call centers. More recently, vacation ownership company **Wyndham Destinations** became the first timeshare company to sign ECPAT-USA's Code of Conduct.

**InterContinental Hotels Group** commissioned an external assessment of human rights risks for the travel and hospitality industry back in 2013 and since has developed global training programs of its branded hotels. That includes a 10-minute training session on human rights, modern slavery and human trafficking accessible

to all hotels—whether owned, managed or franchised—in multiple languages.

**Choice Hotels International** signed the ECPAT-USA Code of Conduct in 2015, and since its training program for hotels has been completed nearly 30,000 times, according to Choice. The company also works with its franchised hotels to be on particularly

roles in combatting human trafficking. Thirteen states, for example, mandate human trafficking awareness signage in lodging facilities, and four states mandate awareness training for individuals working in the lodging industry. Efforts across the industry are likely to step up as such requirements become more commonplace.

Of course, the responsibility for



In 2014, Hilton partnered with Global Fund for Children to create the Hilton Anti-Trafficking Fund.

high alert during major events that have a high risk of human trafficking activity, such as the Super Bowl and the Olympic Games.

While few would disagree that implementing such policies fulfill a hotel company's moral obligation, that obligation increasingly is becoming a legal one as well. ECPAT-USA reports that several states have been passing laws regarding hotels'

combatting human trafficking lies well beyond just hotels. ECPAT-USA works across the industry with travel professionals, including corporate travel buyers and meeting professionals, to raise awareness about the issue. That training is equipping them with information and resources to work with suppliers who in turn are doing their role in combatting human trafficking.

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