

Published: e-hotelier.com
Date: March 2008
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Mar 11, 08 | 1:57 am

The British Hotel Guest Survey 2008, researched and produced by **BDRC**, has just been released. This in-depth annual survey focuses on the domestic hotel market both in the business and leisure sectors, and it is one of the most comprehensive of its kind.

The sample group has been increased for the 2008 report to 2000 respondents made up in equal part of business and leisure travellers. The current report also includes a section on items taken from a hotel room without paying - toiletries came out top at 47% with slippers at 4.9% - more surprisingly, 1.6% claimed to have taken the TV and 1.4% the kettle!

- In terms of the overall market competition in the British hotel sector continues to intensify and leisure continues to be challenged by cheap short-haul flights and poor UK weather
- Business travellers have a greater number of brands to choose from and this is impacting on brand performance - there has been a 53% increase in branded room supply since 2000
- Internet search engines remain the preferred information source for business and leisure travellers and internet bookings continue to rise.
- In 2008 64% of leisure travellers booked online - as opposed to just 4% in 2000. Likewise business travellers are up 70% in 2008 from 11% in 2000
- Expedia is the top website visited for browsing (40%), however travellers still prefer to book through the hotel website
- In 2006 11% of respondents claimed to have used a wireless hotspot in a hotel - in 2008 this is up to 36%. With 29% preferring to use the internet from their bedroom
- However leisure travellers still claim that broadband provision is not a top priority when booking a hotel (48%) and most agree they would opt for free access with low speed (eg 2Mbps) rather than pay for speed
- On emotional attributes design-led brands such as Malmaison and City Inn achieve greater differentiation than their more established counterparts and we are finding some 'older' brands now emulating these lifestyle brands
- Hilton came out top for prompted awareness in the upper service brands category. Holiday Inn leads in the mid-market full service category and Travelodge continues to lead in the budget brands category. Malmaison however overtook Hilton as leading choice amongst actual users