

Marriott.
HOTELS & RESORTS

How Marriott International Tapped into the Mobile Market



✔ Challenge

Eighty per cent of the US population has a mobile phone. Marriott International, which launched its mobile site in 2005, wanted to gain insights into how Marriott Mobile customers rated the usefulness of the site and determine preferences for future features.

✔ Solutions

Develop a custom-made, interactive survey to tap into a valuable and burgeoning mobile community/resource for feedback which would allow Marriott International to improve their customer experience.

✔ Result

Marriott International was able to speak to 700 mobile users in 30 days and gather significant statistical data to enable Marriott to focus on specific and strategic product enhancements: continued mobile booking, more hotel details, and city guides.

Dialing into the needs of their mobile consumers

In this day and age it's not unusual to be stranded in the airport, your flight delayed, cancelled or re-routed due to poor weather conditions. Sure, there are a few channels that will help you to find or rebook your plans – a 1-800 hotel booking service or the internet - but nothing is more unique and location-centric than a mobile phone.

With the advent of web-enabled and faster mobile devices, it's no surprise that both 2008 and 2009 have proven to be the 'coming of age' for mobile booking. Marriott Mobile alone achieved \$2 million in gross revenue between its August 2008 launch and the end of the year. And the start of 2009 proved much the same, in terms of generating an upward trend in revenues for the hotelier.

"In August 2008, we enhanced the site to give mobile users the ability to actually complete the hotel reservation on their mobile devices and access their Marriott Rewards accounts," says Kyra Hicks, Director, Online Sales Programs for Marriott International. "But still, the space is going to evolve – and for that to happen the eCommerce group needed to be able to access our mobile customer base; which is why we came to Vision Critical – they didn't shy away from tackling the challenge: how to survey mobile customers on their mobile devices."

Getting ahead of the curve with cutting edge strategies

So, evolution is fine but how did the Marriott International team determine their direction as it related to new mobile features? One way: working with Vision Critical to create a custom mobile research application to gauge customers' opinions while on their mobile device.

In a recent three-country [Mobile Research Study](#) comparing mobile data collection and online data collection in the US, Canada and the UK, Vision Critical found that when mobile questionnaires are managed properly, respondents will answer in a similar fashion to those who respond using the traditional desktop experience. What this study ultimately shows is that the door is wide open for multi-mode surveys with benefits that include increased response rates and the ability to conduct immediate onsite research. Not surprisingly, mobile internet usage is outpacing desktop internet adoption. According to Morgan Stanley's 424-page "[Mobile Internet Report](#)," the mobile internet is "ramping faster than desktop internet did" and the mobile internet market will be at least twice the size of desktop internet, based on analysis comparing internet users with mobile subscribers.

"We want to have a pulse on what our mobile customers are looking for and the tool [Vision Critical] provided allowed us to have a quick implementation," says Gina Villavicencio, Senior Manager, User Research, Marriott International – eCommerce. "With the survey, we were able to speak to 700 mobile users in roughly 30 days and it allowed us to very quickly get insight into today's mobile customers."

Details, details – it's all in the details of 'how'

Vision Critical's interactive technology was tailored to Marriott International's needs – their survey was easily and seamlessly implemented on major smartphone devices, such as iPhone and BlackBerry; which removed any lag time in getting technical issues resolved. Vision Critical provided cumulative survey results on a daily basis.

"I have to admit, I didn't fully understand the extent of the work you had to do until we got into it but I was pleasantly surprised. We actually launched ahead of time," explains Hicks.

"We were going to launch a city guide/information on mobile and we wanted to understand how our mobile users were going to respond to that feature," says Villavicencio. "The feedback we got was overwhelmingly positive regarding the added city information – and it's also added a halo experience where those who clicked on the city link rated the mobile experience higher."

The partnership between Vision Critical and Marriott International has been a successful one: "We had a great experience working with the team," adds Villavicencio. "They were very professional and the project was executed beautifully."

You can visit Marriott Mobile by typing www.Marriott.com into your mobile browser.



When your customers take the lead, so does your brand.

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About Vision Critical®

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