

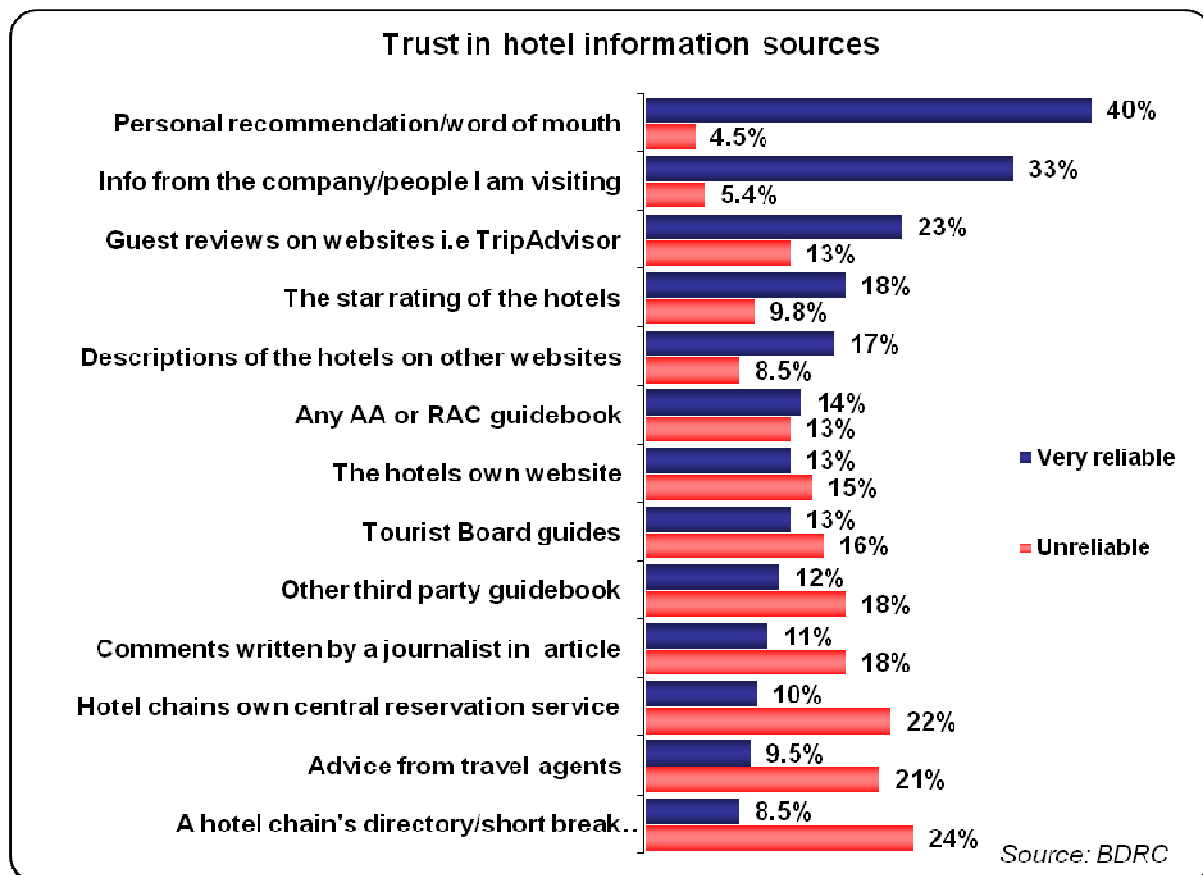
£500m ticket for TripAdvisor

28% of business travellers actively seek advice on consumer review sites when booking hotels

London 9th October 2009: Research from leading market research agency BDRC (www.bdrc.co.uk) shows that the consumer trend of scouring the internet for hotel recommendations is now de rigueur for corporate travellers. Whilst it's quite well known that leisure travellers research the opinions of fellow travellers when booking independent travel, the research indicates that the sites such as TripAdvisor have a phenomenal impact on where business travellers chose to rest their sleepy heads for the night. Based on recent survey data, BDRC calculates that user review sites and blogs influence decisions on hotels choices to the tune of £500m every year.

According to the research, 28% of business travellers actively seek advice on websites featuring consumer reviews. 46% were influenced in their hotel selection by consumer reviews, while another 41% decided to change their original hotel choice after reading about other travellers' experiences.

The influence of word of mouth recommendations - both on and off line –outweighs the star ratings offered by the AA and RAC and official ratings and advice from travel agents. With 40% of respondents citing them as “very reliable”, personal recommendations were the most trusted source of information, followed by information supplied by the company business travellers were visiting at 33%. 23% of business travellers place their faith in reviews by total strangers on sites such as TripAdvisor. Only 13% believe that others' opinions on user review sites are “unreliable”, compared to just 4.5% who remain sceptical about personal recommendations.



Matt Costin, Director of hospitality research at BDRC said “These figures show that the influence that sites featuring consumer reviews and opinions have is absolutely huge for both leisure and business travellers. Personal recommendations and word of mouth is now the number one marketing channel. Hotel brands need to work hard to ensure that they deliver excellent service as their guests have the potential to be their most influential marketing tool by sharing their experiences with others.

In the past a guest’s role as either an advocate or detractor was limited to their personal network but now as more and more business travellers log on to read user-review sites, the impact they are having on corporate bookings is enormous.”

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For press enquiries please contact:

Charlotte Herbert, PR Consultant Greenfields Communications
 cherbert@greenfieldscommunications.com Tel: +44 7870 204242

Lucy Green, PR Consultant Greenfields Communications

lgreen@greenfieldscommunications.com Tel: +44 7870 204242

About BDRC

Founded in 1991, Business Development Research Consultants is a leading full service market research agency. Working primarily for service organisations, the company specialises in hotels, finance, travel and tourism and mobile telephony. The acquisition of Continental Research at the beginning of 2008 added media and advertising, public sector and technology research expertise to the portfolio of market sectors covered. Headquartered in London, the company is renowned for its consultative approach and ability to add value to clients' businesses by bringing insights from multiple markets to their research. BDRC was the recipient of the 'Applications of Research' award at the 2008 Market Research Society awards ceremony. For more information, please visit www.bdrc.co.uk.