



HOTEL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
ASSOCIATION DES HÔTELS DU CANADA

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release:

Business Travel is Picking Up - Leisure Travel is Static

March 6, 2012 - Ottawa – Latest results from the 2012 HAC Canadian Travel Intentions Survey show that business travel is projected to be up four percent in 2012, while leisure travel is expected to be static. Eighty percent of business travellers said they would be doing more or the same amount of business travel in Canada in 2012 as they did in 2011 with the highest percentage coming from Ontario and Quebec. Eighty-two per cent of leisure travellers said they will be travelling more or the same for vacation this year.

While overall, leisure travel is static, twenty six percent of Quebecers said they would be travelling more for leisure, three percent more than the national average. The most uncertainty regarding leisure travel is in Ontario, with eight percent indicating they did not know what their leisure travel plans will be for 2012. Of those who said they would be travelling less for leisure in 2012, thirty seven percent said they were doing so because of financial difficulties while the cost of air fare has been identified as another leading reason for travelling less.

Business travellers who said they would be travelling less this year claimed the number one reason for doing so is the use of video conferencing followed by the cost of air fare in Canada.

Staycation - New Trend

Travellers were asked how many times in 2011 they took a 'staycation' where they stayed in a hotel in their home town and visited local attractions, shopped and ate at local restaurants. A solid twenty two per cent said they did, with six per cent having done so three or more times in 2011. Thirteen per cent said they would consider it in 2012.

“Hoteliers have an emerging market of “staycationers” who are vacationing in their own town or city,” said Tony Pollard, HAC President. “In challenging economic times people still want a get-away but are choosing something closer to home that may be more affordable.”

Social Media and Travellers

Seventy eight percent of leisure and sixty six percent of business travellers use only the internet to gather information before they book travel. All travellers use search engines to get information, followed by hotel booking sites and websites. In 2011, more than twice the number of business travellers used social media sites to get travel information, but in 2012, leisure travellers almost caught up in their social media usage. For the first time, two per cent of leisure travellers are using hotel apps as a source of travel information.

The top five things leisure travellers are looking for on the Internet are specials, photos, maps, amenities and guest testimonials. Topping the list for business travellers is hotel ratings, guest testimonials, videos, travel blogs and social media. Seventy per cent of business travellers (up 16% over 2011) and 72 per cent of leisure travellers (up 13% over 2011) said that hotel ratings on internet booking services have the most influence on their travel choices. Seven per cent

more leisure travellers (56%) and six per cent more business (52%) travellers than in 2011 said testimonials by previous travelers influence their choice of a place to stay.

Smartphones - Weather Obsessed Canadians

The survey looked at leisure and business travellers' use of smartphones when travelling. The majority (44%, up 5% from 2011) said they use their smartphones to check the weather and are fearful about missing connections or worried about flights being delayed, with thirty one per cent of travellers checking departure and arrival times (up 4% from 2011). Thirty-seven per cent of travellers said they use GPS and/or get directions on their smartphones, an increase of five per cent over 2011.

Facebook is becoming more and more popular with twenty five per cent (up 5% over 2011) saying they use their smartphones to check their messages and update their status. Twelve per cent book hotels and seven per cent book air, train, or bus tickets on their smartphones. Eight per cent said that they use their mobile phones to Tweet.

Travellers were asked what they would like to see included in a hotel mobile app. The top five were finding a hotel's location, booking a hotel room, checking a reservation, calling for reservation support or customer service, and linking to a hotel's full web site.

"The greatest percentage of travellers calling for these types of hotel mobile apps is in the 25-34 age range. This is an opportunity to develop something that meets the needs of the young traveller that will be part of his or her travel expectations," said Mr. Pollard.

Customer Service & Food and Beverage

Respondents were surveyed about hotel service. The majority of travellers said that hotel service in 2011 was superior to that of the past. Forty-one per cent said hotel service in 2011 was better than hotel service in 2010, forty five per cent said it was better than two years ago and forty seven per cent said it was better than five years ago.

The survey looked at meals at hotel restaurants and room service. The majority of respondents said meals were better now than five years ago.

Environment Still Important

Forty-two per cent of business travellers (up 5% from 2011) said environmental initiatives such as water recycling and energy efficiency are important to them. Thirty six per cent of leisure travellers and thirty four per cent of business travellers said it is important for hotels to have green products. Twenty-five per cent of leisure travellers and thirty one per cent of business travellers said a hotel with an environmental certification program is important to them.

Nineteen per cent of business travellers and fifteen per cent of leisure travellers said the ability to purchase carbon credits is very important to them. Forty-three per cent of all travellers said they would pay \$1 or more to offset their stay at a property (carbon credits).

The survey of Canadian travellers is the eighth annual Canadian Travel Intention study undertaken by the Hotel Association of Canada. This survey was fielded by Opinion Search and defines a traveller as someone who will stay at least one night in a hotel, motel or resort. The online survey was conducted in the last week of January and the first week of February 2012 among 1518 "likely travellers" with a margin of error of +/- 2.5%.

About the Hotel Association of Canada

The Hotel Association of Canada is the national voice and resource for the Hotel and Lodging Industry in Canada. For nearly 100 years, it has worked to enhance the prosperity of the Canadian Hotel and Lodging Industry through strong member engagements, effective government advocacy, and the provision of value added programs and services. The Hotel Association represents more than 8,400 hotels, motels and resorts that encompass the \$16 billion Canadian hotel industry which employs 284,000 people across Canada. www.hotelassociation.ca.