

COVID-19: the CX Impact.

Travel & Hospitality

Industry Snapshot

The disruption COVID-19 has created would have been unthinkable, even several months ago. It's forcibly changing consumer behavior and buying habits, causing companies to totally reimagine their traditional approach to work and has led governments around the globe to introduce extraordinary measures to protect their people, their economies and their countries. The travel and hospitality industry has been especially impacted thanks to quarantine orders, border closures and lack of travel around the globe.

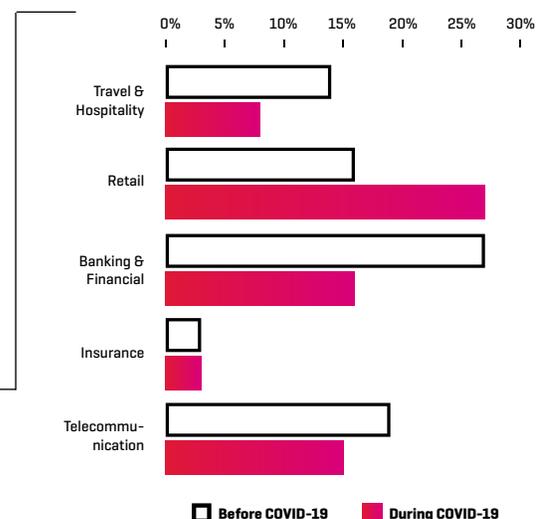
However, even in the midst of a pandemic, consumers are focused on and value emotional connection. They are seeking out brands that understand and can cater to their needs and are actively avoiding those that are judged to have fallen short.

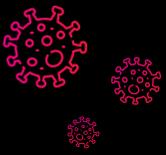
As the immediate threat of coronavirus begins to recede, and consumers begin to return to a semblance of normality, the businesses that prioritize customer experience management will be the ones that thrive, rather than survive in the new normal.

But where should those in the travel and hospitality industry look first?

Prior to the pandemic, the travel and hospitality industry was highlighted by 14% of consumers as being the most innovative when it came to the use of technology in providing customer experiences. Only 8% of consumers felt that travel and hospitality was the industry making the most innovative use of technology during the pandemic.

Which industry is the most innovative when it comes to leveraging technology?





Even in the midst of a pandemic 43% of consumers are still prepared to sever ties with a brand after a single poor experience, and this number is expected to return to pre-pandemic levels (74%) as customers' patience wears thin. During the pandemic, 35% of consumers also indicated a preference for resolving issues or answering questions for themselves. Those in travel and hospitality industry should look to technology to provide consumers with self-service solutions.

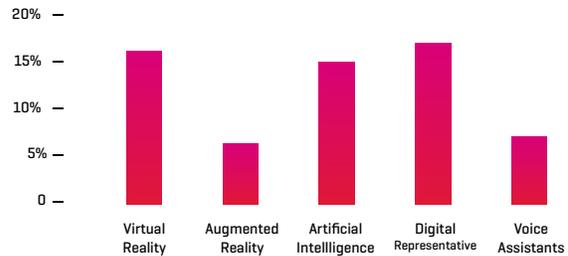
Some in the industry have already made innovative use of artificial intelligence (AI) to support customers through the pandemic, for example implementing FAQ bots to answer customers' COVID-19-related questions. These solutions can be implemented quickly supporting customers in response to unforeseen peaks in demand, such as a global pandemic, and also work to deflect customers from other channels, driving efficiencies and enabling live agents to better support the customers who need their support most.

Both before and during the pandemic, the travel and hospital industry was seen by consumers to be lagging behind banking and financial services, telecommunications and retail industries in the innovative use of technology. Those in the industry should be mindful that consumers' expectations are set by their experiences across industries, and so innovative use of technology

in other spaces raises the expectation in the travel and hospitality industry too.

We asked consumers what technology they believed travel and hospitality brands could leverage to create the most compelling customer experiences, and digital representatives (chatbots, voice automation, etc.) came out just ahead. Virtual reality (VR) was a close second and it is easy to imagine how immersive experiences could be built enabling customers to "try before they buy" a hotel room or holiday destination. Consumers also saw the opportunity for the travel and hospitality industry to leverage AI to deliver personalized recommendations. Those in the industry should explore combining AI and VR to create more personalized, virtual experiences that can seamlessly support consumers through discovery and purchase and on to post-purchase care 24/7.

Which technology makes the most positive experience in travel and hospitality?



Learn More

Sitel Group's COVID-19: the CX Impact study explores how COVID-19 is changing consumer's expectations and helps brand to explore how they can keep pace.

The COVID-19: the CX Impact white paper is available to download at [sitel.group/2020_cximpact_study](https://www.sitel.group/2020_cximpact_study)

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