

MOBILE MARKETING

How to Get Your Share of \$8 Billion in Mobile Bookings

INSIDE

- How to boost direct bookings
- Why you need a mobile-friendly site
- Pros & cons of mobile websites
- Pros & cons of responsive design
- Pros & cons of mobile apps

THE BIG DEAL ABOUT SMALL SCREENS

Don't have a mobile-friendly site yet? Debating the value of developing a mobile app? This guide's for you.

Consider that 51% of mobile web users research travel options using cell phones and iPads or other tablets.¹ And they book too, projecting to \$8 billion in mobile bookings in 2013.²

The first thing you should do to boost direct bookings and get your share of a rapidly growing mobile audience? Make it easy for travelers to find, research and book your property on mobile. Here's why.

OVER 50% OF MOBILE WEB USERS RESEARCH TRAVEL ON MOBILE

MOBILE-FRIENDLY IS BOOKINGS-FRIENDLY

45% of mobile web users choose to browse on their smartphones even when a computer is nearby.³ Why? Because it's so convenient — their phone is always with them and it's always on. So if your potential guests are stuck with a website built for people using a computer, you could be losing out on a lot of prime business.

That's because viewing a full website on a smartphone or tablet distracts and frustrates visitors with:

- Slow load times
- Small links that are hard to tap
- Pages that require resizing
- Layouts that inhibit booking
- Too much typing

THE GOOD NEWS?

You can turn mobile visitors into mobile bookings, with just a little work on your part. We'll give you an overview of two popular options for mobile-friendly sites: Responsive websites and separate mobile websites. We'll also help you decide if a mobile app makes sense for your brand.

A responsive site helps you look your best across different devices.



RESPONSIVE DESIGN IS... FLEXIBLE, EFFICIENT, COOL

WHAT'S RESPONSIVE WEB DESIGN?

It's a flexible approach that automatically reformats your layout based on the user's screen size.

If someone visits your site on a computer, they see the "traditional" version. If they visit on their tablet or phone, they'll see the same content laid out differently for a better smaller screen experience. No more squinting to read text or having to resize pages while on-the-go.

HOW IT WORKS

CSS3 (Cascading Style Sheets Level 3) is a technology that helps style the look and formatting of your website. CSS3 lets you perform a media query to determine a device's screen size and adjust how content is displayed accordingly.

Example: visitmusiccity.com, the tourism site for Nashville, TN. You can sample the site's responsiveness by resizing your computer's web browser, or by doing a side by side comparison with a computer and a tablet or smartphone.

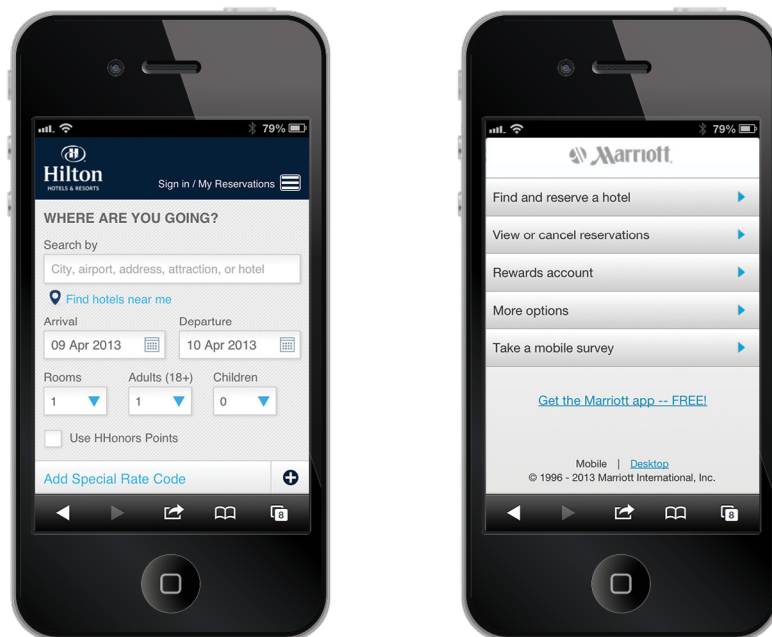
RESPONSIVE DESIGN PROS:

- Efficient way to optimize for any device, big or small.
- You only have to maintain and update one version of your site.
- Having just one set of content maximizes SEO benefits.

RESPONSIVE DESIGN CONS:

- More complex and expensive to build from scratch — you'll probably need to hire a digital agency or web design specialist.
- Fine tweaking how your site displays on different devices can be time intensive.
- CSS3 technology is very new, and what displays well on one device might look suboptimal on another (especially if it's not brand new).
- Not much customization for what you show to mobile users, just how it displays.

Which mobile homepage approach makes more sense for your property?



MOBILE SITES ARE... CUSTOMIZABLE, SPEEDY, TESTABLE

WHAT ARE MOBILE WEBSITES?

A mobile website is a separate site that you create just for your visitors using a tablet or smartphone.

Because your mobile website is independent of your full site, you're free to adjust page layouts for smaller screens and minimize photos to cut down on load times for mobile devices with slower internet connections. It's all about making things easier for busy travelers who could be walking up stairs, standing in line at the airport, or riding in a speeding taxi.

HOW IT WORKS

Mobile sites are like full websites, with a few key differences. Some things, like page sizes and photo dimensions, are smaller. Meanwhile, buttons are bigger so they're easier to tap and text is bigger so it's easier to read. Content and branding should be similar on both your mobile and full website, with your mobile site being more stripped down so on-the-go users can find what they want right away.

Examples: Hilton's mobile homepage focuses users on a booking form, with secondary links to call a booking agent or view the full version of the Hilton website.

On the other hand, Marriott's mobile homepage features a "quick links" navigation with five key links, including, "Find and reserve a hotel" and "Take a mobile survey," with a secondary link to download the free Marriott app.

MOBILE WEBSITE PROS:

- You can customize text and images specifically for mobile users.
- It can be cheaper to create a mobile site than a responsive one.
- Pages can load faster if you reduce images and image file sizes.

MOBILE WEBSITE CONS:

- You have to build, update and keep track of two sites instead of one.
- Having two identical or similar sites can adversely affect your SEO — unless you use the same URL for both sites (checking user agent lets you direct mobile users to the mobile version of the page without needing a separate mobile version of the URL).

Your app should focus on the BUT: make it easy to Book, Update, and Track reservations and loyalty points.



MOBILE APPS ARE... CONVENIENT, CUSTOMIZABLE, COSTLY

WHAT ARE MOBILE APPS?

Chances are, you use apps all the time: Angry Birds, Instagram, TripAdvisor...you know, the essentials.

Mobile apps are applications you download and use on your smartphone or tablet. They can be expensive to create, so only develop an app if you have enough frequent travelers who'll use it often enough.

With an app, you ask a lot from travelers. First, they have to download the app. Then find it and log in. And then actually take the time to use it. So your app has to be helpful, easy to use and work well enough to justify all that effort.

HOW IT WORKS

The most popular and successful type of mobile app, especially within the travel industry, is a "native" app designed specifically for Apple or Android or Windows devices. It takes significant time and money to custom build an app for each platform (it's like translating an entire book into different languages), but then you can take advantage of each operating system's unique features.

Example: Take a look at the Priority Club Rewards iPhone app. It's highly rated with plenty of positive reviews. Why? Because the app makes it easy to book reservations, keep track of upcoming trips and check on loyalty points. In other words, the things busy, frequent travelers care about most.

MOBILE APP PROS:

- You can customize the experience for your frequent (and most profitable) guests.
- Users get a convenient, centralized way to perform important actions.
- Your brand gains a new channel to engage and motivate qualified users, with push notifications, in-app announcements and more.

MOBILE APP CONS:

- A mobile app can take months, and cost tens of thousands of dollars, to develop.
- Your audience is mostly limited to your brand's power users — unlike a game or even general travel app with mass appeal.
- Mobile apps have a very high barrier to entry.

SEVEN KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Travelers are increasingly using tablets and smartphones to research and book travel.
2. You need a mobile-friendly website to capture direct bookings.
3. You have two options: A responsive site or a standalone mobile site.
4. Choose a responsive site if you want display flexibility for a variety of screen sizes and have the resources to invest in a more intensive, technical process.
5. Choose a mobile site if you want more ability to customize content for on-the-go users and don't mind maintaining your desktop site and a separate mobile site.
6. If you go with a responsive site, TripAdvisor advises you not to focus solely on how content displays across devices — the quality of the content is equally important to how it looks.
7. Hold off on developing a mobile app unless your brand has a strong base of business travelers and other high-volume repeat guests.

GET MORE GUIDANCE FROM OUR TRAVEL EXPERTS

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NOT REGISTERED YET? [Start today for free](#) and see what TripAdvisor can do for your accommodation, restaurant or attraction.

1. PhoCusWright, Traveler Technology Survey (December, 2012)

2. PhoCusWright, Mobile Hits the Mainstream: Technology and Industry Trends (February, 2012)

3. Source: PhoCusWright, Traveler Technology Survey (December, 2012)