Presque la moitié des réservations de chambre dans la chaîne hôtelière est faite le jour même à l'aide des apps développées par le groupe. 2011 aura vu une augmentation de leur utilisation de 250% par rapport à l'année précédente et les revenus mobiles pèsent pour 28,5 millions de dollars par mois.

Not all Marriott International Inc. hotel guests can book their rooms in advance, which makes the hotel chain's mobile commerce site and apps vital to helping these consumers. In fact, 47% of bookings made through the hotel company's m-commerce channels are for same-day check ins, Marriott says. "Customers want to be able to able to find and book a hotel while on the go," a Marriott spokesman says. "People want to be able to search and books trips on their mobile devices, especially at the last minute."

Marriott, which counts more than 3,600 hotels in 70 countries in its inventory, recently updated its m-commerce site and its apps for Apple Inc., Android and BlackBerry smartphones, which comprise 99% of the smartphone traffic to Marriott web sites. Its m-commerce site, launched in 2008, now uses HTML5, a web programming language used to create rich, multimedia experiences on mobile sites and apps.

Mobile is Marriott's fastest-growing channel, the spokesman says, with annual growth rate this year of 250% higher than in 2010. Mobile revenue currently averages $25.8 million a month, a figure that includes traffic from iPads. Marriott's mobile commerce site and apps are a natural complement to the company's other services, he says. The web site debuted 15 years ago.

The m-commerce site, designed for easy access from any phone with a web browser, is simple in design with buttons to tap to find and reserve a hotel, view reservations and check a Marriott Rewards loyalty account. Other buttons enable consumers to participate in a survey about the m-commercesite, access city guides and call to make a reservation.

The app's opening page is geared to finding and reserving a room. Consumers can type in a city or airport code to locate nearby Marriott hotels, or tap a button to enable the app to use the smartphone's global positioning system to locate the device and nearby hotels. Tapping a large Find button at the bottom of the screen takes the consumer to a list of available hotels, which can be sorted by distance, city, price and brand. Consumers also can tap a Maps button to view the hotels on a map. Marriott packs the app with hotel photos, list of amenities, city guides and maps.

Consumers also can use the app to enroll in Marriott Rewards, view their account balances and check upcoming reservations. "Marriott's most loyal customers use the apps the most," the spokesman says. "Today, customers are primarily using Marriott mobile to shop and book hotel rooms; however, an increasing number are looking to Marriott mobile to find restaurants and events near them when visiting an unfamiliar city." That's where the city guides embedded into the app and m-commerce site are helpful, he adds.

However Marriott's mobile services grow, Marriott says the overriding objective is to offer consumers access to its hotel inventory wherever they are. "Mobile is the next generation of digital commerce and service at Marriot," the spokesman says.

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