

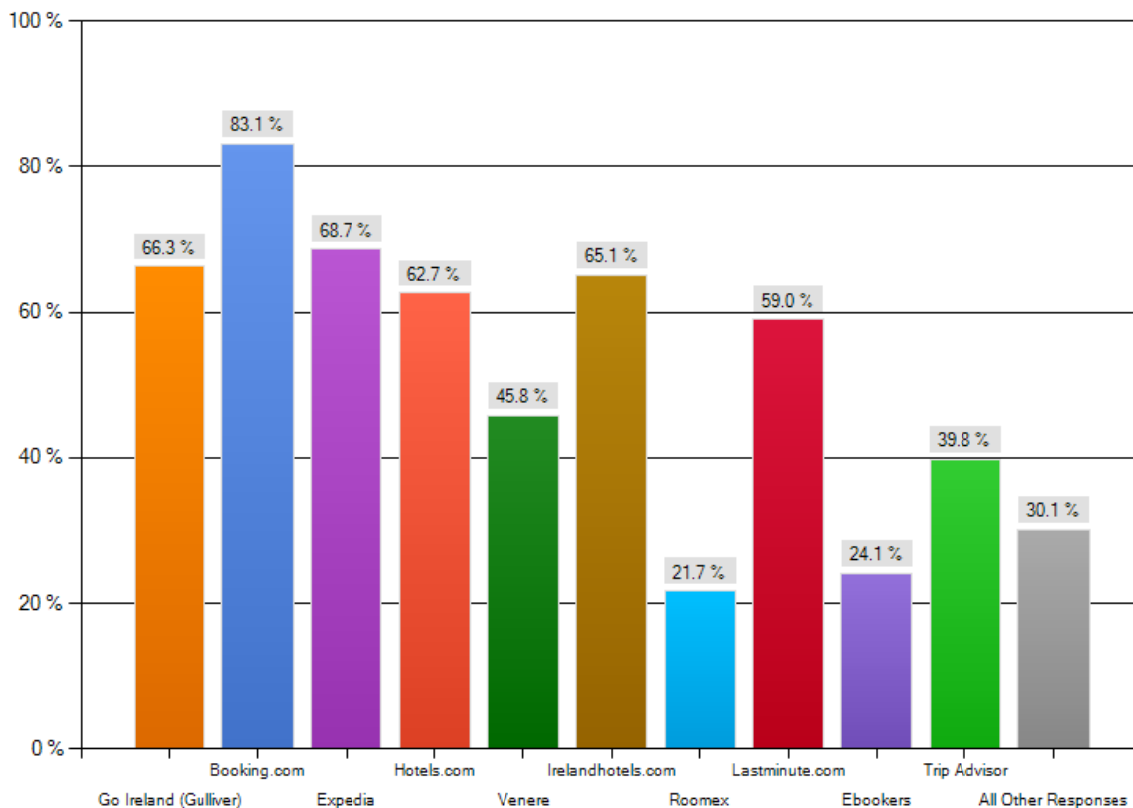
Fáilte Ireland e-Business Research Findings

Fáilte Ireland contacted almost 500 hoteliers and held discussions with leading online booking engines in the tourism sector including Go Ireland, Booking.com, Expedia, Hotels.com, Venere, Irelandhotels.com, Roomex, Lastminute.com, Ebookers and Trip Advisor.

Interesting findings included -

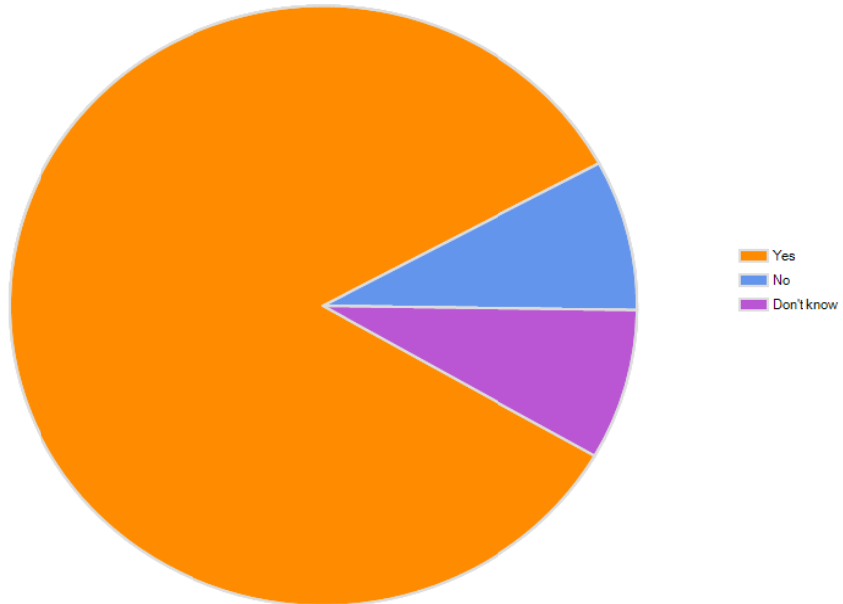
- Booking.com was the most popular site with 83% of hoteliers' surveyed working with them in 2011. Expedia was a close second with 69%, followed by Gulliver (66%) and Irelandhotels.com (65%);

Which of the following OTA's did you work with in 2011?



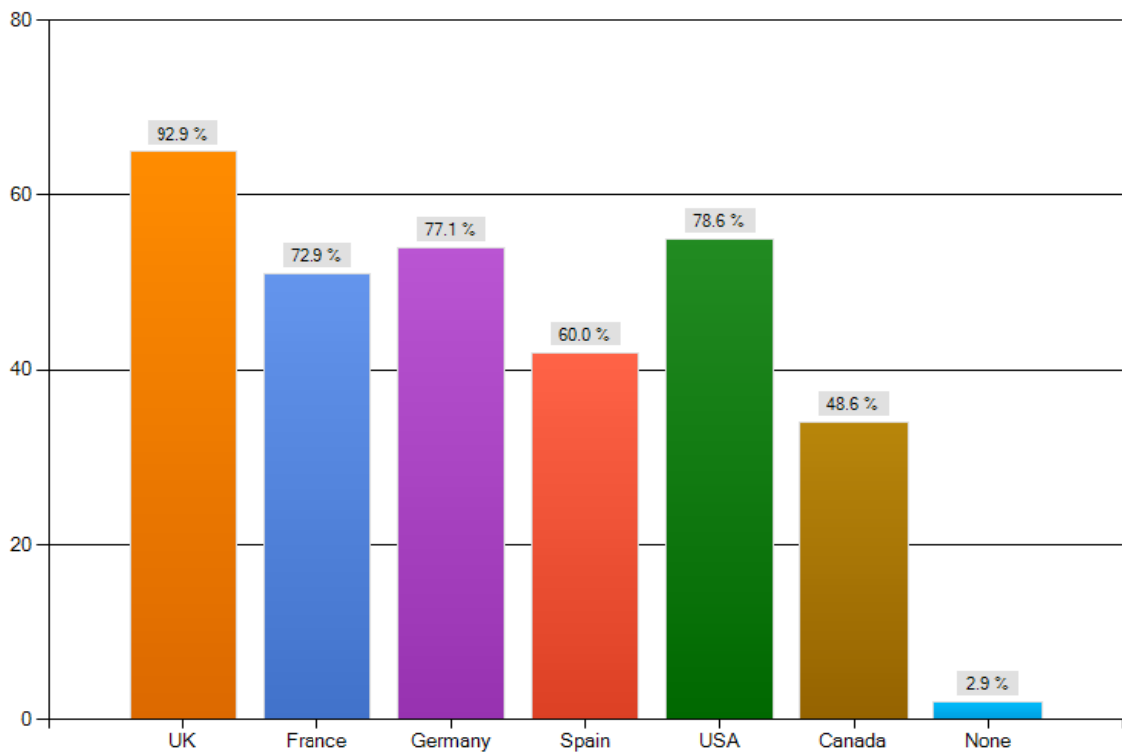
- When asked, 80% believe that these platforms give them access to international markets that may not be possible otherwise but 29% do feel that their business is over reliant on online platforms for bookings;

Do the OTA's you work with give you access to international markets?



- Interestingly when asked to expand as to what markets they could access with the use of OTAs, the top four came out as the UK, Germany, France and the USA.

If so, what markets do they give you access to?



- However almost three quarters of those surveyed spend less than three hours a week updating their offers and rates with the majority (59%) doing this manually as opposed to a channel manager which allows hotels to update and manage their rates and availability across all online platforms instantly;

Surveying the opinion of leading online travel agents, Fáilte Ireland's research highlighted a number of key tips for tourism operators to implement in order to maximise the internet for their business.

Online travel agents across the board believe booking by mobile phones will make up to 25% of bookings next year and this will have a significant effect on the market. Furthermore the mobile phone booker tends to be a last minute booker and so the challenge for tourism businesses is to ensure that they have their offers available through mobile friendly channels and also that their content remains fresh and is updated regularly.

Furthermore different online travel agents appear to appeal to different overseas markets, some are stronger for US visitors with others stronger for European and UK visitors. Smarter tourism businesses need to make their presence felt across a number of these platforms to hit their key markets.

Content remains all important. A business can gain or lose 3% of potential customers depending on the quality of the photos it puts up online as well as the quality of its descriptions. Indeed OTAs recommend that any business should have a minimum of 20 good quality photos on their sites to maximise potential customer interest.

Businesses are also encouraged to offer more than their usual rates on the site and include seasonal, advance booking discounts and last minute offers. Furthermore OTAs are always creating new products and services that tourism providers can benefit from. For example Lastminute.com has recently launched "Secret Hotels" and currently 60% of hotels booked in London are in this category while booking.com offers a "Preferred Hotel Scheme" where hotels can agree to pay extra commission for additional marketing opportunities.

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