



A 5-Star Call Experience

2023 Hospitality
Communication Report



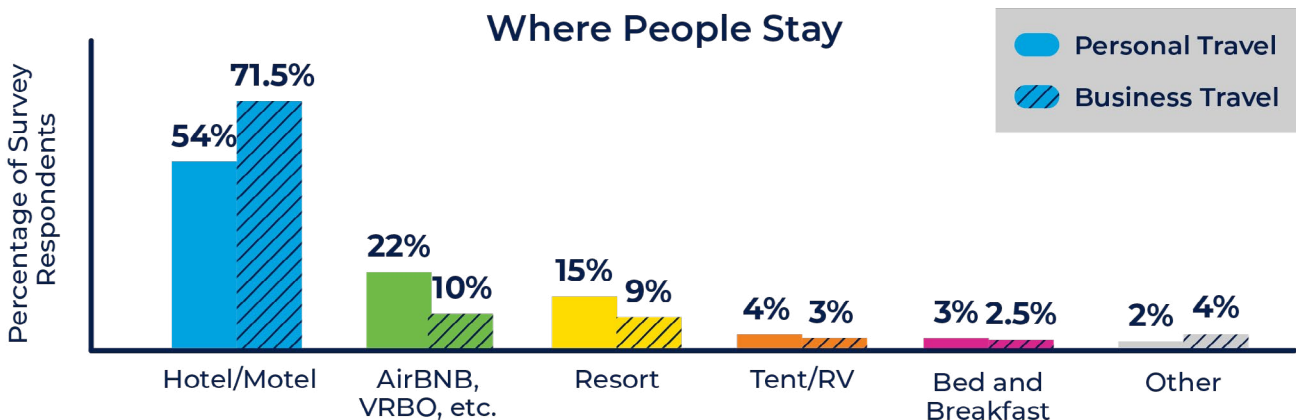
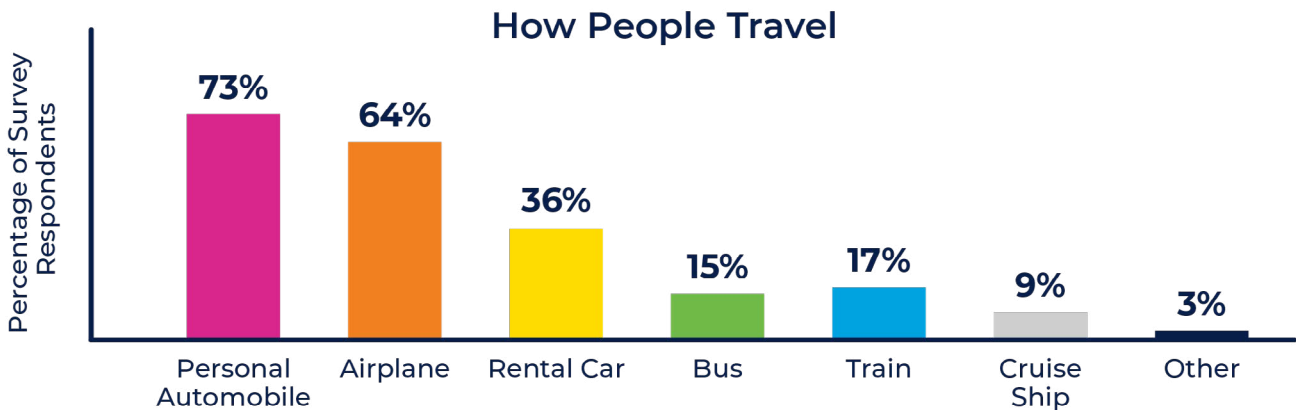
Despite a sharp decline in travelers over the past few years due to the global pandemic, travel rates are slowly returning to pre-COVID levels, and people are looking to get out and about again.

This is the time for hospitality businesses to focus on providing more value than their competitors. This report evaluates how consumers prefer to communicate with hospitality businesses and the business case for implementing branded calling. They should also consider improving their customer experience while providing better value over competing companies.

Methodology

In 2023, First Orion surveyed more than 1,000 U.S. mobile phone subscribers about their communication preferences concerning businesses in the hospitality industry. The survey included questions for the travel sector (airlines, rental companies, cruises, etc.) and the lodging sector (hotels, motels, rentals such as Airbnb and VRBO, etc.).

Survey respondents comprised of 35% female and 65% male, and spanned multiple generations of travelers, from Generation Z to Baby Boomers and beyond.



Key Findings

95%

of customers say a branded phone call is important to their overall customer experience



More than

2/3

of customers want a phone call for an urgent issue, such as a change in travel or suspected fraud

90%

of customers expect hospitality businesses to take steps to identify their calls



News Travels Fast

Why Do Customers Want A Call?

Contrary to popular belief, customers still prefer phone calls over other standard methods like email, mobile app messaging, and social media posts. And they definitely want to hear from you regarding urgent communication.

More than 2/3 of people said they prefer a phone call when there's a change in travel arrangements or suspected fraud.



2 in 3 people

want a phone call for travel changes and suspected fraud



1 in 4 people

want a call to hear special deals and promos

But it's not just bad news that customers want to hear – they're also interested in the good news!

Highly engaged customers already loyal to your brand want to hear everything you offer on a phone call – including your current upgrade options, discounts, and promotional deals!

For sales and promotions, **nearly 1 in 4 customers want to hear about any special deals you can offer them.** First-class seats for a discounted rate? A complimentary room upgrade if you stay more than three nights? Make their travel experience one to remember. And don't forget the complimentary peanuts!

A Major Roadblock

Missed Calls Damage Your Reputation

What good does it do your customers if they want to take your calls but don't know it's you calling them?

Missed calls can seriously damage your brand reputation and build distrust between your brand and the customers you seek to serve.

Almost half of the people in our survey said they've missed a call they were expecting from a hospitality company because they didn't recognize the phone number.

A bad reputation is ... not good, especially for companies that are literally in the business of creating comfortable customer experiences.



Nearly
50%
missed a call they
were expecting
because it was
unknown

Ready to Jump Ship

Spam and Fraud Are Scaring Your Customers Away

It's not just unknown numbers that kill customer trust – bad actors also damage your brand reputation. Scam and fraud calls bombard people's phones daily – you, me, and everyone we know. It's no wonder people don't want to pick up your calls!

Almost 30% of people surveyed said they've received a hospitality-related scam call in the past 12 months.

And scammers often steal more than a customer's trust. **1 in 5 people reported they've lost money to a scam caller** in the past 12 months.

Customers don't need another reason to leave you a negative review – recent eye-popping headlines from airline fiascos and hotel missteps have proven that. But don't give them another reason to think your business is trash and deserves a damaged reputation.



1 in 5 people

have lost money to a hospitality scam



Bad Actors Travel A Rocky Road

How Are Scammers Targeting Your Customers?



A Free Trip to Scam Town

*"I got a call about an all-inclusive Friday through Sunday night stay in Las Vegas, but I needed to secure the reservation by providing a credit card number and a deposit of \$100 that would allegedly be returned to me. They also wanted to know my address. **Total scam to get my credit card number and billing address.**"*

Confirmation Capers

"A call from Jamaica and Indonesia got me two times. They verified our arrangement. Sounded just like it was real."

Hotel High Jinks

"I get them all the time. Trying to tell me I've been 'preselected' because of my relationship with certain hotel chains. And several of those I have never stayed at."

Scammer Shenanigans

*"I usually do not answer numbers that I don't know. If the call is important, they usually leave a message. **Often scammers try to get me to give them my credit card, or they claim there's a problem.** I've received so many scam calls, I don't even believe the calls that say I have won something. I'd rather lose an opportunity to gain a prize than be involved in a scam."*



Clearly scammers will go to any lengths to trick your customers and ruin their travel plans, whether for business or pleasure.

So how do you combat the rise in scams and unknown calls **and** deliver a better customer experience?



Fly Higher Than the Competition

Positive Customer Experience is the Key to Standing Out

Every airline, every hotel, and every cruise offers essentially the same experience – choose us, and we'll make your travel experience the best you've ever had!

But how many hospitality businesses can actually say they deliver on that? And with the countless options customers have, how do you deliver a customer experience above and beyond what people are used to?

With so many businesses offering the same perks and similar values, you need to provide an experience that stands out from the crowd.

Branded Calling is a simple way to deliver a better customer experience and place your business ahead of the competition.



Go the Extra Mile

Use Branded Communication for a CX Upgrade

Branded Communication isn't a "nice-to-have" solution – it's one that your customers insist on.

According to our survey, **9 in 10 customers expect hospitality businesses to take steps to identify their calls.** Unknown numbers can't be trusted, and scammers scare people away from answering calls they don't recognize.

But when you brand your calls with your name and reason for calling, customers are far more likely to pick up.

Not only are they picking up the phone, they're also ready to talk. Some businesses that adopted branded calling into their customer experience strategy have seen an **engagement rate boost of up to 90%.**



of customers expect hospitality businesses to identify their calls



From Zero to 100

Branded Communication Case Studies Prove Its Value

Hospitality businesses that have adopted INFORM® into their calling programs have also seen a major bump in answer rates and a decrease in declined calls. By adding Branded Communication, their customer service experience has gone from zero to 100 with a simple upgrade!



Case Study: Travel Agency

A Major Customer Service Boost

Problem:

A large travel management company handles booking and trip updates for corporate travelers. The business was having difficulty getting customers to answer customer service calls and inquiries about travel changes. Their calls were unbranded and seemed suspicious to customers.

Solution:

By implementing INFORM Branded Communication, the business saw a **15% boost in calls answered**. They also experienced a **15% increase in engaged customers**, meaning those that answered were ready to talk!

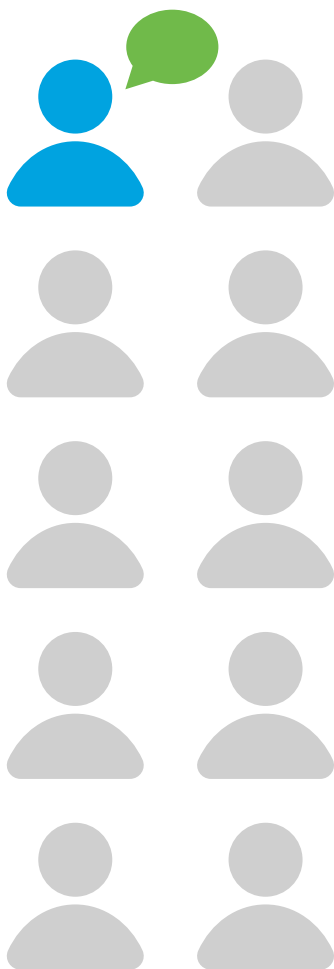
15%
INCREASE
in calls
answered

15%
INCREASE
in engaged
customers

Branded Calls Set You On the Right Track

FEWER THAN
1 in 10
CUSTOMERS

would recommend a hospitality business to others if they called from an unknown number.



We're not making it up; it's true. **95% of customers say a branded phone call is important to their overall customer experience with hospitality businesses.**

And if you aren't providing that special something, your customers will look elsewhere. Or worse, they'll tell everyone else how bad you are online.

Nearly 9 in 10 people said they would prefer a hospitality company that displays their name and reason for calling on outbound calls instead of one that doesn't.



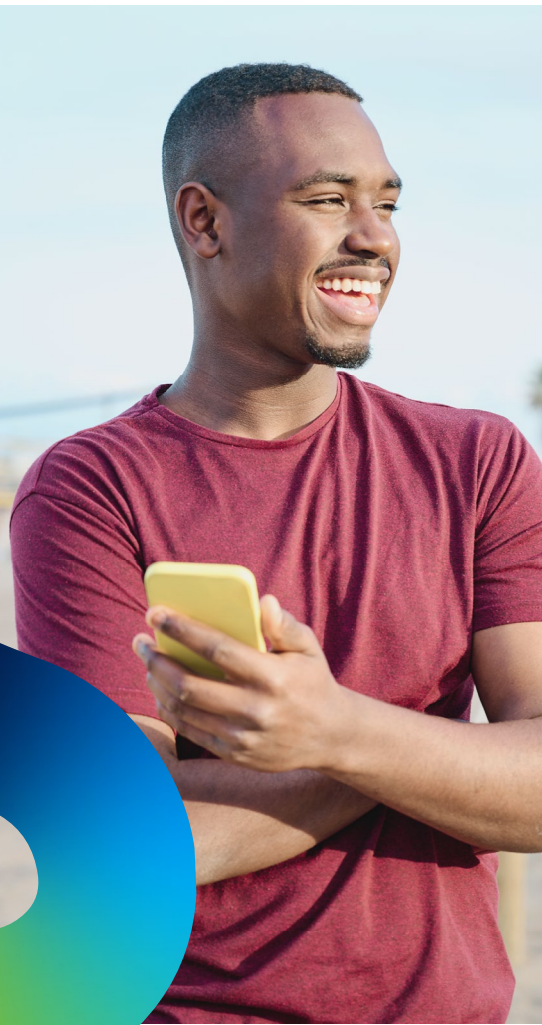
And those vital recommendations to friends and family? Forget about it.

Fewer than 10% of customers would recommend a hospitality business to others if they called from an unknown number.

So what will it be: risk your reputation on an unknown number or boost your customer experience with the most effective branded calling solution on the market?



Ready to Shift Gears?



Are you ready to see what INFORM® and ENGAGE® Branded Communication solutions can do for you?

Your customers will thank you, and your business will thrive when you prioritize a positive customer experience.

TRY A FREE BRANDED COMMUNICATION DEMO TODAY

and connect with a salesperson. Help us transform your business from “just another business” to “my trusted business for travel.”

Follow us on social for more customer experience tips!

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