



HOTEL INDUSTRY 2026:

UNDERSTANDING TRAVELLER EXPECTATIONS TO
BETTER SHAPE THE HOTEL OFFERING

EquipHotel reveals the findings of a study conducted by Coach Omnium among 603 French and international hotel guests

Direct booking is regaining ground, digital technology is advancing without replacing human interaction, room expectations remain focused on the essentials, and wellness is establishing itself as a hallmark of upscale hospitality: the study conducted by Coach Omnium for EquipHotel reveals current trends and changes in travellers' relationship with hotels in 2026.

At a time when the hotel industry is being transformed by digitalisation and seeking to modernise, which priorities still really matter to travellers, and which have changed?

Understanding how hospitality is evolving over time

To assess this, EquipHotel commissioned Coach Omnium to conduct a qualitative and quantitative face-to-face study among 603 French and international travellers who stay in a hotel in France at least once a year. Conducted between February and March 2026, it covers all generations, the different hotel categories, and both leisure and business stays.

This new survey follows on from the studies conducted by Coach Omnium approximately every five years, the two most recent having been carried out in 2017 and 2022. This long-term perspective provides a concrete view of how traveller behaviour and expectations have evolved over the years. These findings are particularly relevant to EquipHotel, whose 2026 edition, held under the theme of "Hospitality in Motion", will bring together in Paris Porte de Versailles from 2 to 5 November the professionals, innovations and expertise driving the sector's transformation.

Key findings from the study

Star ratings are losing influence when travellers choose a hotel

Star ratings are becoming a less influential factor when travellers choose a hotel. Only 8% of travellers say they consider them today, compared with 14% in 2017 and 16% in 2022. Location, price and online reputation remain their main selection criteria. Online ratings and reviews from other travellers are becoming increasingly important: they now influence 44% of respondents, compared with 35% in 2017. By contrast, loyalty programmes, labels and environmental commitments are each cited by only 1% of travellers among their selection criteria.

At the same time, platforms play a predominant role in the research phase: 70% of travellers use them to search for a hotel. While 66% of guests still book their hotel through these platforms, this proportion has not increased since 2022.

New practices are also emerging: 5% of travellers now use artificial intelligence or social media when searching for a hotel.

Direct booking is regaining ground

Although platforms remain highly influential during the research phase, 42% of travellers now finalise their booking directly with the hotel, compared with 30% in 2017. Coach Omnium links this rise in particular to the growing digital expertise of hoteliers, with more appealing websites and booking engines that are more user-friendly, seamless and secure.

Digital technology is advancing without replacing the human welcome

Apps, self-service kiosks, digital check-in... While technology has become part of the guest journey, it has not replaced the need for human interaction. Some 58% of travellers prefer their check-in to be handled by a receptionist, an expectation shared across generations and hotel categories. Among those who book directly with the hotel, 44% still do so by telephone. Arrival at the hotel also remains a defining moment in the hospitality experience: 28% of travellers spontaneously cite the welcome and/or pleasant staff as their primary source of satisfaction on arrival. Digital technology therefore appears to be primarily a tool for simplifying and streamlining hotel organisation and management. For guest reception, however, a human presence remains essential.



In the room, a return to essentials and privacy

Despite changing concepts and layouts, priorities remain highly practical: 60% of travellers focus on room cleanliness and 49% on the quality of the bedding, the two leading essentials mentioned spontaneously. Wi-Fi is considered important by 96%, while 73% consider a power socket beside the bed very important.

The study also highlights a disconnect with certain design choices developed in the hotel industry in recent years: 68% of travellers do not like bathrooms that are open to the bedroom. Another practical finding is that 83% prefer a shower to a bath, as was already the case in 2017 (85%). Travellers also seem prepared to change some habits to reduce the environmental impact of their stay: 68% view the non-daily replacement of towels positively. As for the decision by some hoteliers not to service rooms every day - for economic or organisational reasons more than environmental ones - 48% view it fairly positively. These findings place comfort, functionality and privacy at the centre of thinking about hotel-room design.



Beyond these essentials, personalisation remains popular. Nearly six in ten travellers like the hotelier to anticipate some of their room preferences: personalised drinks and snacks in the minibar rank first, followed by suitable amenities, an adjusted room temperature and a choice of pillow.

Wellness is increasingly becoming a hallmark of upscale hospitality

Wellbeing is no longer seen merely as an additional service. Some **82%** of travellers consider the presence of a spa important or even essential in upscale hotels, compared with **18%** in mid-range hotels.

More significantly, **34%** of guests in upscale hotels (four-star properties) now consider a spa essential, compared with **21%** in 2022. More than one in three upscale hotel guests therefore regards a spa as an essential part of their stay.

This increase can also be seen in guest behaviour: among travellers who stay at hotels with a spa, **15%** say they often book massages or treatments, compared with just **2%** in 2022.

A swimming pool or pool area is the most popular facility, cited by **75%** of respondents. In addition, **41%** attach importance to the spa's environmental commitment.

Homemade and organic products gain ground at breakfast

Breakfast retains a special place in the hotel stay: **59%** of travellers always have breakfast at the hotel and **33%** do so sometimes. Price remains the main reason cited by those who choose not to eat breakfast on site. The most marked changes, however, relate to its content. Today, **91%** show an interest in homemade products, an increase of 23% compared with 2022; 72% are interested in organic products, up **35%**; and **48%** in gluten-free or lactose-free products, an increase of **93%**.

Beyond the meal itself, breakfast remains a powerful differentiator for a hotel, particularly through its ability to offer homemade and local products or options suited to new dietary habits.



The bar is increasingly becoming a social hub

The lobby is no longer merely a space people pass through: **53%** of travellers say they spend time there, including **13%** often and **40%** sometimes. Among the services they enjoy or would like to find there, the bar ranks first at **32%**, ahead of complimentary soft drinks and snacks.

EquipHotel 2026: responding to the needs of hotel guests



From 2 to 5 November 2026 at Paris Expo Porte de Versailles, EquipHotel will reflect the major developments highlighted by the Coach Omnium study. Nearly 1,100 exhibitors will come together across the show's four main sectors - Tech & Services, Wellbeing, Design and Foodservice - to present the solutions, innovations and expertise supporting the transformation of the hotel and restaurant industries.

These new expectations present a series of challenges for professionals: preserving human interaction in an increasingly digital journey, rethinking the room around comfort and privacy, personalising the stay further, making wellbeing part of the experience, and transforming shared spaces into genuine social hubs. EquipHotel 2026 will showcase the solutions developed to meet these challenges.

Preserving privacy: Exclusive Collection reimagines the hotel room

The study shows that, despite changing hotel concepts, travellers remain attached to the room's essentials and express a real need for privacy. EquipHotel will offer an interpretation of this through Exclusive Collection, a 1,000 m² space created in partnership with the Réseau Excellence des Entreprises du Patrimoine Vivant (EPV) and l'Ameublement français.

At the heart of this space, the exhibition "Do Not Disturb: An Ode to Intimacy" will give four creative talents carte blanche to imagine four stories and four ways of reinterpreting the hotel room. Design studio W&I with Jean-Michel Wilmotte, Paul Emilieu, Maison A&G and Mathilde de l'Ecotais will bring together interior architecture, materials, light, craftsmanship and sensory experience.

An immersive room, a retreat where silence becomes a luxury, a bathroom designed as an intimate space for returning to one's roots... These settings will explore new ways to combine design, emotion, comfort and privacy.

Balancing digital technology and human interaction: tech as an enabler

Although digital tools occupy an increasingly important place in the guest journey, they do not replace the need for contact and attention. The challenge is therefore no longer to pit technology against people, but to find the right balance between the two: technology to optimise hotel management, and people to improve relationships and the guest experience.

EquipHotel is France's leading trade show for hotel technologies and services. It brings together more than 200 international exhibitors and around 50 start-ups across over 6,000 m² of exhibition space in Hall 7.3.



Within its Tech & Services sector, EquipHotel presents artificial intelligence solutions, along with tools for hotel management, sales and reservations, payments, robotics, smart buildings and entertainment. These technologies are designed to streamline operations, save time, personalise services, create value for guests and allow teams to refocus on customer relationships.

This discussion will take on an international dimension with:

The launch of HITEC Paris, held on 5 November as part of EquipHotel in partnership with Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals (HFTP). International experts, executives and technology solution providers will come together to discuss the key issues surrounding innovation and the sector's digital transformation.

The Commercial Strategy Forum Paris held on Thursday 5 November with HSMAI Europe (Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International). The event will bring together executives, commercial leaders and hospitality experts for a programme dedicated to the future of commercial strategy: sales, marketing, revenue optimisation, distribution, technology and leadership



Turning the lobby into a social hub: Atelier Rouge reinvents the hotel bar

EquipHotel will bring this development to life with L'Atelier Rouge, a new 400 m² signature bar conceived by Paris Society Consulting and Saguez & Dash, an international design agency.

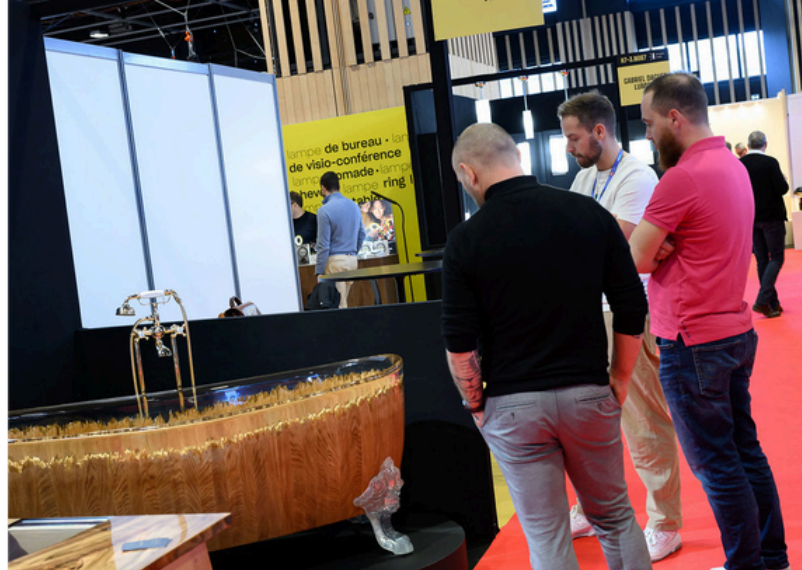
The experience will unfold in three stages: a sensory corridor, an open laboratory showcasing techniques and craft, followed by a bar with a subdued atmosphere. Cocktails, mocktails and hot drinks prepared by Paris Society's chefs and bartenders will offer a vision of the hotel bar that goes beyond simply serving a drink to become a place for experience, knowledge-sharing, social connection and discovery.

Breakfast and dining at the heart of new hotel experiences

Breakfast remains an important part of the stay, but the study reveals changing preferences: more homemade and local products, more organic options and more alternatives suited to new dietary habits. These new expectations extend more broadly across the entire hotel food and beverage offering.

EquipHotel's Foodservice sector is refocusing on the hotel industry and will welcome more than 200 international exhibitors offering new solutions to rethink hotel dining, from breakfast and snacking to shorter menus served in bars, coworking spaces, spas, bedrooms and outdoor areas. A "food market" featuring more than 50 young innovative companies will be dedicated to new F&B snacking options tailored to hotels.

The Best Breakfast Competition - Special Hotel Trophy, organised with Les Tables & Auberges de France on Wednesday 4 November, will showcase new ways to enhance this key moment in the guest experience.



Wellbeing, a new dimension of the hotel experience

EquipHotel is placing wellness at the heart of the show, with an entire pavilion dedicated to a sector that now extends far beyond the traditional spa.

A total of 16,000 m² will be dedicated to sleep, recovery, fitness, nutrition, treatments and sensory design, as well as new approaches to "healthy ageing" that offer a more holistic vision of wellness. Biohacking, cryotherapy, epigenetic testing and hyperbaric chambers will illustrate the emergence of new longevity-focused services.

Round tables with international experts and keynote sessions will also address treatment techniques, as well as the business models, concepts and human resources needed to make wellbeing a genuine growth driver for hoteliers.

Personalising the experience to better meet travellers' needs

Personalisation also emerges from the study as a strong expectation. It is no longer limited to thoughtful touches in the room: it means adapting the experience to different uses, preferences and traveller profiles.

Families, travellers with pets, people with reduced mobility and guests looking for new services will find relevant solutions from exhibitors. Mon Lit Cabane, Omy and Welcome Family will present solutions for families; La Niche Rebelle and Laren Hotels Cosmetics for pet-friendly establishments; Le Centre Français and Steamery for in-room services; La Playlist for sound identity; and Eclipso for immersive virtual-reality experiences.

The Senses Room will take this discussion further by exploring inclusive hospitality. Designed this year under the artistic direction of interior architect Christine Borella, this 65 m² room for people with reduced mobility will combine accessibility, home automation, design and wellbeing, moving beyond regulatory compliance to create a genuine guest experience.

EquipHotel, a laboratory for the hospitality of tomorrow

Design, technology, foodservice, wellbeing, personalisation and inclusion: the expectations highlighted by the Coach Omnium study will find practical expression across the different sectors of EquipHotel 2026.

Over four days, exhibitors, experts and professionals will bring together innovations, solutions and visions to support a rapidly changing sector and build a hospitality offering that meets increasingly diverse expectations.





About Coach Omnium

Founded in 1991, Coach Omnium was one of the first consultancies to specialise in strategic consulting and marketing and economic studies for the hotel industry, business tourism (MICE) and spas.

Market and feasibility studies, project analysis and support, destination strategies, surveys and guest studies, brand awareness and image studies, operational audits and business plans are among its core areas of expertise. At the same time, Coach Omnium actively works to map the sector's outlook and development, investing part of its annual revenue in Research & Development, particularly in studying the expectations and purchasing behaviour of leisure, hotel and business travellers. These analyses are available free of charge to readers on its website:

<https://coachomnium.com/dossier-etude/>

About EquipHotel

EquipHotel is an event organised by RX France, a leader in the organisation of professional trade shows. Held every two years in Paris, EquipHotel Paris is the leading B2B event for the hospitality sector. The event brings together more than 1,200 exhibiting companies, 30% of them international, across four major sectors: Tech & Services, Wellbeing, Design and Foodservice. This unique offering is the most comprehensive among international hotel and restaurant trade shows. It presents leading French and international companies in their fields, as well as innovative young businesses shaping the hotel and restaurant experiences of tomorrow. The event attracts 80,000 decision-makers from the hotel, restaurant and catering sector: chefs, restaurateurs, hoteliers, architects, interior designers, investors, café owners, brewers, institutional catering managers, engineering consultancies and installers. Over four days, these professionals have the opportunity to meet new suppliers and discover their latest innovations.

EquipHotel is also a hub for hospitality trends and innovations, with conferences, masterclasses and inspirational spaces created by leading architects and experts.

EquipHotel, 2-5 November 2026

www.equiphotel.com

About RX

RX is in the business of building businesses for individuals, communities and organisations. We combine the power of face-to-face events with data and digital products to help our customers understand markets, source products and complete transactions through more than 400 events in 22 countries and 43 industry sectors. RX France organises leading face-to-face, digital and hybrid events across around fifteen different markets. Its flagship trade shows, recognised as essential events in France and internationally, include MIPIM, MAPIC, Batimat, Pollutec, EquipHotel, SITL, IFTM Top Resa, MIPCOM, MIPTV, Paris Photo, Maison&Objet* and many more. Our events take place in France, Hong Kong, Italy, Mexico and the United States. RX is committed to making a positive impact on society and creating an inclusive work environment for all its employees. RX is part of RELX, a global provider of information-based analytics and decision tools for professional and business customers. www.rxglobal.com

* organised by SAFI, a subsidiary of RX France and Ateliers d'Art de France

Press contacts

Pascale Venot press office

Emma Galizzi
emmagalizzi@pascalevenot.fr
06 30 89 19 07

Nathalie Arnal
nathalie@pascalevenot.fr
06 07 01 48 24