2021 Year in Review

Hotel Reputation Benchmark Report

Over 147,000 hotels. Analyzed in 200+ countries

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A Letter From the CMO

I am thrilled to present the Revinate Reputation Benchmark Report, 2021.

We analyzed guest reviews for over 147,000 hotels in over 200 countries to compile benchmarks for you to level-set against other hotels in your regions as well as globally.

We also gathered tips and insights for you to improve your guest feedback scores and online reputation. In our industry, guest feedback and online reviews have a direct impact on our revenues since it impacts visibility and bookings.

This report is based on our [Revinate Guest Feedback](#) and the hotels using this on their properties.

2021, like the year before it, was a pandemic year. We faced continued government restrictions and travel bans that kept both leisure and business travelers away.

Despite this, review volume increased 20% over 2020 with 60M new reviews. Globally, across all review sites and OTAs, the average review rating was 4.1 (out of 5).

2022 is already proving to be better. A majority of hotels are bracing themselves for travel booms even as they want to delight guests. The key to success will be focusing on programs that will help you maximize profitability.

Raj Singh
CMO, Revinate

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Introduction

Every year, Revinate publishes a *Hotel Reputation Benchmark Report* to provide the industry with actionable and comparative insights from hotels around the world.

We analyzed reviews from over 147,000 hotels in 200+ countries using Revinate Guest Feedback.

Our goal is to provide benchmarks so hoteliers understand how they're faring against their peers. Hoteliers must stay agile and responsive to online reputation management to accelerate their recovery.

We're confident this benchmark report will provide hoteliers with the insights they need along with data that shows to actively manage their guest feedback.

Data for this report runs from January 1st through December 31st, 2021.

Newer Covid variants kept travelers away and The Great Resignation made it difficult to keep hotels and outlets staffed.

We also published additional insights for your email marketing campaigns in our 2021 Marketing Benchmark Report.

In this report

1 Year in Review

In 2021, there were three significant shifts for us to map as we considered the online reputation scores across hotels globally.

- **Leisure travel -** For the hospitality industry, the focus was on leisure travel as people stepped out after a year and more of travel bans. Most corporations maintained employee travel bans. [Corporate hotels](#) and many hotel brands - Wyndham, Hilton, Marriott, Hyatt - all invested in the space, hoping to drive profitability from leisure guests. They devised new marketing promotions, experimented with their layouts to provide more space, started outdoor gyms in parking spaces, and a lot more.
- **Inflation and supply chain issues -** Covid-19 induced inflation and supply chain issues meant that hotels had difficulty sourcing products and materials.

- **The Great Resignation -** Millions of people leaving the hospitality industry made it hard for hotels to stay fully staffed, maintain housekeeping and other services at previous levels.

We need to keep all three shifts in context as we analyze the guest reviews and see how hotels managed their online reputation scores by keeping guests delighted.

Revinate also began sharing email marketing best practices through [Revinate Marketing](#) to enable better guest communication. We launched an [Email Certification Course](#) and Covid-19 recovery-focused content on [Covid19Hotel.info](#).

Guest Loyalty is Key

68% of travelers indicated they would feel more comfortable staying at a hotel they have stayed at before.

What it means: Repeat guests are important as hotels seek to maintain high occupancy even as we continue to climb out of the pandemic-related dips.

What to do:

- **Invest in loyalty programs.** Guests who have stayed with you in the past feel cared for and are likely to book again

- **Build on your competitive edge.** Seeking guest feedback and meeting their needs for social distancing, cleaning, or overall trust with your hotel gives you a clear advantage over the competition

- **Work that database.** A well-maintained guest database allows you to segment guest data and focus your email marketing efforts to invite past guests back to your property.

- **Focus on communication.** Revinate Marketing customers found that focusing on communication around pandemic policies, expectations, and safety initiatives created and built trust with guests

All of these initiatives will create and maintain a positive sentiment online. At a time when there is a decrease in review volume, each review carries more weight.

68% *of travelers looking to book a hotel feel more comfortable doing so at one they've stayed at before*

2 Review Volume

The number of reviews published online in 2021 increased by 20% over 2020.

This was an increase compared to the volumes Revinate Guest Feedback customers saw in 2020, which was a 52.8% decline from the previous year.

What it means:

- The increase in review volumes is directly related to the uplift in leisure travel - so best to focus on leisure travelers
- Meeting guests' needs during the pandemic era requires a specifically tailored approach

Many review sites and OTA algorithms take into account both recency and volume of reviews to determine ranking - affecting your hotel's visibility to prospective travelers.

Revinate Guest Feedback can help improve your guest experience and boost online rankings with consolidated reputation management, guest surveys, and best-in-class reporting. Hotels using Revinate see a 15% increase in ranking and a 409% increase in new review volume on TripAdvisor.

+20% *Review volume in 2021*

Total Reviews

New review volume growth has been slowing in the last few years. Our pre-pandemic benchmark reports showed that 2017 saw 27% growth, and 2018 slowed to just 8%. While volume had been slowly decreasing, it never contracted before until 2020.

Luckily, review are back up in 2021. Revinate Guest Feedback customers recorded 60M reviews in 2021, which is an improvement over 2020, but nothing compared to the 106M reviews in 2019.

As travel rebounds and travelers think about going on vacation again, guests will undoubtedly turn to online reviews during their travel research to understand whether previous guests felt safe and catered to by hotel staff. Hoteliers should therefore continue to encourage guests to share their experiences online.

| | 106M | | |
| 2019 | 2020 | 2021 |
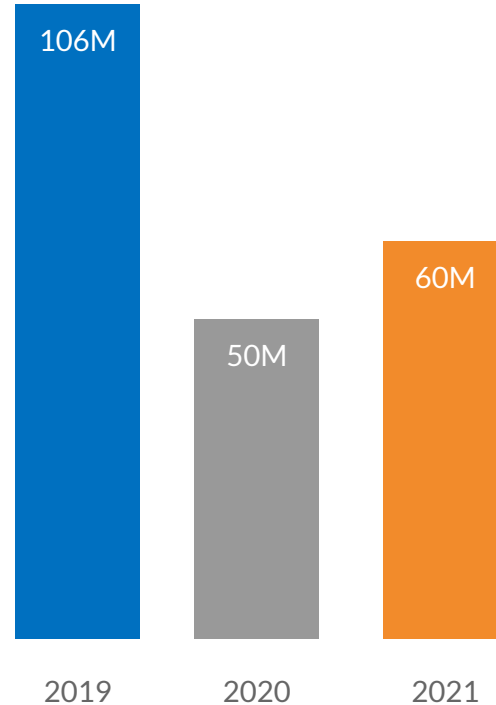
Reviews Per Month

Hotels track the average number of reviews they receive monthly. Globally, in 2021, Revinate Guest Feedback customers received an average of 35 reviews in 2021, a 20.7% increase from 29 reviews in 2020.

What to do to increase the number of reviews per month

- **Timing is everything:** Encourage guests to write reviews during checkout or as soon as they return home
- **Any channel works:** Offering your guests a chance to give you feedback via email, text or phone increases your chances
- **Invest in technology:** Invest in technology that automates this process by turning post-stay survey feedback into online reviews

29   35

2020   2021

3

Site Distribution

In 2021, the top two review sites were Booking.com and Google. Together, these two sites contributed to 65.8% of the total review volume.

What it means: Understanding the review channels that are popular with travelers allows you focus your reputation management efforts where it matters most.

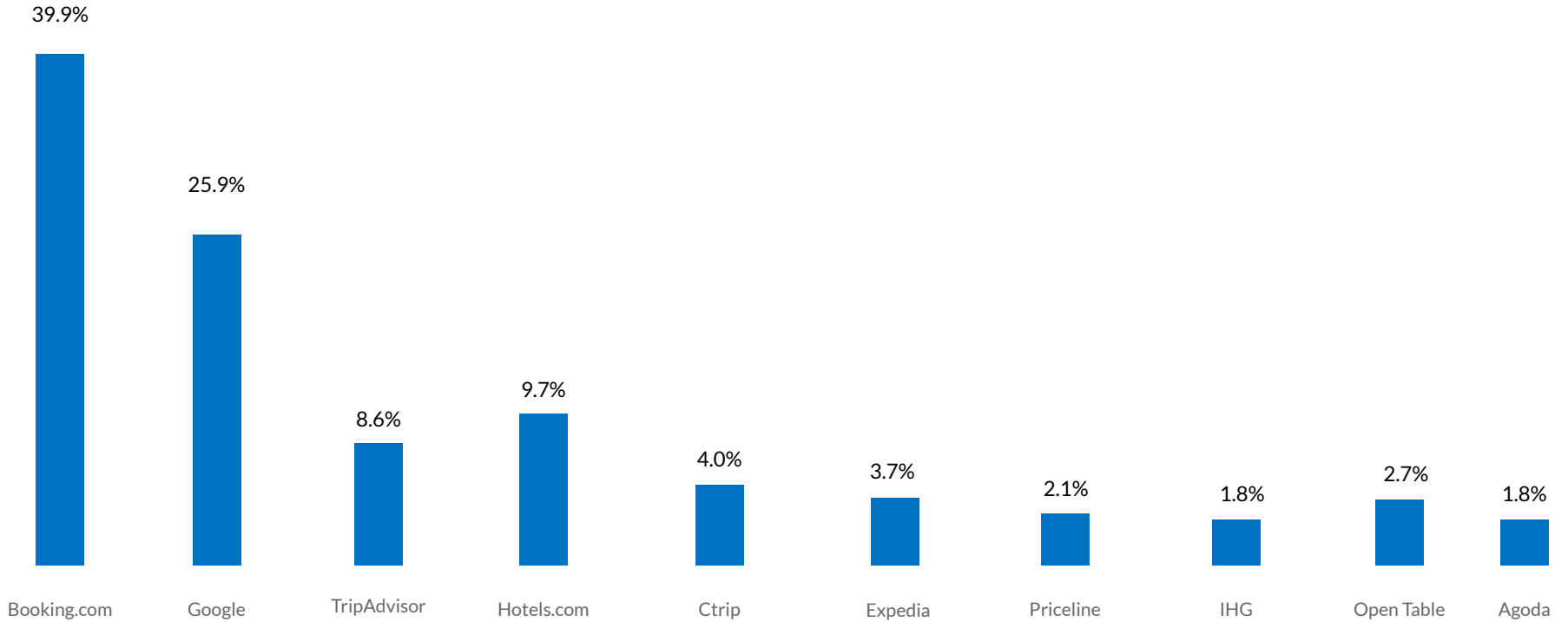Each year, we look at the changes in review site volume to uncover trends in how consumers use each platform.

For the second year in a row, Booking.com had more reviews than Google, and the gap is growing. In 2021, they had 34% more reviews than Google topping their previous advantage of 2.9%.

Regardless of the channel, Revinate Guest Feedback has made it easy for hotels to keep up with Reputation Management. By combining reviews from 100+ sites into a single dashboard, hoteliers can better focus efforts where it matters most. To learn more, request a demo with our team.

65.8%

of all reviews on Google & Booking.com

Site Distribution

Site	Percentage
Booking.com	39.9%
Google	25.9%
TripAdvisor	8.6%
Hotels.com	9.7%
Ctrip	4.0%
Expedia	3.7%
Priceline	2.1%
IHG	1.8%
Open Table	2.7%
Agoda	1.8%

4 Review Ratings

Globally, across all review sites and OTAs, the average review score in 2021 was 4.1 out of 5.

This was a marginal decrease from the 2020 average score of 4.2. Seen against the context of lower review volume in 2021, this review rating is positive.

Regional breakdown

- Asia Pacific: 4.5 average review score
- Europe, Middle East, and Africa: 4.2 average review score
- US and Canada: 3.9 average review score

What it means:

- Hotels were able to delight guests despite limited housekeeping, closed outlets, strict social distancing, and mask requirements
- Guests related to hoteliers' efforts during the pandemic and didn't let it affect their review scores

What to do:

- Set goals around review volumes and the average review score to bring your staff together as a team
- Celebrate as a team when you reach key milestones
- Report against this in your monthly report cards
- Incentivize reaching review rating goals for team members where possible

Revinate Guest Feedback customers can track their review rating over time and see how their rating compares to their goal, as well as their comp set.

4.1
Average Global Review Score

Review Rating by Region

Despite challenging conditions, most regions scored a 4 out of 5 or better. The US and Canada were the outliers averaging the lowest review rating at 3.9. APAC received the highest average rating at 4.5.

Cultural differences may be the attributing factor to these numbers. Where Western culture encourages open communication resulting in guests mentioning areas for improvement, Asian cultures prioritize non-confrontational relationships, possibly leading to reviewers keeping these thoughts to themselves.

Check your rating to compare and benchmark your performance to hotels in your region.

| Region	Rating
US & Canada	3.9
LATAM	4.3
Europe	4.2
ME & Africa	4.2
APAC	4.5
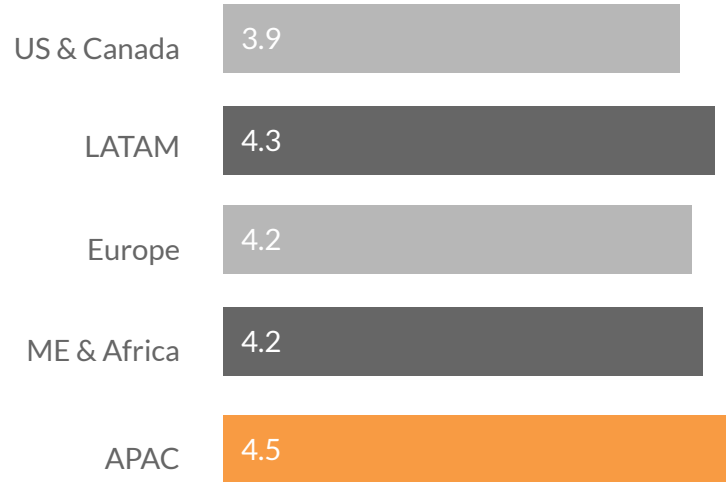
Rating by Class

The class of hotel can also affect the overall review rating. In 2021, luxury hotels received the highest average rating at 4.5 - meaning that guests' expectations are largely met at high-end hotels.

Interestingly, upper-upscale hotels went from an average rating of 4.3 in 2019 to 4.1 in 2020 to 4.0 in 2021. They were outperformed by both upscale and upper-midscale hotels, which had an average rating of 4.1, down from 4.2 in 2020.

Economy and midscale hotels saw the lowest ratings. This indicates that guests at these classes of hotels are not being wowed by their experience and there is an opportunity to set guests' expectations better or improve the offering.

Class	Percentage
Luxury	57.0%
Deluxe	25.8%
Upscale	38.9%
Midscale	29.2%
Budget	29.8%
Economy	11.8%
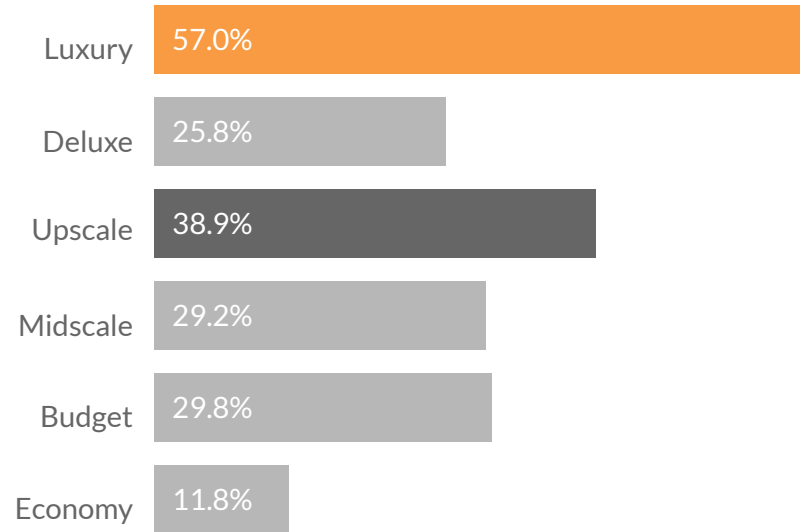
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Response Rate

In 2021, the global review response rate increased slightly to 33.5%.

Revinate Guest Feedback customers responded mostly to 5-star and 2-star reviews

- 35.9% - response rate for 5-star and 2-star reviews
- 29.3% - response rate for 4-star reviews

What it means:

- Hoteliers respond to the highest and lowest star reviews in line with best practice
- Despite The Great Resignation and staff shortages, hoteliers have prioritized responding to reviews - underlining the recognition that responding to reviews drives loyalty, increases visibility on booking sites, and hence new guests

What to do:

- Responding to reviews is more important given the lower review volumes
- Prioritize staff training on how to respond to both good and bad reviews with empathy and acknowledgment

33.5%
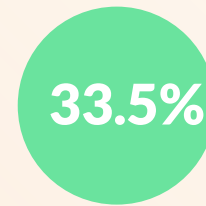
Average Global Response Rate

+.5% from 2020

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Response Rate by Region

There were regional differences in the response rates.

- APAC responded to 49.0% of reviews registering the largest growth in response rates
- US & Canada were at a 32% decline
- Europe had the lowest response rate at 27.1%

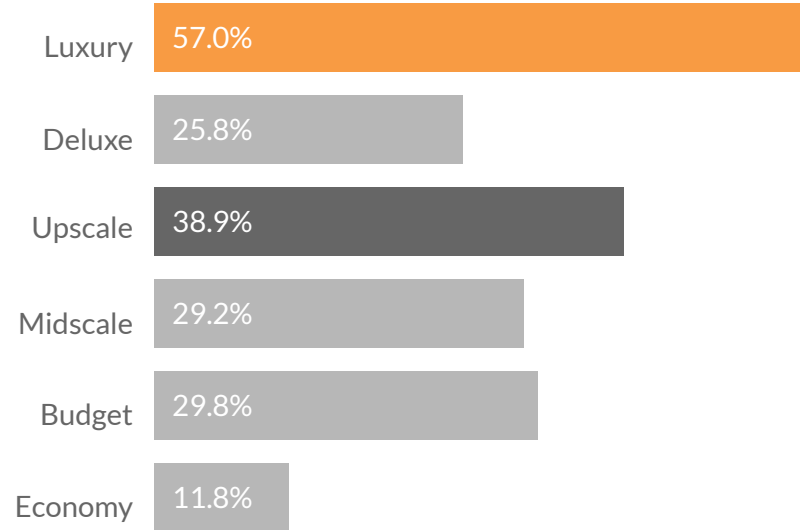Hotels should continue to respond to reviews to reap the benefits of online reputation.

Staffing challenges further emphasize the importance of a reputation management tool. Revinate can alert your hotel to new reviews and provide the tools so you can quickly and easily respond to both negative and positive reviews, right from within the platform.

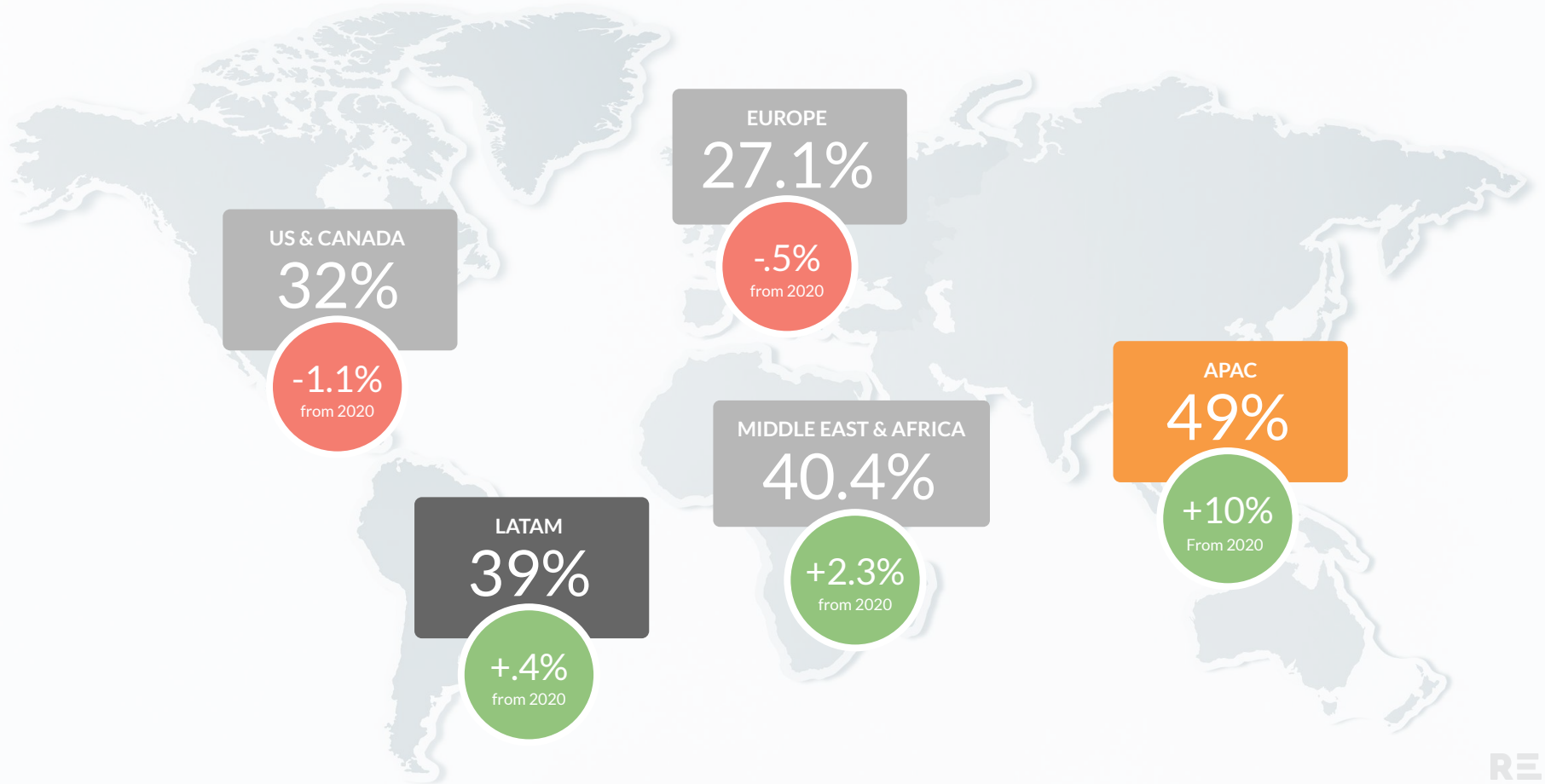| Region	Response Rate
US & Canada	32%
LATAM	39%
Europe	27.1%
ME & Africa	40.4%
APAC	49.0%
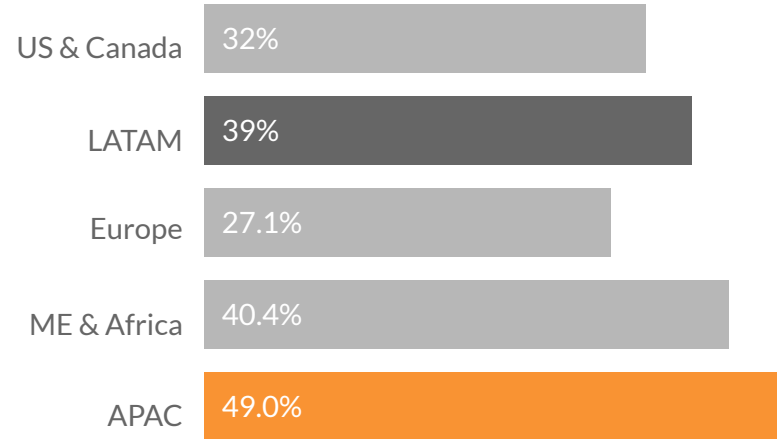
Response Rate by Class

The class of hotel can also have an impact on the review response rate. In 2021, luxury hotels overwhelmingly responded to the largest number of reviews at 57.0%. Meanwhile, economy hotels only responded to 11.8%.

In addition to typically offering a higher level of service throughout the guest journey, we also know that luxury hotels are better staffed, which could explain this difference.

Class	Response Rate
Luxury	57.0%
Deluxe	25.8%
Upscale	38.9%
Midscale	29.2%
Budget	29.8%
Economy	11.8%

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Average Response Rate by Region

US & CANADA
32%
-1.1%
from 2020

EUROPE
27.1%
-.5%
from 2020

LATAM
39%
+.4%
from 2020

MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA
40.4%
+2.3%
from 2020

APAC
49%
+10%
From 2020

RE

Response Rate by Rating

Review response rate by star rating was fairly distributed in 2021. Hoteliers responded to 2 and 5 start reviews the most, and 4 star reviews the least.

What to do:
- Respond to all 1- and 2-star reviews, assuming there is actionable feedback. Our previous benchmark report noted these reviews recorded the highest response rate
- Responding to 5-star reviews can also be advantageous in expanding the guest experience online
- 3- and 4-star reviews should be responded to as needed to address any bad experience and to assure the reviewer that management is serious about improvement

Rating	Response Rate
1 Star	34.1%
2 Star	35.9%
3 Star	32.9%
4 Star	29.3%
5 Star	35.9%
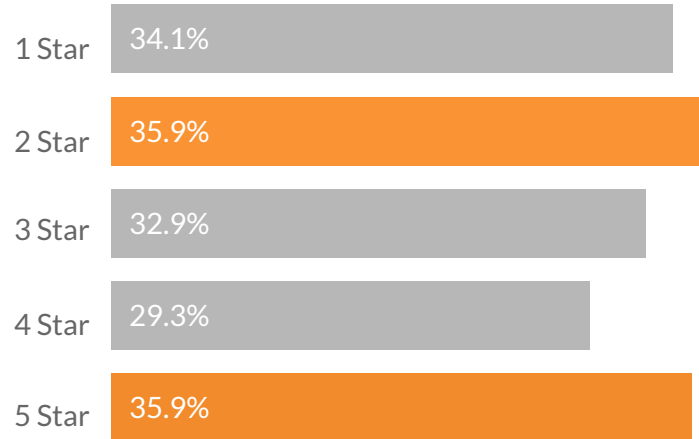
Keep up the great work!

2021 was a challenging year for hospitality.

Despite everything, hoteliers stayed focused on tracking guest experience and collecting post-stay feedback.

The dramatic dip in 2020 was most likely due to the lack of travelers rather than review fatigue. As travel returns, we'll watch the trends closely to determine if health and safety concerns drive people back to online review sites in record numbers as predicted.

In the meantime, we recommend that hoteliers use this report to benchmark their review management practices and take necessary action to improve.

If you're looking to understand how your peers are using guest feedback to their advantage, please review the following case studies:

1. Inn at Northrup Station
2. Aqua Aston

Make sure you never miss an important trend or resource to help drive revenue for your hotel. If you would like to learn more about Revinate's solutions for guest marketing, hotel CRM or guest feedback, reach out here. We would love to help! And, be sure to follow us on social.

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Hotel Marketing Benchmark Report

Over 368 Million Emails Analyzed

VIEW THE REPORT

Top 10 Strategies to Recover Abandoned Booking Revenue

We uncover first-hand the challenges hoteliers are faced with for website and cart abandonment.

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