

How InterContinental Hotels Group Used Agile Research To Optimize Their Online Booking Experience



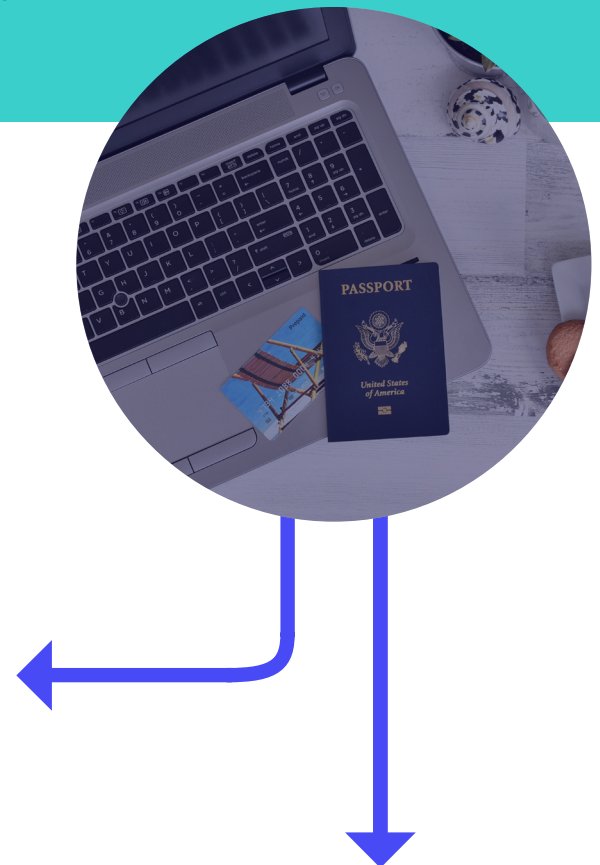
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We compete with other hotels, online travel platforms, traditional travel agents, even airline companies [...] We have to constantly be on our toes, delivering the right products in the right way with the right experience in mind.

Tom Noggle
Senior Manager of Global Insights

The Challenge

The global insights team at InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) knows that ecommerce has completely changed the way we purchase and organize travel. Travel is an extremely competitive space, and this insights team is always looking to optimize the online booking experience in order to drive traffic to their own platform and build brand equity. So when the team sought to add travel-related products and services to their online booking platform, they wanted to ensure that the resulting experience would attract and appeal to their target audience.

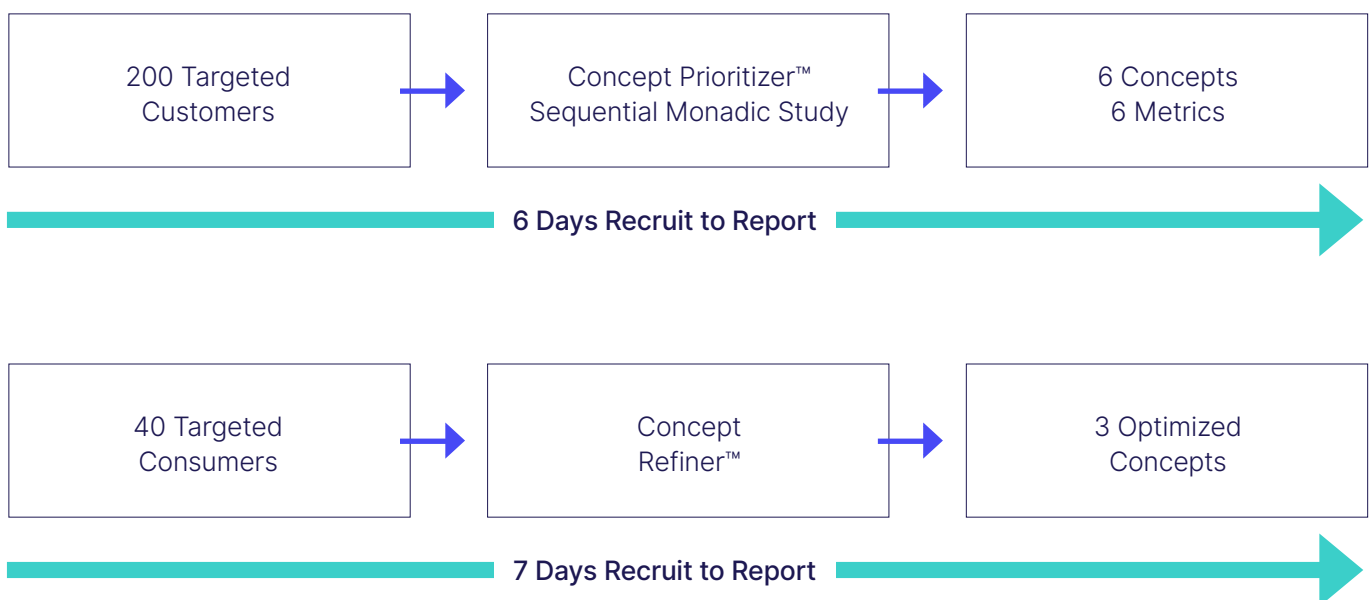


The Solution and Research

In order to prioritize website concepts and understand which aspects of their online booking process needed fine tuning, the IHG team combined GutCheck's Concept Prioritizer™ and Concept Refiner™ solutions. Though the team recognizes that quantitative results offer concrete numbers that help convince upper management to accept the findings, they also needed qualitative assessment to contextualize feedback and articulate consumer concerns. IHG worked with our research team to target two types of travelers—leisure and business—and gather feedback on three wireframe concepts for their new online booking platform, with the goal of determining which booking flow worked best for consumers and why.

The Research Objectives

- Prioritize website wireframe concepts based on consumer scoring in key quantitative metrics.
- Understand concept pain points, functionality, and potential for optimization through qualitative investigation.



The Results

While the quantitative ranking of concepts pointed Tom Noggle, the IHG team in the right direction, the qualitative Sr. Manager of Global Insights feedback proved to be the deciding factor in determining a consumer preference. Two of the booking interface concepts similarly outperformed the other in the quantitative metrics of ease of use, uniqueness, and appeal, so it was a deeper qualitative understanding of consumers' desires for simple design and a one-stop travel shop that narrowed down a winner. Qualitative research for the least liked concept proved just as helpful, as it articulated how to improve the interface design and ease of transaction in the next iteration. After deliberating the implications and feasibility of delivery, the IHG team was able to confidently determine which concept stood the best chance at satisfying both leisure and business travelers, and moved it forward into product development. They were even able to incorporate well-liked elements from the concepts that fell to the bottom of the rankings.

1

Broke quantitative tie between two concepts with qualitative explanation of consumer preferences for bundling options, more detail, and simpler design.

2

Revealed price-consciousness of leisure travelers, leading to improved bundling options and time-saving factors in concept refinement.

3

Determined that additional steps and external webpages compromise ease of use and design appeal, confirming internal preference for a cleaner interface.

4

Achieved research buy-in by engaging stakeholders through contextualized insights and actionable implications.

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Two [of the concepts] actually performed very similarly in quantitative [research], so thank gosh we got those qualitative results back [to] really figure out what was driving appeal to those two different concepts.

Tom Noggle

Senior Manager of Global Insights



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