

# Expedia

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# Team Odyssey

## Surveys

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## Executive Summary

Expedia is a global travel company that allows users to book flights, hotels, car rentals, and any combination of the above through their website or mobile app. The purpose of our study was to use a survey in order to familiarize ourselves with our potential users travel preferences, and to guide our research on the bundle feature of the Expedia app. The primary questions we aimed to answer through this survey were: which factors do the users consider while booking flight tickets and accommodation? And why do users hesitate to use the Bundles feature on the Expedia app? We started our survey with a paper version administered to 7 participants. We then expanded our survey through an online platform, eventually garnering 60 responses over 5 days. Our target audience, according to our client preference, were participants 30-55 who travel at least once a year, reducing our pool of responses down to 39, which were used for our analysis. Using Qualtrics and Excel, and our team as a whole, we used the raw data to formulate the following findings and recommendations. One of our key findings was that most users do not prefer to use mobile apps to book hotels and flights, preferring to use standard websites instead. We also found that, in terms of workflow, most users prefer to book their flights before booking hotels. Bundles, or combo deals with both hotels and flights, did not appear to be a popular choice for our survey participants. Finally, Expedia's was the number one choice for most of our user when booking both hotels and flights, but not the mobile app. Based on these findings, we make the following recommendations to Expedia: Change the workflow when booking bundle deals to allow users to book their flights prior to selecting a hotel, as it is currently done the other way around. Emphasising security and ease to attract web users to use the mobile app. Areas that were left underexplored during our survey include deeper rationale for *why* users prefer to book travel on the website versus the mobile app, and a change in question wording left us unable to compare factors used to select flights and hotels without further research. However, the survey did provide our team a good jumping off point for changes to recommend and areas to research further.

## Introduction

Expedia is a famous travel company that operates through an smartphone app and a website. Through Expedia, customers worldwide can book flights, hotels, holiday packages and leisure activities. Since 2007, the penetration of smartphones has increased the number of customers accessing travel services through apps. In order to target the growing smartphone user segment, Expedia's goal for this project is to improve the user experience of Expedia's iOS app users. Expedia has asked us to focus on the "Bundle" feature of the iOS app that allows the users to book flights and hotels in a combined deal.

As detailed in this report, for this stage of research, we have designed and distributed an online survey to understand the user's travel habits, especially for holidays and their comfort with smartphone technology to make payments for travel related bookings. From our previous interviews with users, we found a general discomfort to use Expedia smartphone apps for travel package reservations. We use this survey to check those ideas by gaining the perspective of the broader audience group in the online travel market. We created the survey with two main questions in mind:

1. Which factors do the users consider while booking flight tickets and accommodation?
2. Why do users hesitate to use the Bundles feature on the Expedia app?

These questions are central to understanding the users attitude towards the bundle feature on the Expedia iOS app. Questions about user's preference for flights and hotels would help us decide which features to highlight in the Expedia app as the users moves through the booking process. The questions about user's comfort level with holiday packages and travel payments using smartphone can help us identify the main reason for the users hesitancy in using the bundle feature of the Expedia app.

## Methods

The survey was deployed in order to get to know more about the feature in context (Bundles) and to have a fair idea about a user's' travel preferences. The survey was focused on getting answers to the following important questions -

1. Which factors do the users consider while booking flight tickets and accommodation?
2. Why do users hesitate to use the Bundles feature on the Expedia app?

The first question was the primary method to discover the user behavior. The responses were intended to get insights into the thought process of the users while they are booking flights and accommodation. These responses would then be translated into recommendations for the client to consider incorporating in the Bundles feature so that the user's expectations would be met, while interacting with the app. The second question aimed to uncover any bias which prevents users from using the Bundles feature on the Expedia app. The responses were intended to provide insights, which could be used by the client to enhance the Bundles feature, in order to attract more users.

## **Structure**

The survey was intended to get data about our target population and their characteristics by sampling, the data being characteristics, attitudes and behaviors of the target users. We also wanted to uncover some underlying relations between these three factors in order to better understand our target users. A pilot survey was first conducted on paper with 7 participants. The findings of the pilot survey were used to construct the final survey on Qualtrics. The survey was active on the internet for the duration of 5 days during which we recorded a total of 60 responses.

After deploying the pilot survey, and analyzing the responses, we found out that the participants had an issue recalling the number of times they had travelled within a certain period. We decided to replace a question asking participants for the number of times they travel in a typical year, and decided to be more specific with the time period under context.

We structured the final survey into 5 different pages, with each page containing at least 2 questions. The grouping was done so that all questions on a page belonged to a particular theme. This improved the user flow and kept the user focussed on a single theme under context.

The first page of the survey focussed on questions about age, number of times the individual travelled in the last year, the primary purpose for the trip, time taken for them to book a trip and the type of operating system they had, on their smartphone. These descriptive findings were used in assessing the characteristics of the users.

## **Participants**

Based on our client's requirements, the target audience defined for the scope of this entire project was individuals between 30-65 years of age, who travel at least once a year. Gender was not a factor in recruiting participants, nor was the profession/ occupation. Participants were contacted through word of mouth and email. The survey was also sent out on a couple of mailing lists at the university and shared on Twitter. We received a total of 60 complete responses. An additional 6 responses were incomplete. 5 of the individuals we had mailed, did not respond back, nor did they fill out the survey.

Out of the 60 responses received, we filtered out 21 responses that did not fall under our target population since the respondent's age was less than 30 years. So, considering the definition of our target population, we narrowed down the responses to a total 39 responses. Majority of the respondent were in the age range of 30-40 years, while only 5 respondents reported that they are older than 50 years. 76.92% of the respondents were full-time professionals, while 17.95% fell under the category of Student/ Unemployed and the remaining 5.13% of respondents were self-employed. 25.64% of the respondents said that they traveled more than 7 times in the last one year, while 51.28% reported that they travelled between 3 to 5 times in the last year. The primary reason for trips being leisure was reported by 82.05% of the respondents while the remaining respondents reported that the primary purpose of the trip was for business.

## **Data Analysis**

The team analyzed the survey responses in an interpretation session. Tools such as Qualtrics and Microsoft Excel were used to sort, filter and analyze the data. The Qualtrics dashboard was the primary source of data visualization which was then used in narrowing down the findings. Microsoft Excel was used in analyzing the descriptive statistics. The findings were translated onto a whiteboard and the team collectively studied the data to develop recommendations for the client. The findings and recommendations can be found in the following sections.

## **Findings and Recommendations**

Our survey questions aimed at drawing valuable insights from online travel trends among professionals so we can make valuable recommendations to the primary focus of our client's app, Bundle Deals. The questions we asked pertained to booking hotels/accommodations and flights online, online payment and even preferred medium for trip planning. We also asked a few questions (3 in total) that were directly aimed at Expedia's iOS application to get to know it's usage statistics. The results were very helpful in drawing actionable recommendations that are discussed immediately after the key findings.

### **Key Findings**

#### **Finding #1: Users do not primarily use mobile apps to book flights or hotels**

This finding came as a bit of surprise to us but as is evident from Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, website was the primary medium to book both flights and hotels. In case of flights, 97.37% users selected websites and in case of hotels, this share was 92.31%. When the users were asked which platforms had they used Expedia on, the results were in conjunction to these findings. Majority of the users (64.1%) used the Expedia website and the app usage was not significant at all, as shown in Fig. 3.

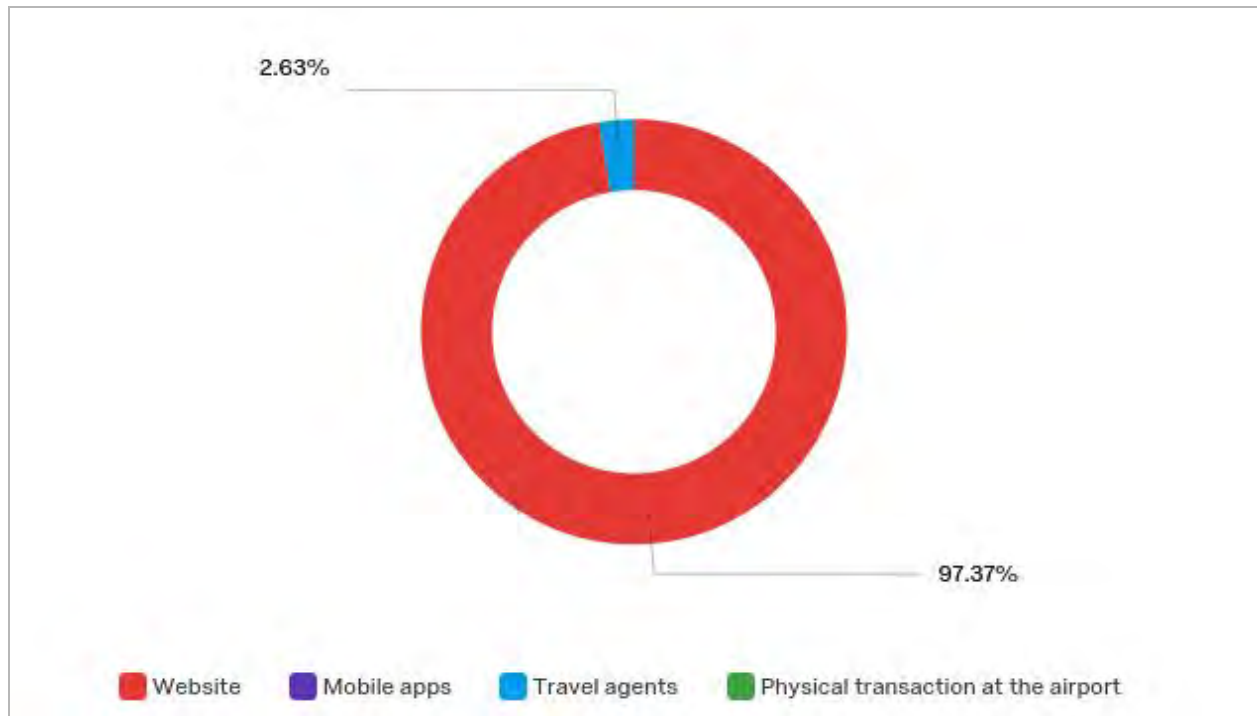


Fig. 1 - Visualization for primary medium to book flight tickets

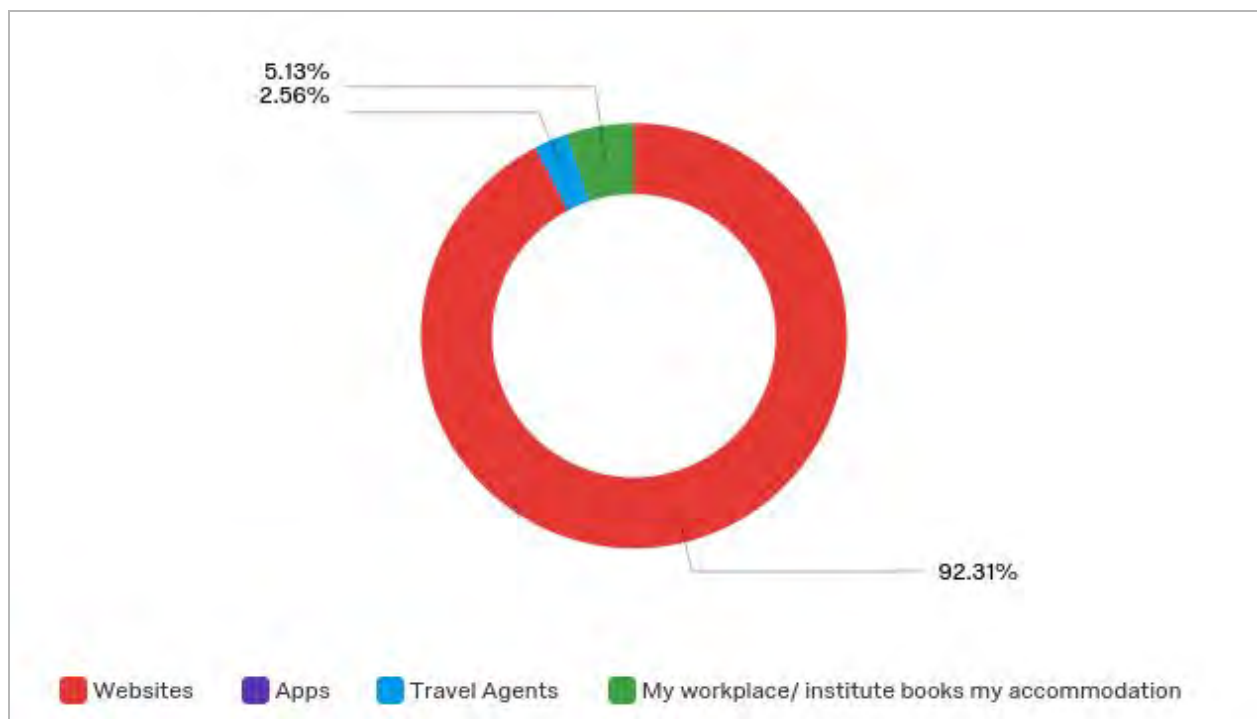


Fig. 2 - Visualization for primary medium to book hotels/accommodations

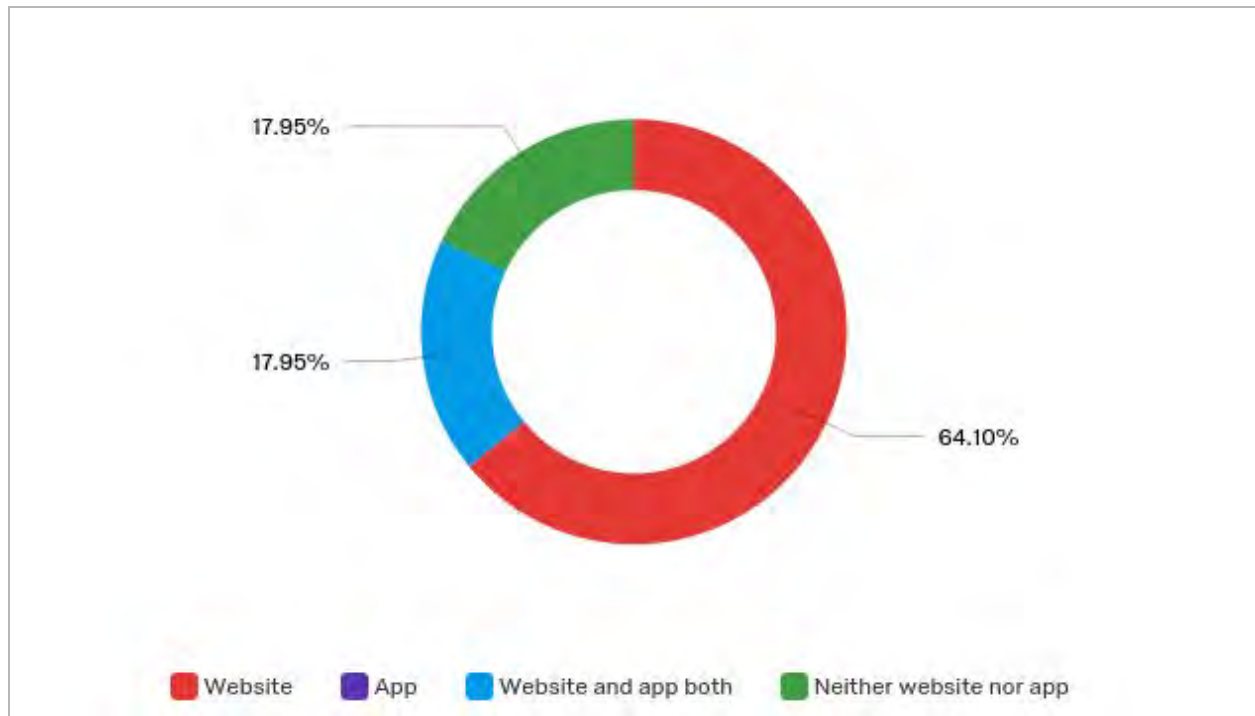


Fig. 3 - Visualization for Expedia platform usage

### **Finding #2: Users preferred booking flights before hotels**

This finding is directly related to the Bundles feature and is in stark contrast to the current flow of Bundles as well as our initial recommendation. Bundles allows a user to book a packaged deal starting with booking a hotel and then followed by booking an outbound and inbound flight. Initially, we recommended that hotel booking should be performed after the user has selected an outbound flight due to factors such as proximity of the airport to the selected hotel but as we can see from Fig. 4, users wished to book flights (outbound and inbound together) before hotels (89.74%, which is a considerable amount). The percentage corresponding to the existing workflow is a mere 7.69% and there is no percentage share at all corresponding to our initial recommendation.

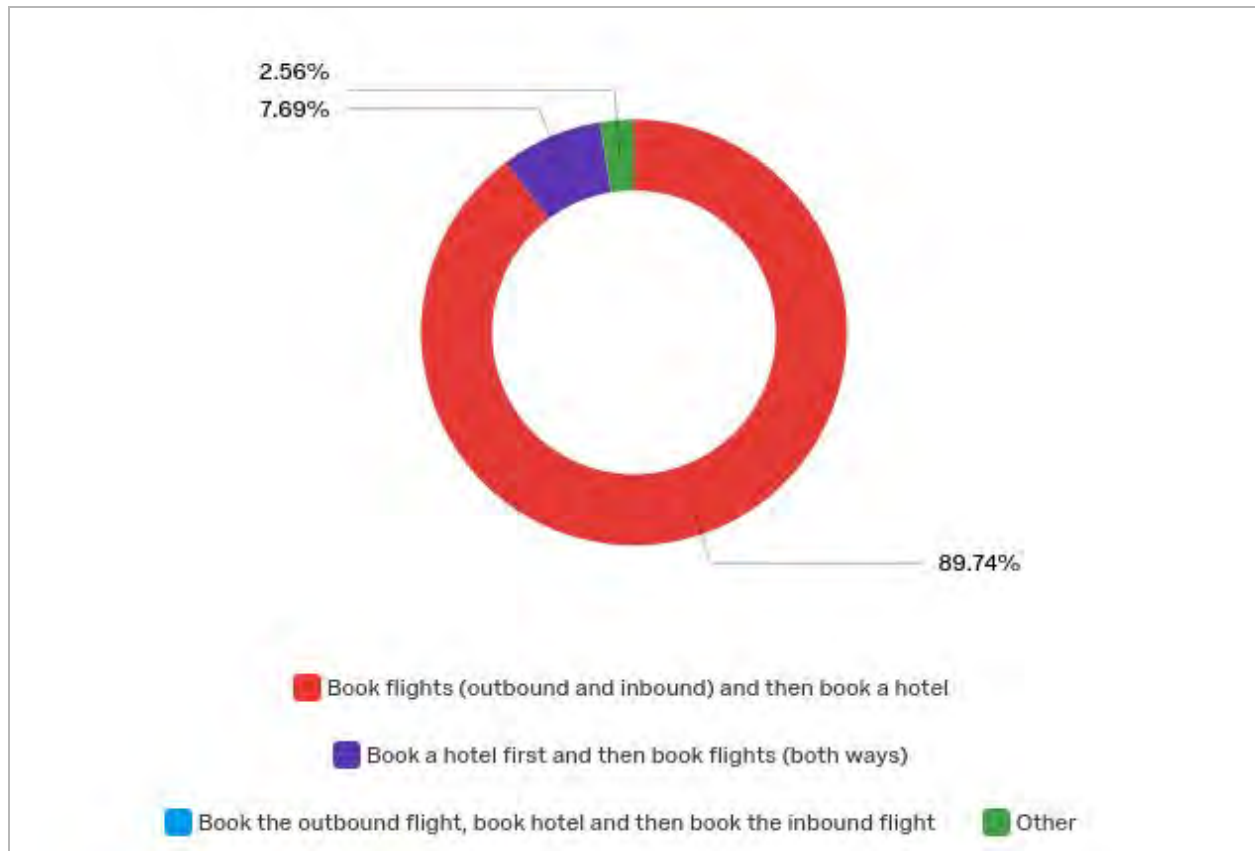


Fig. 4 - Visualization for itinerary planning

### Finding #3: Combo deals is not a popular choice among users

We asked our users if they had used any sort of combo deals on an app or a website previously. A substantial percentage of users (64.1%) had not. This is a key finding since Bundles itself is a combo deal and can be directly tied to why Bundles does not contribute as a popular feature of the Expedia app, as evident from Fig. 5. A follow-up question incorporated with a skip logic was then asked as to why the users did not opt for combo deals. Fig. 6 shows the percentage share of the options we provided. While we do acknowledge that we should have expanded on the option of “I prefer booking flights and hotels separately” which constituted the majority of the responses (52%), this data can still be used to support the claim that Expedia needs to market their Bundles feature better.



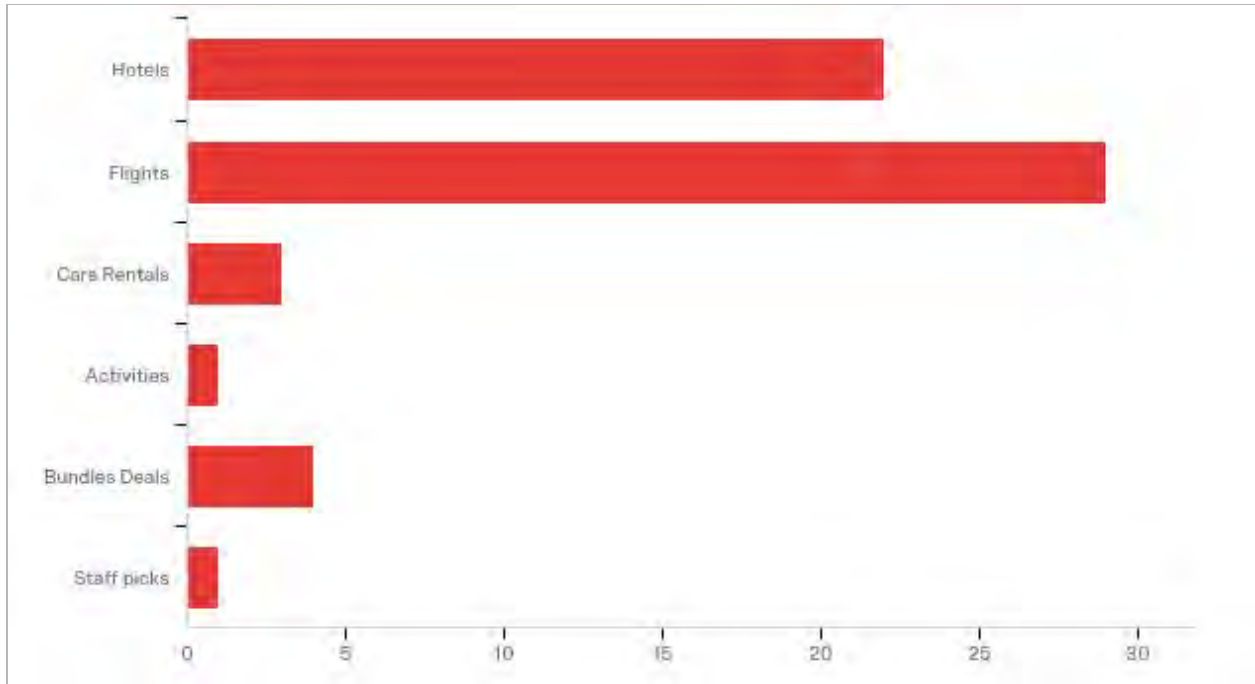


Fig. 5 - Visualization for the usage of Expedia features among users

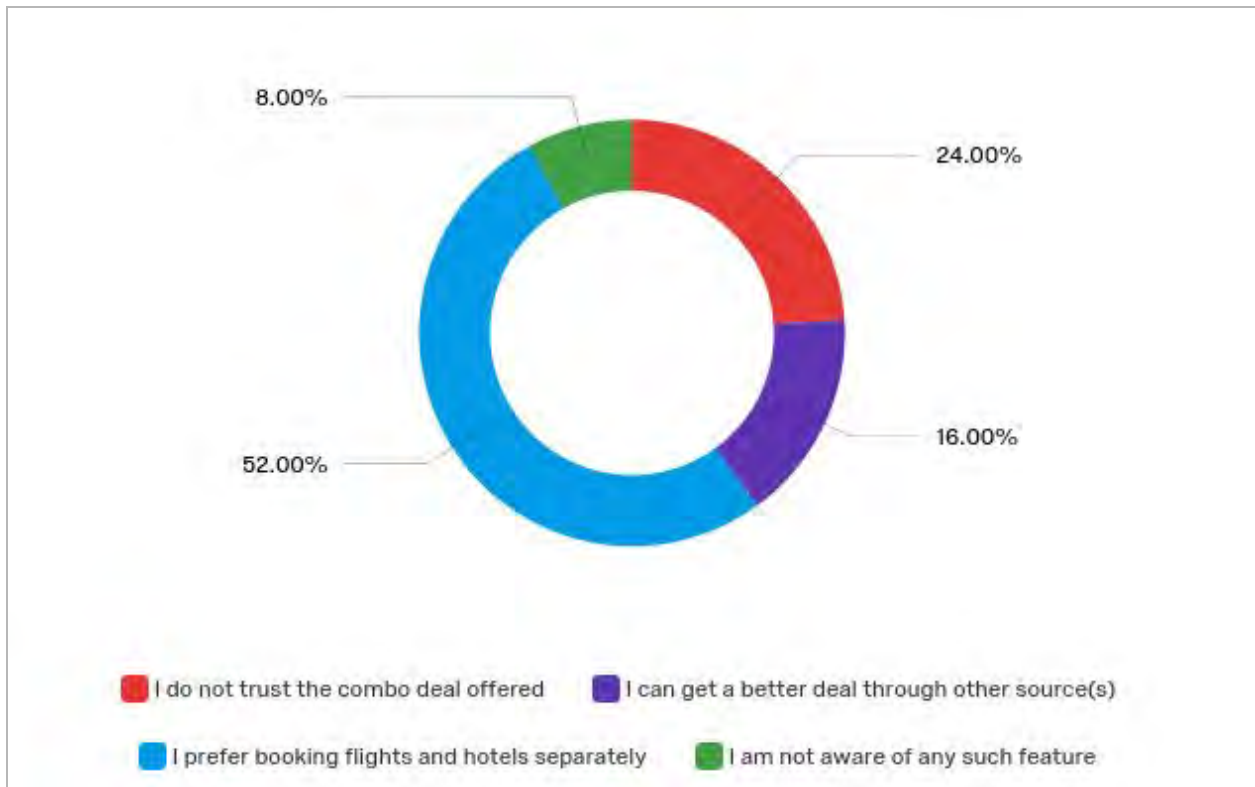


Fig. 6 - Visualization for reasons to not use combo deals

**Finding #4: Expedia is the most popular choice among users for booking flights and hotels but not necessarily the app**

The survey data announced Expedia as the clear winner among various competitors to book flights as well as hotels (Fig. 7 and Fig. 8). However, this data is not a reflection to the app usage necessarily. From finding #1, we concluded that Expedia's website platform was far more popular so this data might be an indication to the website usage too.

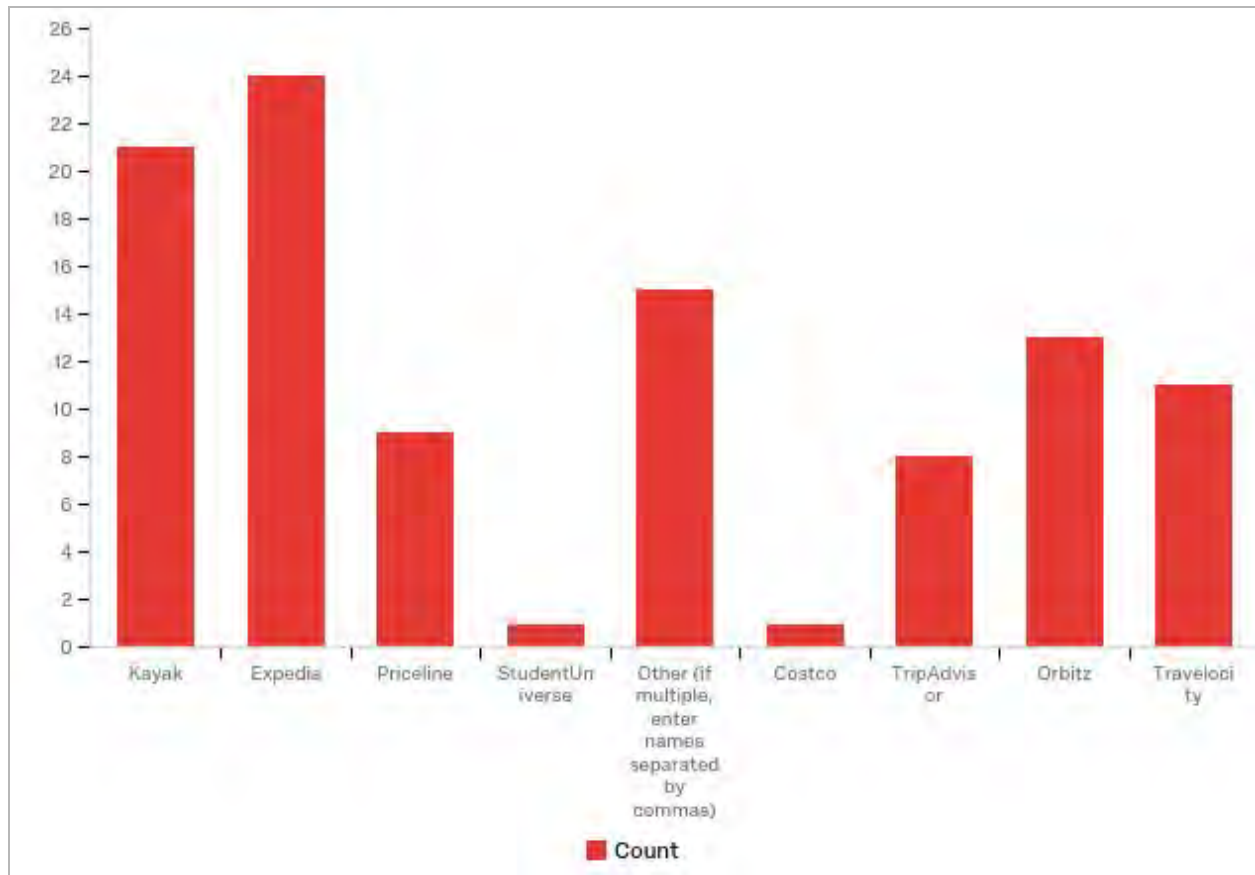


Fig. 7 - Visualization for popular services to book flights

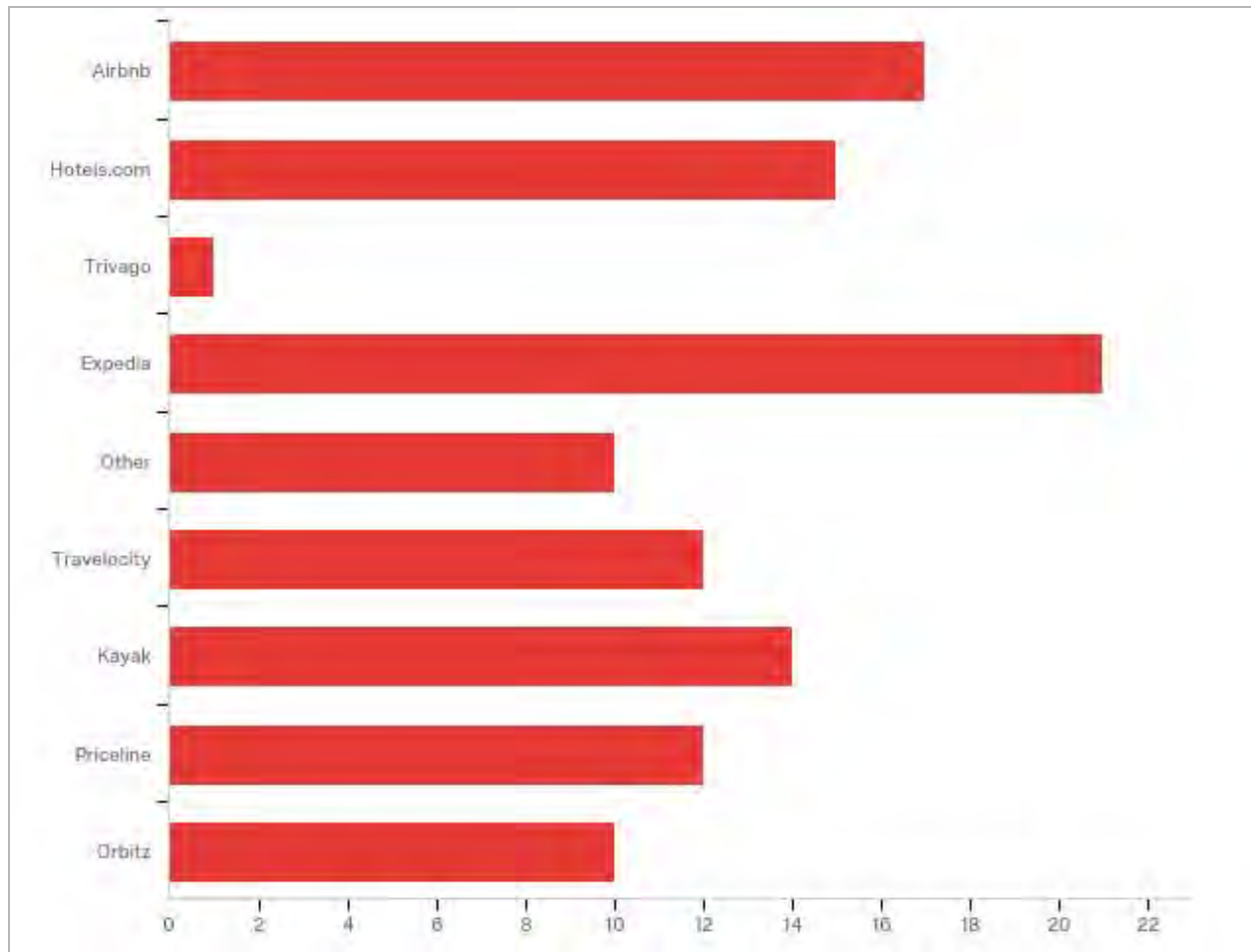


Fig. 8 - Visualization for popular services to book hotels/accommodations

## Recommendations

### **Recommendation #1: Change Bundles flow to booking flights before hotels**

This recommendation is of great value and can be implemented by our client easily. The results show that users would book flights before hotels but the current Bundles flow is exactly reverse with the app prompting the users to book hotel before flights. Our initial recommendation involved splitting the flight booking but we came to realize from the survey that it is not desirable (as none of the survey takers opted for this option). Users clearly prefer the option to book all flights before worrying about accommodations, and prefer the round trip experience of selecting both inbound and outbound flights at the same time.

### **Recommendation #2: Establish trust in booking through a mobile app**

This recommendation is a bit trickier. We found that most users prefer using Expedia when booking flights and hotels, but did not prefer to use the mobile app. The majority of our users, 56.7%, have completed purchases through their phone before, so it is not necessarily a distrust

of phone security. Rather, there seems to be a need to establish trust and convenience through using the app. This could be done by additional marketing on the website, and possible security checkpoints while using the app.

### **Recommendation #3: Add additional features to the mobile app**

We would also recommend implementing additional features from the website to the iOS mobile app, in order to establish a sense of equality between the two. One example would be, to include the capability to narrow your search focus to specific brands of airlines. Our research found that other than price, choice of airline was the second most important factor to users in selecting a flight. This search capability is lacking on the iOS mobile app, yet featured on the Expedia website.

## **Discussion**

In this section of survey, we formed good understandings of users travel planning behaviors and developed patterns based on that. However, we didn't realize that we used different methods to measure factors that would affect users' flights and hotels booking preferences. In survey, we asked users to rank in sequential orders from the most to the least important factors that would affect their flights booking decisions (Question #9), while we provide multiple-choice options for users to identify the factors that may affect their hotels booking decisions (Question #13). Without a list order importance of factors for hotels booking, it doesn't provide enough comparable information of factors between hotels and flights booking for us to analyze. We will need to investigate more on the common and different factors between two subjects.

Other questions we identified from this survey and will need to dive in more are question 16, 17, 22, that we didn't ask follow-up questions for reasons that survey respondents' response for 1) prefer to book hotels and flights separately (Question #16); 2) no survey respondent have used Expedia mobile app for online payment (Question #17); 3) large amount of the survey respondents doesn't like to use combo (Question #22). The detailed information and findings from these follow-up questions can be crucial for survey results, that possibly there are other factors affecting potential users from completing the journeys with the product. We will conduct follow-up surveys to answer those questions.

## **Conclusion**

Overall, the survey provided us good understanding of our target users travel planning habits answered questions around factors that affects users' decision making process for flight and hotel bookings respectively, users' attitudes toward travel app mobile payment and mobile app

payment in general, and users' familiarity around the bundles and packages options for booking holidays. According to our findings based on survey, we suggest to change the bundle flow to booking flights before hotels, to establish trust in booking through a mobile app and adding additional features to the mobile app.

## Appendix - Survey Questions

1. What is your age?



2. Which of the following best describes your current occupation?

Full Time Professional - **30**

Student/ Unemployed - **7**

Self-employed - **2**

Part Time Professional - **0**

3. Which operating system does your smartphone have?

iOS - **19**

Android - **20**

N/A - **0**

4. How many times did you travel in the last year?

Did not travel at all - **0**

1-2 times - **6**

3-5 times - **20**

6-7 times - **3**

More than 7 times - **10**

5. What was the primary purpose of your trips?

Leisure/ Vacation - **32**

Business - **7**

6. How much time do you cumulatively spend on booking a trip?

1-2 days - **20**

1 week - **13**

2-3 weeks - **6**

1 month - **0**

More than 1 month - **0**

7. When you travel via flights, generally do you book the tickets on your own?\*

Yes, I book my own tickets - **38**

No, my tickets are sponsored - **1**

8. Which is your primary medium to book flight tickets?\*

Website - **37**

Travel agents - **1**

Physical transaction at airports - **0**

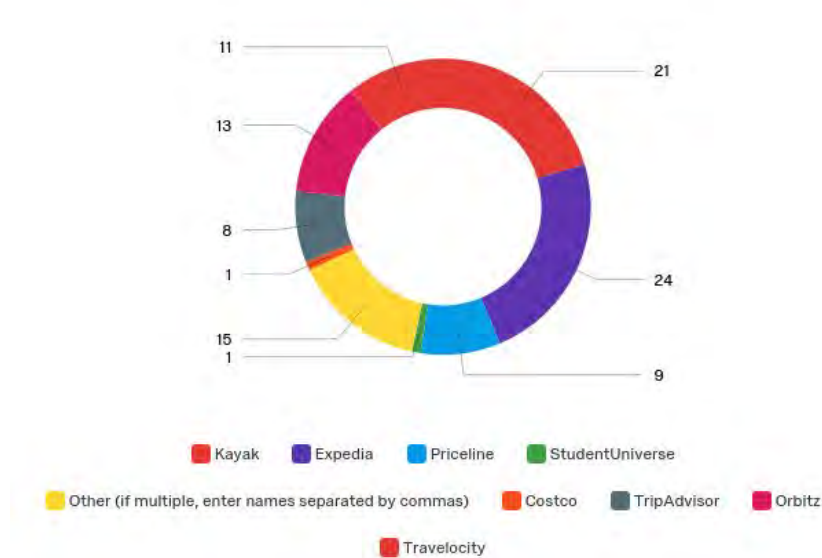
Mobiles apps - **0**

9. Please rank the following factors in the order of importance you attribute to them, while booking flights (1 - very important, 4 - least important)\*

#	Field	1	2	3	4	Total
1	Comfort	10.53% 4	26.32% 10	47.37% 18	15.79% 6	38
2	Price	81.58% 31	18.42% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	38
3	Ratings	2.63% 1	13.16% 5	31.58% 12	52.63% 20	38
4	Choice of Airline	5.26% 2	42.11% 16	21.05% 8	31.58% 12	38

Showing Rows: 1 - 4 Of 4

10. Which of the following services have you used for booking flights? (Select multiple options if applicable)\*



## 11. Which is your primary medium to book hotels/accommodation?

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Websites	92.31% 36
3	Travel Agents	2.56% 1
4	My workplace/ institute books my accommodation	5.13% 2
2	Apps	0.00% 0

39

Showing Rows: 1 - 5 Of 5

## 12. Which of the following websites/ apps have you used? (Select multiple options if applicable)\*

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Airbnb	45.95% 17
2	Hotels.com	40.54% 15
3	Trivago	2.70% 1
4	Expedia	56.76% 21
5	Other	27.03% 10
6	Travelocity	32.43% 12
7	Kayak	37.84% 14
8	Priceline	32.43% 12
9	Orbitz	27.03% 10
		37

Showing Rows: 1 - 10 Of 10



13. Which of the following factors influence your decision while booking accommodation?  
(Select multiple options if applicable)\*

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Photos	64.86% 24
2	Price	94.59% 35
3	Reviews	81.08% 30
4	Ratings	59.46% 22
5	Location	86.49% 32
		37

Showing Rows: 1 - 6 Of 6

14. What is your strategy for planning out the itinerary of your trip? (Outbound flight = to destination, inbound flight = back home)

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Book flights (outbound and inbound) and then book a hotel	89.74% 35
2	Book a hotel first and then book flights (both ways)	7.69% 3
3	Book the outbound flight, book hotel and then book the inbound flight	0.00% 0
4	Other	2.56% 1
		39

Showing Rows: 1 - 5 Of 5

15. Have you previously used the combo deal (flights + hotel booking) feature on any travel website/ app?

- a. Yes - **14**
- b. No - **25**

16. If no, why have you not used the combo deal feature?\*

#	Field	Choice Count
1	I do not trust the combo deal offered	24.00% 6
2	I can get a better deal through other source(s)	16.00% 4
3	I prefer booking flights and hotels separately	52.00% 13
4	I am not aware of any such feature	8.00% 2
		25

Showing Rows: 1 - 5 Of 5

17. Have you used any of the following services offered by Expedia?

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Website	64.10% 25
2	App	0.00% 0
3	Website and app both	17.95% 7
4	Neither website nor app	17.95% 7

39

Showing Rows: 1 - 5 Of 5

18. Do you have the Expedia app installed on your smartphone?\*

- a. Yes - **6**
- b. No - **1**

19. Which features of the Expedia website/ app have you used? (Select multiple options if applicable)\*

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Hotels	68.75% 22
2	Flights	90.63% 29
3	Cars Rentals	9.38% 3
4	Activities	3.13% 1
5	Bundles Deals	12.50% 4
6	Staff picks	3.13% 1

32

Showing Rows: 1 - 7 Of 7

20. Have you done any online payments using your smartphone?

- a. Yes - **22**
- b. No - **17**

21. If yes, how comfortable are you doing online transactions on your smartphone?\*

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Extremely comfortable	41.18% 7
2	Moderately comfortable	47.06% 8
3	Slightly comfortable	5.88% 1
4	Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable	0.00% 0
5	Slightly uncomfortable	0.00% 0
6	Moderately uncomfortable	5.88% 1
7	Extremely uncomfortable	0.00% 0
		17

Showing Rows: 1 - 8 Of 8

22. Have you previously done any online transactions through any travel app on your smartphone?\*

- a. Yes - **13**
- b. No - **9**

Questions marked with \* had skip logic