ACSI® Travel Study 2025

April 22, 2025



American Customer Satisfaction Index

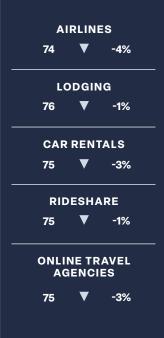


Customer Satisfaction Challenges Add to Choppy Air Ahead for Travel Industries

Having navigated through the pandemic and its chaotic aftermath of pent-up demand, the travel segment for a brief time seemed to settle back into something like a "new normal." However, by the beginning of this year some clouds began gathering on the horizon. These include decreased pricing power, constraints on consumer budgets due to persistent inflation, and more recently the potential impacts of international trade politics—all playing out against the promise (and potential peril) of rapidly evolving operational models fueled by ongoing IT innovation and the rise of AI-enabled services.

Adding to this complicated mix of challenges, new data from the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) show a decrease in customer satisfaction with travel experiences, as airlines, lodging, car rentals, rideshare, and online travel agencies all lose ground. Of particular concern is that much of the decline is driven by business travelers and other premium customers, who make up a disproportionate share of industries' revenues, while lower-margin economy customers show little change.

The silver lining to these clouds is that as pressures on industry capacities ease, companies should have more breathing room to fully dial in the most effective improvements to their operations for enhancing the customer experience, positioning them for success in a future where volumes rise again. Brands that improve the business travel experience in particular should be well positioned to enjoy ongoing profitability.



ACSI results are based on surveys conducted over a 12-month period ending in March 2025. ACSI scores are reported on a 0 to 100 scale.

Key Takeaways

AIRLINES

- After reaching a record high last year, customer satisfaction with airlines falls 4% to an ACSI score of 74 as the industry faces uncertain near-term business conditions and a changing economic outlook.
- Among the big three legacy airlines, American loses significant ground for satisfaction on operational issues and misfires in rollout of new loyalty program.
- Budget airlines show mixed results in the face of increasing competition for fewer routes in the economy travel space.

LODGING

- Guest satisfaction with the lodging industry inches back 1% to an ACSI score of 76 as its traditional model continues to be challenged by new operational models, nontraditional competitors, and shifting customer expectations.
- Guests traveling for business are the principal driver of declining satisfaction, particularly for midscale/upper midscale brands.
- Economy brands show higher guest satisfaction with improvements in amenities and food.

CAR RENTALS

- Changes to fleet management practices create challenges for car rental brands to maintain positive customer experiences.
- Industry satisfaction drops 3% to an ACSI score of 75 in tandem with a large jump in the number of customers registering complaints.
- Customers interacting directly with brands via their mobile apps and websites report higher satisfaction compared to those booking through third parties.

RIDESHARE

- The customer satisfaction tie between the two rideshare industry leaders ends as Lyft pulls ahead and Uber drops back slightly.
- Industry satisfaction dips 1% to 75, driven primarily by the ACSI drop for the industry leader by volume Uber, which appears more vulnerable to reputational risks.
- Customer focus at Lyft drives satisfaction higher among less frequent users, while more regular users exhibit less satisfaction year over year.

ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES

- Satisfaction with online travel agencies retreats 3% to an ACSI score of 75, with deterioration across all components of the customer experience.
- Expedia Group brands are among those with the steepest declines in satisfaction, most notably Orbitz.
- ACSI scores decline by the largest margins among Millennial and Gen Z customers as pressure from direct bookings mounts.

Study Findings

Customer satisfaction is a driving force that impacts the financial outlook of individual firms and the health of the U.S. economy at large. New results from the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) provide customer satisfaction benchmarks for five travel industries: airlines, car rentals, lodging, online travel agencies, and rideshare. In addition, the ACSI captures consumer opinions about critical elements of the customer experience, tailored specifically to each industry.

AIRLINES

Airlines have generally come back strong in the boom travel years following the COVID-19 pandemic, enjoying both a return to higher volumes and enhanced pricing power. However, some indications have started to emerge that less exuberant times are at hand, as airlines cut the number of flights offered, average fares soften, and the broader economic outlook becomes

increasingly uncertain. Adding to these potential headwinds, new ACSI data show declining satisfaction with the air travel experience overall. The airline industry posts a 4% drop in passenger satisfaction from the prior year, falling from a record high of 77 to 74. The erosion extends across the entire customer experience, with usefulness of flight information (71) and quality of in-flight Wi-Fi (66) debuting at the bottom.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX:

AIRLINES

0-100 Scale

COMPANY	2024 ACSI	2025 ACSI	% CHANGE
Airlines	77	74	-4%
Southwest	78	80	3%
Delta	77	77	0%
JetBlue	77	77	0%
Alaska	82	76	-7%
American	79	73	-8%
United	75	73	-3%
All Others	73	70	-4%
Spirit	67	69	3%
Frontier	69	65	-6%

Source: ACSI Travel Study 2025.

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As always, the satisfaction story is more mixed across the individual airlines in the study. While several carriers suffer drops in customer satisfaction, Delta and JetBlue hold steady at 77 from the prior year, and Southwest and Spirit each improve their satisfaction scores by 3%. Southwest, building on substantial goodwill among its customers, likely benefits from its announcement that it would move to an assigned seat model for flights beginning next year. The airline now leads the industry for satisfaction at 80. Spirit, despite facing an overall decrease in flight operations, appears to be taking advantage of the breathing room afforded by lower volumes to improve its day-to-day customer service. Nevertheless, the airline remains at the lower end of the industry at 69.

Other budget and regional carriers do not fare as well this year. Most notably, Alaska tumbles 7% to 76 in overall satisfaction, giving up its prior status as the industry satisfaction leader as fallout from the January 2024 Boeing 737 Max incident persisted throughout the year. Frontier Airlines suffers a 6% satisfaction decline to 65 in the face of increasing competition from mainline carriers pushing into the budget travel space with expanded basic economy offerings. The carrier now trails its nearest competitor Spirit by 4 points.

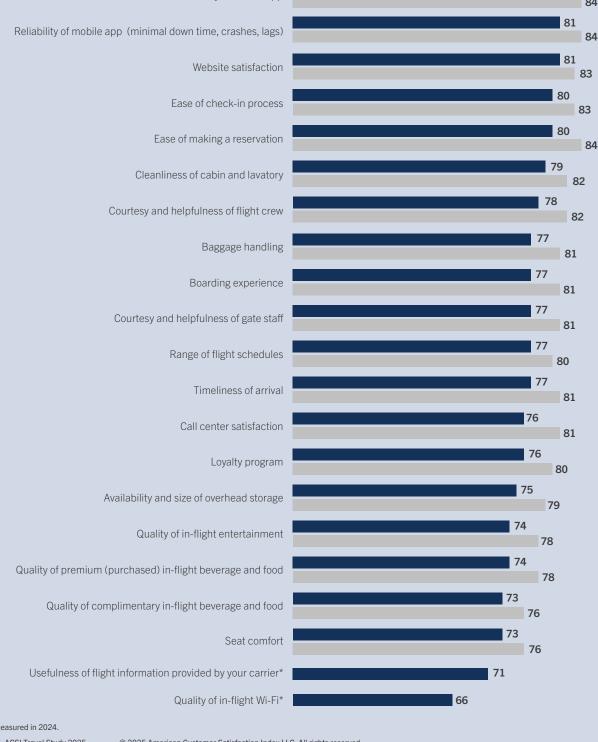
The largest year-to-year score decrease, however, is the hefty 8% decline in satisfaction for American, which falls from near the top of the industry last year to 73. This abrupt reversal of fortune appears to be the result of factors specific to American that dovetail with broader industry trends. Operationally, American consistently shows higher rates of passengers involuntarily bumped from flights than the other mainline carriers. This exacerbates frustrations particularly among business customers who were already displeased by the frequency of the delayed, interrupted, and changed flights they experienced. While satisfaction among business customers is down 6% for the industry overall, the downturn for American exceeds this average. In contrast, satisfaction among those flying for leisure travel dips just 1% year over year.

American's lost ground among these customers also results from the rollout of its new loyalty program, which was generally poorly received. Loyalty program membership remains a key driver of overall airline satisfaction. Loyalty program fliers outscore nonmembers by 6 points on overall satisfaction and by similar margins across all of the specific aspects of the flying experience tracked in the study. Attending to the needs and expectations of business travelers and frequent fliers should be a key priority for airlines looking to improve their prospects with customers in the potentially bumpy economic environment ahead.

AIRLINES

Customer Experience Benchmarks Year-Over-Year Industry Trends 0-100 Scale





^{*}Not measured in 2024.

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Baggage Fees and Customer Satisfaction

ACSI data indicate that customers have become accustomed to baggage fees. In general, those who pay a fee for baggage, whether checked or carry-on, show similar (or sometimes higher) levels of satisfaction than those who do not.

The data reveal interesting exceptions to this general finding, however. The satisfaction of business travelers paying a fee for carry-on baggage drops 9% year over year. Likewise, leisure travelers show a decline of 11% among those who pay a fee for both checked and carry-on luggage. Airlines may want to consider altering their baggage fee tactics to take advantage of these differences and recover some of the goodwill they may have lost among these specific groups of customers.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX:

AIRLINES: BUSINESS TRAVELERS

Baggage Fees and ACSI

0-100 Scale

Did you pay fees for checked or carry-on luggage on your most recent flight?

YES-paid for checked

YES-paid for carry-on

YES-paid for both checked and carry-on

NO-did not pay fee

2024		
Percentage of respondents	ACSI	
44%	82	
13%	78	
14%	79	
15%	77	

2025		
Percentage of respondents	ACSI	
39%	81	
19%	71	
18%	79	
24%	75	

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX:

AIRLINES: LEISURE TRAVELERS Baggage Fees and ACSI

0-100 Scale

Did you pay fees for checked or carry-on luggage on your most recent flight?		
YES-paid for checked		
YES-paid for carry-on		
YES-paid for both checked and carry-on		
NO-did not pay fee		

2024		
Percentage of respondents	ACSI	
33%	77	
11%	71	
10%	72	
42%	76	
10%	72	

2025		
Percentage of respondents	ACSI	
30%	76	
13%	73	
10%	64	
44%	75	

Source: ACSI Travel Study 2025.

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Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

A significant portion of declining passenger satisfaction for airlines is due to rising complaints among customers, coupled with lower satisfaction ratings among those who complain. Both business and leisure travelers who report registering a complaint show lower levels of satisfaction in 2025 compared to a year ago by notable margins.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX:

AIRLINES PASSENGERS Complaints and ACSI

0-100 Scale

	2024		
	Percentage of passengers who complained	ACSI score of passengers who complained	
Business	26%	78	
Leisure	13%	68	

2025		
Percentage of passengers who complained	ACSI score of passengers who complained	
38%	73	
17%	64	

Source: ACSI Travel Study 2025.

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LODGING

The lodging industry finds itself in a similar position to the airline industry, with a modest year-to-year ACSI decline driven by lower satisfaction among customers traveling for business. Overall, guest satisfaction slides 1% to an ACSI score of 76, with decreasing ACSI and customer experience scores for most (but not all) lodging companies and their associated brands. Hilton continues to lead the industry despite slipping 1% to 80, followed closely by IHG (+1% to 79). Airbnb and Marriott are not far behind with scores of 78.

Industrywide, satisfaction among business travelers drops 3% on average, but even more sharply for those staying at upscale/upper upscale (down 5%) and midscale/upper midscale (down 10%) properties. Business travelers report lower ratings year over year for the ease of making reservations, food services, room amenities, ease of check-in/checkout, brands' mobile apps, and perceived value. Midscale/upper midscale customers more broadly (business and leisure together) also post sharp declines for the courtesy and helpfulness of staff, a notable contrast to the generally strong scores that staff receive for the industry as a whole.

While unwelcome, these satisfaction declines reflect the challenges of the current environment. Nearly every aspect of the legacy lodging business model is undergoing rapid change, with developments in the broader industry—such as the rise of boutique properties and the increase in 'bleisure' travel mixing work and play—creating new customer needs and expectations. Homeshare brands like Airbnb (steady at 78) also continue to pose a challenge to traditional lodging brands, with solid satisfaction ratings that meet and often exceed those of the midscale brands that frequently share their price point.

By contrast, economy brands fare better this year, with guest satisfaction rising 6% on notable gains in ratings of room amenities and food services, the latter of which shows an 8% year-over-year improvement. While still lower-scoring overall than higher-end brands, economy brands appear to have recovered from many of the operational stresses of the pandemic and its aftermath and have used their newfound breathing room to make incremental gains in executing on the basics for their guests.

LODGING

0-100 Scale

COMPANY	2024 ACSI	2025 ACSI	% CHANGE
Lodging	77	76	-1%
Hilton	81	80	-1%
IHG	78	79	1%
Airbnb	78	78	0%
Marriott	79	78	-1%
Hyatt	78	76	-3%
BWH Hotels	77	75	-3%
All Others	73	72	-1%
Choice	75	72	-4%
Wyndham	70	71	1%
G6 Hospitality	NA	67	NA

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX:

LODGING BRANDS

0-100 Scale

LODGING BRAND	PARENT	TYPE*	ACSI
Marriott Hotels	Marriott	Upper Upscale	82
Hilton Hotels & Resorts	Hilton	Upper Upscale	81
Holiday Inn Express	IHG	Upper Midscale	81
Hampton	Hilton	Upper Midscale	80
Hilton Garden Inn	Hilton	Upscale	80
Wyndham Hotels & Resorts	Wyndham	Upscale	80
Holiday Inn	IHG	Upper Midscale	79
Airbnb	Airbnb	Homeshare	78
Best Western	BWH Hotels	Midscale	75
Best Western Plus	BWH Hotels	Upper Midscale	74
Comfort	Choice	Upper Midscale	74
Courtyard	Marriott	Upscale	74
Days Inn	Wyndham	Economy	70
Motel 6	G6 Hospitality	Economy	67
Baymont	Wyndham	Midscale	62

^{*}Lodging type per industry standards.

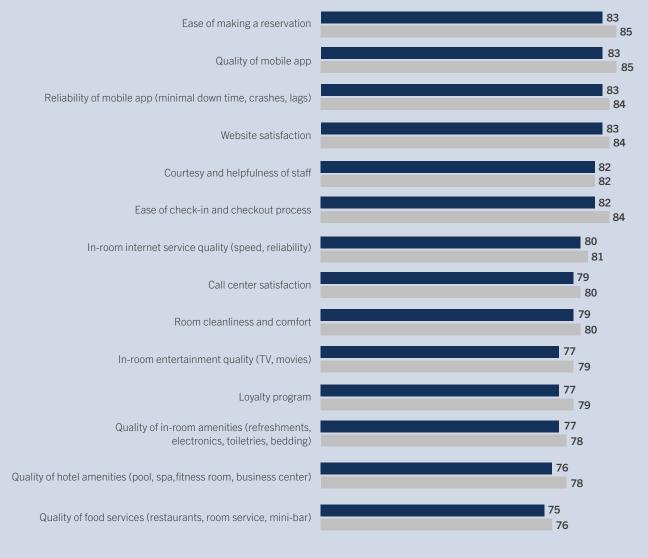
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LODGING

Customer Experience Benchmarks Year-Over-Year Industry Trends

0-100 Scale

2025 2024



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Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

ACSI data show an uptick in customers making a complaint about their lodging stay for both business and leisure travelers. That said, there is no change year over year in the satisfaction scores of those complaining. For business customers, complaints prove to be a valuable opportunity for brands to create a positive customer interaction by resolving the issue; in fact, results show virtually no difference between the satisfaction scores for business guests who complain and those who do not. By contrast, leisure travelers who complain report overall satisfaction that is 18% lower than those who do not. This makes even a small increase in complaint volumes more worrisome, particularly for properties and brands with high proportions of leisure guests.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX:

LODGING GUESTS Complaints and ACSI

0-100 Scale

	2024		
	Percentage of guests who complained Complained ACSI score		
Business	31%	77	
Leisure	12%	64	

2025		
Percentage of guests who complained	ACSI score of guests who complained	
36%	77	
14%	64	

Source: ACSI Travel Study 2025.

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CAR RENTALS

Car rental companies have recently been engaged in what has been called a "great reset" in their business model, particularly regarding fleet management. Reduced new car supplies driven by semiconductor shortages in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic, closely followed by rising interest rates, spelled the end of the era of 'over-fleeting' that allowed rental companies to easily accommodate demand. At the same time, rental companies increasingly shifted to higher-end vehicles for their fleets to meet profitability goals for aftermarket sales.

While the latter trend has the potential to improve overall levels of customer satisfaction, the generally reduced size of fleets leaves brands with a smaller margin of error in their day-to-day operations to keep customers satisfied with the rental experience. The latest data from the ACSI captures some of the strain that has resulted from this new reality. Overall, customer satisfaction with the car rental industry declines 3% to 75, while customer complaints take a huge leap year over year.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX:

CAR RENTALS

0-100 Scale

BRAND	2024 ACSI	2025 ACSI	% CHANGE
Car Rentals	77	75	-3%
Enterprise	77	78	1%
Budget (Avis Budget)	73	77	5%
Hertz	78	76	-3%
Avis (Avis Budget)	78	74	-5%
Dollar (Hertz)	75	73	-3%
National (Enterprise)	84	71	-15%

Source: ACSI Travel Study 2025.

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Among individual brands, the biggest surprise is a sharp drop in customer satisfaction with Enterprise's National brand. Previously the industry satisfaction leader at a stellar score of 84, National plummets 15% to 71, moving to the very bottom of the industry rankings. A silver lining for National's parent company is that its namesake brand, Enterprise, now leads the industry at 78. Customers give National dramatically lower ratings in nearly every aspect of their experience, but show especially large drops for the pick-up experience, perceptions of value for money, and courtesy and helpfulness of personnel.

Avis suffers a notable 5% decline in renter satisfaction to 74, also accompanied by lower customer ratings of the pick-up and drop-off experience. By contrast, sister brand Budget posts a healthy 5% increase in satisfaction to 77, by virtue of improvements not only in its pick-up experience but substantially higher customer ratings of its website and mobile app—both of which previously lagged its competitors.

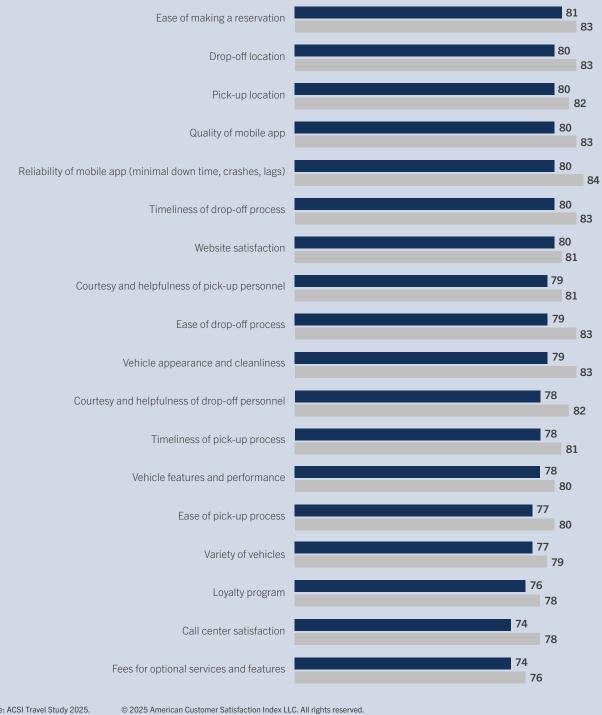
Apart from Budget's experience, the study results give another indication of the key role of technology in providing satisfying customer experiences. Customers who book their rentals directly via a brand's app or website, rather than through an online or traditional travel agent, report dramatically higher levels of satisfaction, even among National's customers. Those booking through third parties also report registering complaints 32% more frequently than the industry average.

Taken together, the study results suggest that brands that leverage their technology to cultivate direct relationships with customers and keep a clear focus on getting customers to their rentals as seamlessly as possible will be best positioned to return to or maintain higher levels of satisfaction.

CAR RENTALS

Customer Experience Benchmarks Year-Over-Year Industry Trends

2025 2024



Source: ACSI Travel Study 2025.

Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

Apart from modest declines across all the areas of the car rental experience captured in the study, the data also show a somewhat startling 35% overall jump year over year in the number of respondents who report lodging a complaint with their car rental company. Among business travelers, the rise in complaints is more pronounced than it is for leisure travelers. For both categories, satisfaction levels for those who complain remain well below the industry ACSI average (75).

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX:

CAR RENTAL CUSTOMERS Complaints and ACSI

0-100 Scale

	20	2024	
	Percentage of customers who complained	ACSI score of customers who complained	
Business	43%	71	
Leisure	21%	67	

2025				
Percentage of customers who complained	ACSI score of customers who complained			
50%	72			
25%	69			

Source: ACSI Travel Study 2025.

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RIDESHARE

In its second year of ACSI measurement, overall satisfaction with rideshare services shows a small decline, falling 1% from a debut score of 76 to 75. The satisfaction drop is almost entirely attributable to declining ratings of the customer experience with dominant market leader Uber, which slips 1% year over year to an ACSI score of 75. Meanwhile, Uber's principal competitor Lyft posts a 1% satisfaction improvement to lead the industry at 77.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX:

RIDESHARE

0-100 Scale

COMPANY	2024 ACSI	2025 ACSI	% CHANGE
Rideshare	76	75	-1%
Lyft	76	77	1%
Uber	76	75	-1%
All Others	NA	71	NA

NA = Not Available

Source: ACSI Travel Study 2025.

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Driving Uber's small ACSI decline is softening performance in several aspects of the customer experience, most notably user ratings of driver courtesy, their feelings of safety during their ride, and the ease with which they were able to be dropped off at their desired location. ACSI data also show a significant uptick in complaints among respondents who use Uber, coupled with a large decrease in their ratings of its complaint handling.

Uber may also be facing a gender gap when compared to Lyft, as both its year-over-year score deterioration and its performance compared to its primary competitor are most pronounced among women. When considered alongside the public relations challenges it has faced on social media and elsewhere as the most prominent face of the industry, Uber may need to make both operational and reputational efforts to ensure it does not lose further ground for satisfaction.

Lyft has touted its "customer obsession" and ACSI results suggest this focus may be starting to show dividends, including recently turning its first profits. However, while Lyft fares slightly better among its users than Uber overall, its gains in satisfaction are somewhat uneven across its user base. First-time and infrequent Lyft users (three times per month or less) post a satisfaction increase of 7%, whereas the most frequent users (those using the service six times or more in the past month) show a 3% satisfaction drop. This is despite Lyft's rollout of new features such as Price Lock, a program offering price stability for frequent users who make specific trips on a regular basis. ACSI data also show that while the number of customers reporting a complaint to Lyft holds steady year over year, ratings of its complaint resolution experience lag Uber by 10%. This points to a potential area of relative weakness the company may need to shore up as it seeks to widen its satisfaction lead and command a greater share of the market.

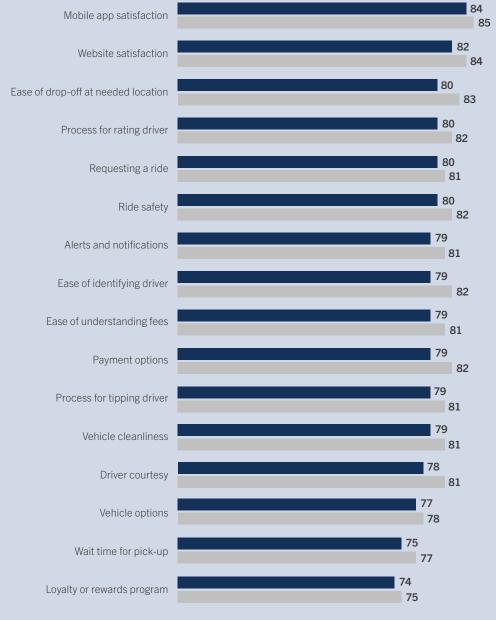
RIDESHARE

Customer Experience Benchmarks Year-Over-Year Industry Trends

0-100 Scale

2025

2024



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ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES

Given the decreased satisfaction among airline and car rental customers, and the mixed experiences of brands in the lodging industry, it is perhaps not surprising that online travel agencies (OTAs) suffer satisfaction setbacks. The industry overall drops 3% to an ACSI score of 75, with all the measured brands and all components of the customer experience showing declines.

Of the two most prominent OTA brand families, Booking Holdings (Booking.com, Kayak, Priceline) fares better than the Expedia Group (Expedia, Orbitz, Travelocity, Trivago). Expedia includes two of the three brands showing the largest year-over-year decreases in satisfaction—Travelocity and Orbitz—with the latter posting a striking 10% drop. Both brands' scores reflect user dissatisfaction with the content on their sites. Orbitz further suffers from a sharp drop in ratings of its mobile app, and a 48% increase in customers reporting a complaint.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX:

ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES

0-100 Scale

BRAND	2024 ACSI	2025 ACSI	% CHANGE
Online Travel Agencies	77	75	-3%
Booking.com (Booking Holdings)	80	78	-3%
Expedia	79	77	-3%
All Others	78	76	-3%
Trivago (Expedia)	77	76	-1%
Priceline (Booking Holdings)	76	74	-3%
Tripadvisor	76	74	-3%
Travelocity (Expedia)	78	73	-6%
Kayak (Booking Holdings)	73	69	-5%
Orbitz (Expedia)	73	66	-10%

Source: ACSI Travel Study 2025.

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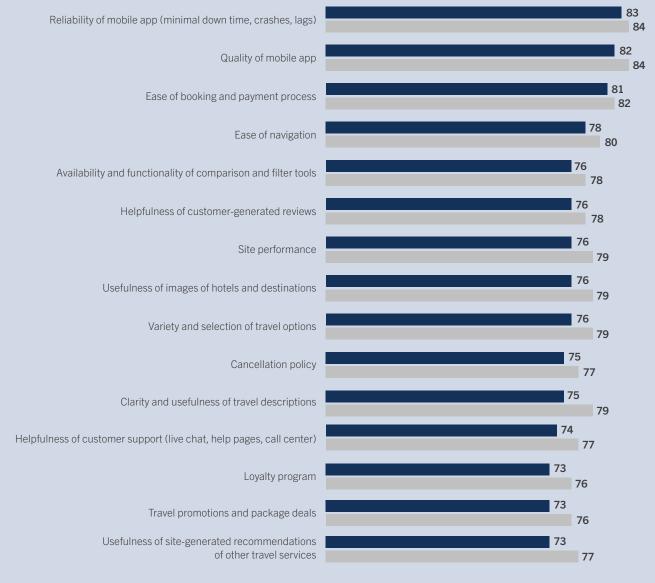
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While there is not a single culprit responsible for the industry's declining scores, ACSI data point to a potentially significant contributing factor. OTAs have increasingly found themselves facing a higher volume of customers taking advantage of direct booking with airlines and hotels as these services have worked hard to improve their website experiences. Customers are also increasingly inclined to book travel and experiences directly from other sources such as social media. In ACSI data, these trends show up as score decreases that are particularly pronounced among younger customers, with those 41 and under dropping 5% on satisfaction compared to a more modest decrease of 3% among older customers (and the oldest showing no change in satisfaction). OTAs looking to return to higher levels of satisfaction will have to evolve their platforms to be more compelling to these more internet-savvy customers, who might otherwise be content to DIY their travel planning.

ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES

Customer Experience Benchmarks Year-Over-Year Industry Trends

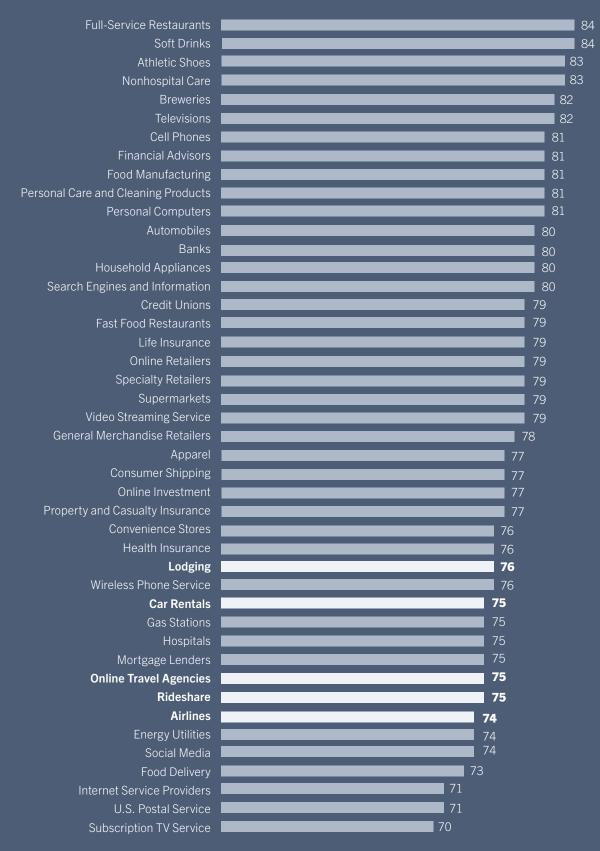
2025 2024



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Customer Satisfaction Benchmarks by Industry

0-100 Scale



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Methodology

The ACSI Travel Study 2025 is based on 16,771 completed surveys. Customers were chosen at random and contacted via email between April 2024 and March 2025. Customers are asked to evaluate their recent experiences with the largest companies in terms of market share, plus an aggregate category consisting of "all other"—and thus smaller—companies.

ACSI survey data are used as inputs to the Index's cause-and-effect econometric model, which estimates customer satisfaction as the result of the survey-measured inputs of customer expectations, perceptions of quality, and perceptions of value. The ACSI model, in turn, links customer satisfaction with the survey-measured outcomes of customer complaints and customer loyalty. ACSI clients receive confidential industry-competitive and best-in-class data on all modeled variables and customer experience benchmarks.

About ACSI

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) is a national economic indicator of customer evaluations of the quality of products and services available to household consumers in the United States. The ACSI uses data from roughly 200,000 responses annually as inputs to an econometric model for analyzing customer satisfaction with approximately 400 companies in about 40 industries and 10 economic sectors, including various services of federal and local government agencies. ACSI results are released throughout the year, with all measures reported on a scale of 0 to 100.

ACSI data have proven to be strongly related to several essential indicators of micro and macroeconomic performance. For example, firms with higher levels of customer satisfaction tend to have higher earnings and stock returns relative to competitors. Stock portfolios based on companies that show strong performance in ACSI deliver excess returns in up markets as well as down markets. At the macro level, customer satisfaction has been shown to be predictive of both consumer spending and GDP growth.

Contact Information

For more information regarding this study, the travel industries, and how the ACSI can help your company harness the power of customer satisfaction to improve your bottom line, visit **www.theacsi.org** or contact:

ACSI LLC | 4750 Venture Drive | Suite 400 | Ann Arbor, MI 48108 Phone: (734) 913-0788 | E-mail: info@theacsi.org

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