



American Customer Satisfaction Index

April 21, 2026



Satisfaction Turns a Corner as New Tech Horizons Emerge for Travel Industries

The past year has likely been the most “normal” that travel industries have seen in quite a while. With post-pandemic “revenge travel” and operational challenges receding, inflation cooling, and sustained consumer demand, companies have had more space to return to a focus on the day-to-day task of providing customers with satisfying travel experiences. New data from the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) shows a turnaround in previously declining customer satisfaction, with modest improvement across the travel segment as airlines, lodging, car rentals, rideshare, and online travel agencies all post gains for 2026.

The results also show that many brands are meeting with initial success in leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) solutions to deliver improved service to customers and in some cases remaking industry business models. At the same time, customer value propositions appear to be in flux as consumers recalibrate their expectations. Continued focus on technological innovations, along with the nuts and bolts of customer service, will be crucial for firms that wish to fully capitalize on these dynamics.

ACSI results are based on surveys conducted over a 12-month period ending in March 2026. ACSI scores are reported on a 0 to 100 scale.

AIRLINES

76 ▲ 3%

LODGING

77 ▲ 1%

CAR RENTALS

76 ▲ 1%

RIDESHARE

76 ▲ 1%

ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES

76 ▲ 1%

Key Takeaways

AIRLINES

- The airline industry mostly reverses the satisfaction decline from the prior year, rising 3% to an ACSI score of 76. Customer-facing technology like in-flight Wi-Fi and enhanced flight information systems show notable gains.
- Delta moves to the top position for satisfaction at 79 as Southwest retreats. American posts substantial ACSI improvement based in part on customer appreciation for its loyalty program, particularly among business travelers.
- Lower-cost carriers meet with mixed results due to a combination of operational and reputational effects.

LODGING

- Guest satisfaction rises a modest 1% to an ACSI score of 77 as the lodging industry settles into a more stable post-pandemic environment, with Airbnb and Hilton tied for the lead at 79.
- Satisfaction is rising faster among customers traveling for business, whose overall ACSI score is up 3% from the prior year.
- Lodging results vary by brand and type, with indications that customer perceptions of the value propositions of various lodging types may be in flux as operating models continue to evolve.

CAR RENTALS

- Despite ongoing challenges with fleet management and high staff turnover, the car rental industry posts a small satisfaction gain of 1% to an ACSI score of 76, with Alamo and Avis tied as the top-rated brands at 79.
- Higher customer ratings across nearly all aspects of the rental experience suggest brands could enjoy further improvement in the coming year if they continue to execute well.
- As customer complaint levels remain high relative to historical baselines, particularly among business customers, complaint handling has not improved significantly, leaving a potentially valuable touchpoint underleveraged.

RIDESHARE

- Lyft and Uber move into a tie for customer satisfaction with ACSI scores of 76, losing and gaining 1 point from the prior year, respectively. Likewise, the industry's overall satisfaction ticks up 1% to 76.
- Uber improves among female riders as it addresses prior negative press around safety issues; Lyft demonstrates initial success with AI-enabled customer service recovery.
- Ratings of value lag other areas of the customer experience at a time when Uber and Lyft focus on profitability, a potential weak point as fuel costs rise.

ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES

- Customer satisfaction with online travel agencies increases 1% to an ACSI score of 76, led by gains for Tripadvisor and Orbitz. Tripadvisor's improvement puts it into a tie with Booking.com for the lead among reported sites at 77.
- Industry results reflect successes in a shift of the business model to providing AI-enabled services like customized packages and experiences, and in brands' deployment of value-adding loyalty programs.
- Satisfaction rises among those under 42, suggesting the industry is having more success winning over these previously unenthusiastic younger customers.

Study Findings

Customer satisfaction plays a pivotal role in shaping both the financial performance of individual companies and the overall strength of the U.S. economy. New findings from the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI®) offer benchmark insights 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

Despite unclear early indications, 2025 unfolded as a relatively solid, if unremarkable, year for the airline industry from a business perspective. From a customer experience viewpoint, the industry makes notable gains as customer satisfaction increases 3% to an ACSI score of 76 for 2026, just 1 point shy of its all-time high of 77 from 2024. This overall improvement flows from across-the-board score increases in all aspects of the flying experience, with especially large jumps in ratings for technology-enabled offerings like in-flight internet access (up 20% year over year) and the usefulness of flight information provided by the airlines (up 15%). While airlines have been improving their technology game to optimize back-of-the-house operations and yield management for some time, this marks a significant milestone in their deployment of tech in direct provision of enhanced customer experiences.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX

AIRLINES

0-100 Scale

COMPANY	2025 ACSI	2026 ACSI	% CHANGE
Airlines	74	76	3%
Delta	77	79	3%
American	73	78	7%
JetBlue	77	78	1%
Southwest	80	77	-4%
Alaska	76	75	-1%
All Others	70	75	7%
United	73	75	3%
Frontier	65	69	6%
Spirit	69	66	-4%

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Delta emerges as the highest-satisfaction airline industrywide, rising 3% to 79. At 78, American trails by just a point after a breakthrough improvement of 7% that almost completely reverses its steep score drop in the prior year. In addition to participating in the industrywide technology improvements noted previously, American makes significant strides in the customer rating of its AAdvantage loyalty program, which is up substantially in 2026. While changes to the program by American in early 2025 were met with an initial lack of enthusiasm, especially among frequent flyers in the business community, clearly these customers have come to appreciate the program's perceived simplicity, generosity, and utility relative to its mainline competitors.

The 2025 industry leader, Southwest, falls 4% to land in the middle of the pack at 77. Southwest's scores across the customer experience show a mixture of small increases and decreases, with a large improvement for in-flight internet access like many of its competitors. However, the results indicate some slippage in customers' assessments of Southwest's service, with ratings for flight crew courtesy, gate staff courtesy, and call centers all inching back in 2026. These perceptions may be compounded by the reputational hits Southwest took with its announcements to move to assigned seating and to require larger passengers to purchase more than one seat, leaving some customers feeling less of the 'LUV' than before.

Scores in the ultra-low-cost segment show a divergence in the experiences of the two largest carriers, with Frontier's satisfaction rising 6%, to 69, while Spirit drops 4% to 66—the lowest reported score for 2026.

Consistent with its recent focus on solid operations and incremental improvements to the in-flight experience, Frontier enjoys large increases in ratings for customers' ease of planning their trip including flight schedules, reservations, and flight information. Additionally, the airline receives better ratings for its in-flight services.

Spirit’s satisfaction declines come despite efforts to enhance the in-flight experience with new seating options and other amenities, as well as its improved ratings across many aspects of the customer experience, including a particularly robust bump in flyers’ views of its staff. These successes are countered by decreasing scores for two key customer touchpoints as ratings of mobile app quality and call center satisfaction decline sharply. These headwinds, together with Spirit’s ongoing reputational challenges like being the target of jokes by late-night hosts and prominent press coverage of its two brushes with bankruptcy, likely account for Spirit’s satisfaction decline. Nevertheless, the airline’s improvements elsewhere suggest the potential for a rebound, presuming its operational and financial issues can be successfully managed.

Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

Airlines show notable progress in dealing with customer complaints in 2026, especially among those traveling for business. Business respondents report much lower rates for lodging a complaint this year compared to a 1 percentage-point drop for leisure passengers. For both segments, however, passengers who complained are significantly more satisfied overall than in 2025.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX AIRLINE PASSENGERS Complaints and ACSI

0-100 Scale

	2025		2026	
	Percentage of passengers who complained	ACSI score of passengers who complained	Percentage of passengers who complained	ACSI score of passengers who complained
Business	38%	73	33%	77
Leisure	17%	64	16%	72

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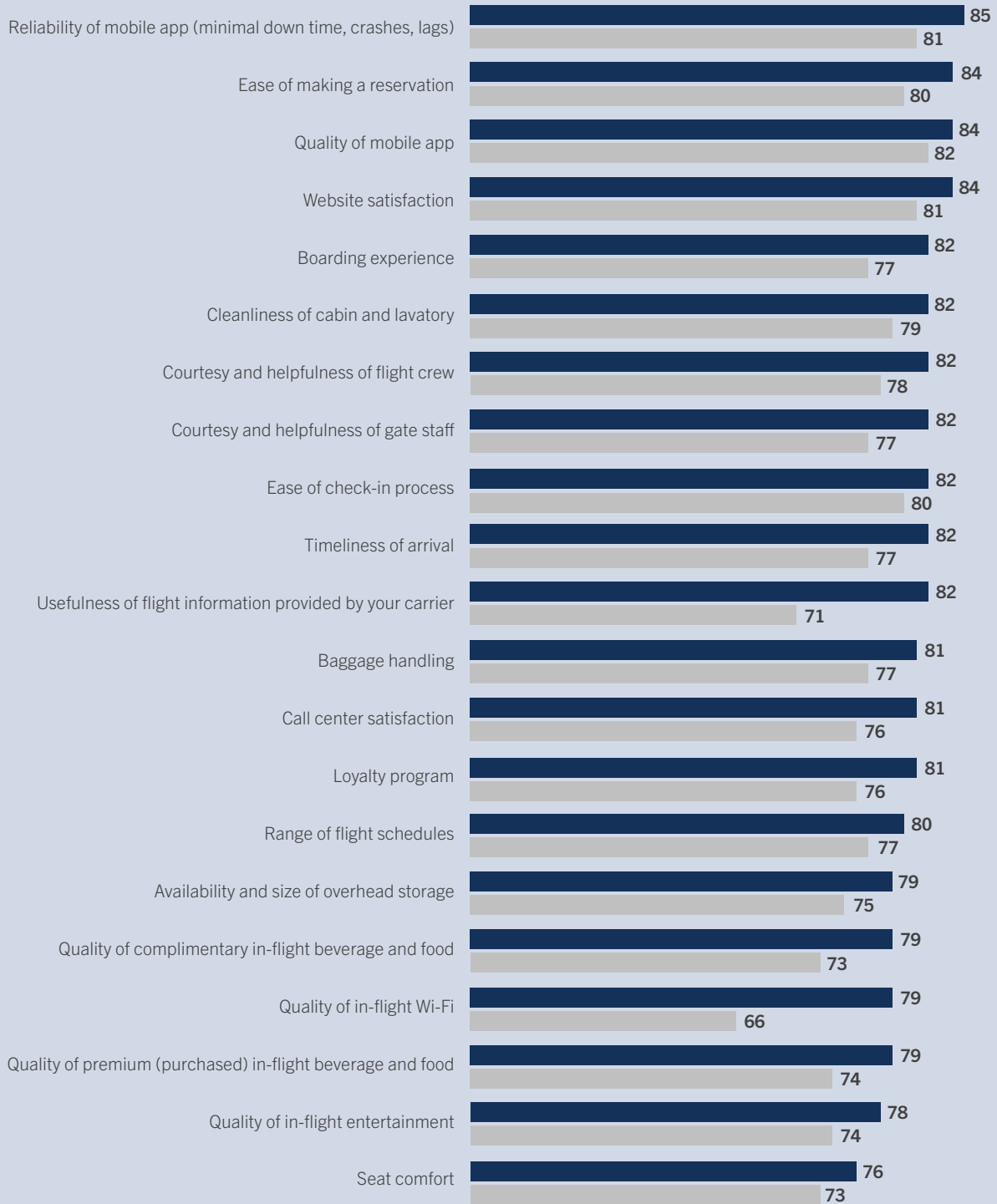
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AIRLINES

Customer Experience Benchmarks Year-Over-Year Industry Trends

0-100 Scale

■ 2026 ■ 2025



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LODGING

After a period of significant upheaval, the lodging industry over the past year appears to have settled into something of a new normal, as post-pandemic staffing issues have eased, disruptive technologies like app-based check-in and room keys have become more widespread, and operational models have evolved to meet the challenge posed by homeshare and rental apps like Airbnb and Vrbo. As these stresses lessen, customer satisfaction with lodging overall increases modestly, rising 1% to an ACSI score of 77 and reversing the decline posted the prior year.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX

LODGING

0-100 Scale

COMPANY	2025 ACSI	2026 ACSI	% CHANGE
Lodging	76	77	1%
Airbnb	78	79	1%
Hilton	80	79	-1%
Marriott	78	78	0%
Hyatt	76	77	1%
IHG	79	76	-4%
BWH Hotels	75	75	0%
All Others	72	75	4%
Choice	72	72	0%
Wyndham	71	70	-1%

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Results vary across individual operating companies, brands, and hotel types. Airbnb and Hilton jostle to maintain the top spot in this year's ratings at 79, with Marriott following closely at 78. Meanwhile, IHG posts a 4% satisfaction decline following drops for both its Holiday Inn (-6%) and Holiday Inn Express (-4%) brands. Holiday Inn's satisfaction decrease may reflect stresses more broadly in the upper-midscale segment of the lodging market, as Hilton's Hampton brand also slides 6% this year. However, Holiday Inn does show large drops in ratings of its food services and call centers.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX
LODGING BRANDS

0-100 Scale

LODGING BRAND	PARENT	TYPE*	2026 ACSI
Hilton Hotels & Resorts	Hilton	Upper Upscale	82
Hilton Garden Inn	Hilton	Upscale	81
Marriott Hotels	Marriott	Upper Upscale	80
Airbnb	Airbnb	Homeshare	79
Holiday Inn Express	IHG	Upper Midscale	78
Best Western Plus	BWH Hotels	Upper Midscale	77
AC Hotels	Marriott	Upscale	76
Hampton	Hilton	Upper Midscale	75
Best Western	BWH Hotels	Midscale	74
Comfort	Choice	Upper Midscale	74
Holiday Inn	IHG	Upper Midscale	74
Days Inn	Wyndham	Economy	68
Baymont	Wyndham	Midscale	66

*Lodging type per industry standards.

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ACSI by Lodging Type

0-100 Scale

TYPE*	2025 ACSI	2026 ACSI	% CHANGE
Upper Upscale	81	80	-1%
Homeshare	79	79	0%
Upscale	76	78	3%
Luxury	74	77	4%
Upper Midscale	78	75	-4%
Midscale	69	72	4%
Economy	68	66	-3%

*Lodging type per industry standards.

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Customer Satisfaction by Lodging Type

Upper-midscale brands overall drop 4% for guest satisfaction, in contrast to a 4% increase among midscale brands. Satisfaction changes for both segments reflect similar changes in ratings across the drivers of the customer experience, potentially suggesting a broader shift in customer preferences and expectations for these lodging types in addition to specific changes in the brands' performance.

The data across other lodging types also points to a larger shift in customers' value perceptions, with luxury brands rising 4% on satisfaction as economy brands retreat 3%, with no standout change among satisfaction drivers to definitively account for these shifts. While the major customer satisfaction challenges of recent years may be easing for the industry overall, brands clearly remain in a contest to successfully recalibrate their strategies for this still-evolving landscape.

Industrywide, the welcome shift in customer satisfaction for lodging is driven by gains across the customer experience, most notably in the areas of room cleanliness and comfort, in-room amenities, check-in/out, reservations, and mobile apps. Score improvements are largest among business customers, whose satisfaction rises 3% year over year.

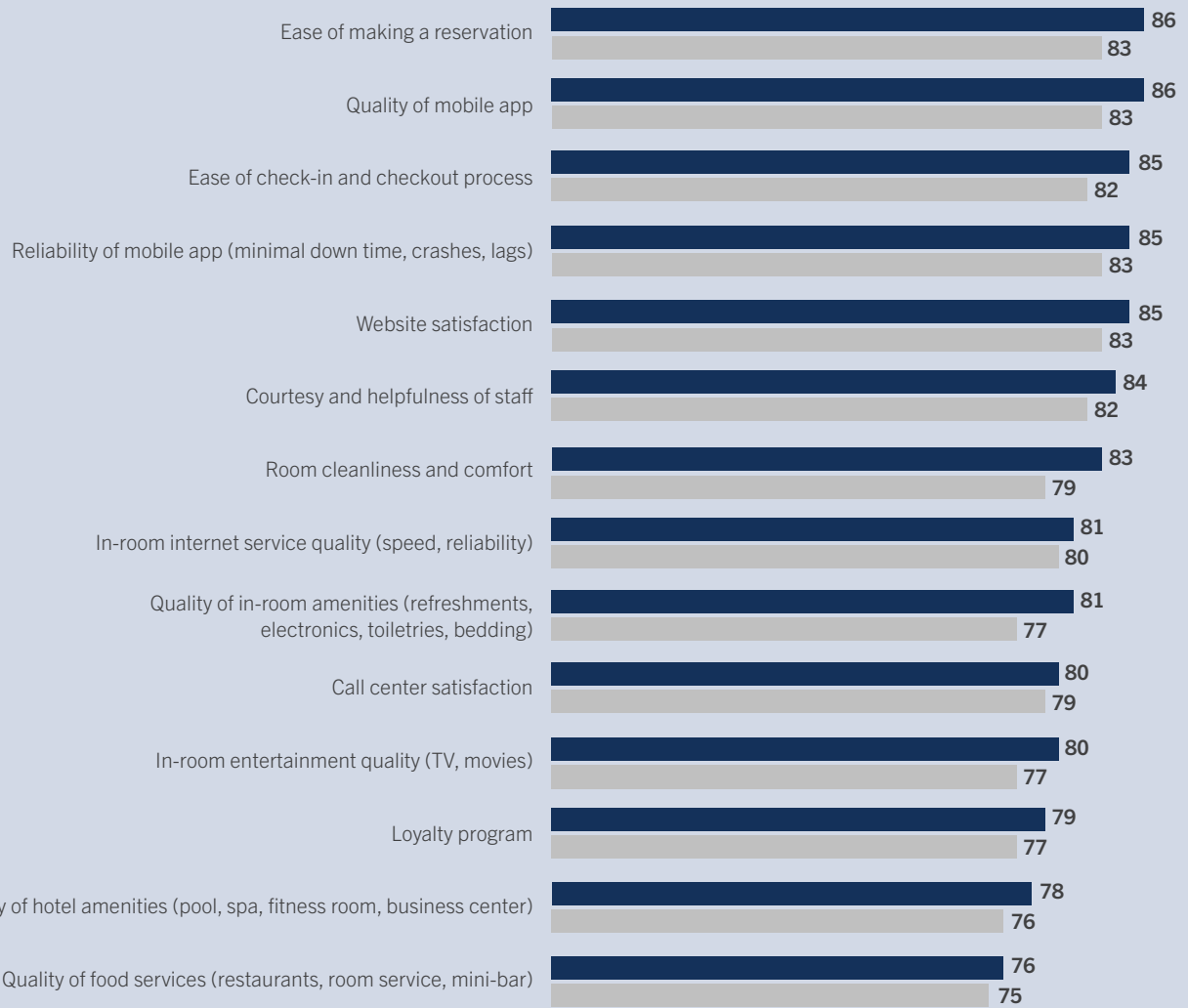
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LODGING

Customer Experience Benchmarks Year-Over-Year Industry Trends

0-100 Scale

2026 2025



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Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

In 2025, the rate of respondent-reported complaints for the lodging industry rose, including a 5 percentage-point increase among business guests compared to 2024. This year complaints level off, up just 1 percentage point for both business and leisure customers. In contrast to prior results, satisfaction scores among those reporting complaints drop notably, especially among business customers. This leaves brands with two tasks: lowering the number of occasions for complaints and deploying more effective service recovery strategies.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX

LODGING GUESTS Complaints and ACSI

0-100 Scale

	2025		2026	
	Percentage of guests who complained	ACSI score of guests who complained	Percentage of guests who complained	ACSI score of guests who complained
Business	36%	77	37%	72
Leisure	14%	64	15%	62

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CAR RENTALS

The post-pandemic years have presented significant challenges for the car rental industry. Higher interest rates, recall headaches, and complicated decisions about how far to pursue a transition to electric vehicles have made fleet management a struggle. Likewise, high staff turnover in the industry has threatened to undermine operations and customer service. In the past year, however, the market has settled a bit into a new normal, appearing to be leveling out from a customer experience perspective. Overall, customer satisfaction with the car rental industry improves 1% to an ACSI score of 76 in 2026 following a 3% decline one year ago.

More progress may be in store for the coming year as well, as nearly all aspects of the customer experience improve this year. However, customer complaints in the industry continue to run higher than historical averages, representing a potentially persistent risk to continued satisfaction improvement unless well managed. At present, complaint handling for the car rental industry has not improved significantly.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX

CAR RENTALS

0-100 Scale

BRAND	2025 ACSI	2026 ACSI	% CHANGE
Car Rentals	75	76	1%
Alamo (Enterprise)	NA	79	NA
Avis (Avis Budget)	74	79	7%
Hertz	76	77	1%
Enterprise	78	76	-3%
National (Enterprise)	71	76	7%
All Others	NA	74	NA
Budget (Avis Budget)	77	73	-5%
Dollar (Hertz)	73	71	-3%

NA = Not Available.

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Results vary somewhat both across the industry and among brands within each of the three major car rental parent companies, with some satisfaction improvements emerging among the marquee brands while economy brands struggle.

The largest improvements are for Avis and National, each rising 7% year over year to scores of 79 and 76, respectively. Avis makes good on its longstanding promise to “try harder” with initiatives like its “Avis First” curbside pick-up program and the brand shows strong improvement across the customer experience, including a substantial increase for its Avis Preferred loyalty program. National rebounds sharply from its steep 15% satisfaction decline in 2025, showing a large decrease in customer complaints along with noteworthy gains for ratings of interactions with its pick-up and drop-off staff and call centers. These improvements leave National tied with its flagship sister brand Enterprise, as the latter posts a 3% decline stemming from relatively stagnant ratings across the customer experience.

Enterprise meets with much greater success in the economy space with its Alamo brand, which ties Avis for the top overall industry score (79) and clearly differentiates its performance in the economy segment.

The other economy brands, Budget and Dollar, both post satisfaction declines against the backdrop of apparent struggles with customer complaints. While generally receiving solid scores across various aspects of the car rental process, Budget’s customers report lodging a higher percentage of complaints this year and are much less happy with the company’s complaint handling. Budget also receives lower ratings this year for its website and call centers, touchpoints closely associated with the service recovery process. Dollar continues to struggle with the highest complaint rate among all reported brands by a wide margin. Given the brand’s lack of standout performance for either the customer service or technical aspects of car rental, Dollar may remain an industry laggard for the foreseeable future.

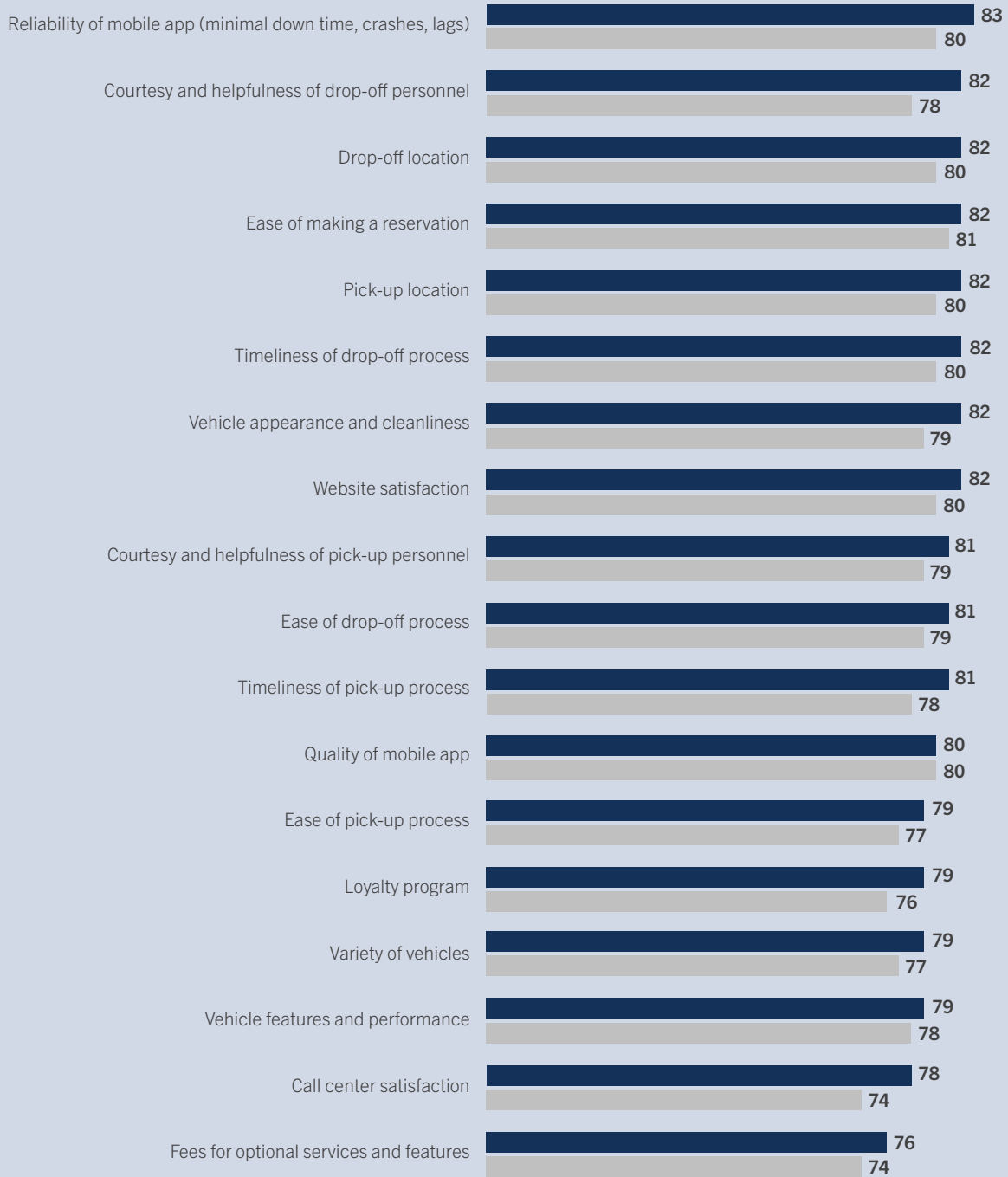
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CAR RENTALS

Customer Experience Benchmarks Year-Over-Year Industry Trends

0-100 Scale

2026 2025



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Complaints and Customer Satisfaction

This year, customer complaint rates for the car rental industry remain elevated, continuing to run roughly one-third higher than they had prior to 2024. While high volumes may be a continuing drag on overall satisfaction, complaints are a key opportunity to 'get it right' with customers for brands that have a disciplined focus on managing the resolution process.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX

CAR RENTAL CUSTOMERS Complaints and ACSI

0-100 Scale

	2025		2026	
	Percentage of customers who complained	ACSI score of customers who complained	Percentage of customers who complained	ACSI score of customers who complained
Business	50%	72	50%	73
Leisure	25%	69	24%	66

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RIDESHARE

The third year of ACSI measurement of rideshare services shows a modest improvement in customer satisfaction for the industry overall, rising 1% to an ACSI score of 76. Prior leader Lyft backtracks 1% on satisfaction from the previous year, falling from 77 to 76, while Uber closes its modest gap to Lyft with a 1% improvement from 75 to 76. The deadlocked brands also enjoy modest improvements across the customer experience, both in general and in ways related to specific customer-centric initiatives each have launched within the past year.

AMERICAN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INDEX

RIDESHARE

0-100 Scale

COMPANY	2025 ACSI	2026 ACSI	% CHANGE
Rideshare	75	76	1%
Lyft	77	76	-1%
Uber	75	76	1%
All Others	71	69	-3%

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Uber shores up its ratings of the ride experience among its female users, reducing the satisfaction gap to Lyft this year. Female riders' ratings of driver courtesy, vehicle cleanliness, and safety perceptions all improve in 2026. Initiatives like Uber's July 2025 introduction and accelerating rollout of its Women Preferences program allowing female users to request female drivers should serve Uber well in reinforcing a positive shift toward making women increasingly comfortable with the brand after prior public relations challenges.

Lyft shows notable improvement in complaint handling this year following its deployment of Anthropic's Claude AI in its app to more quickly address customer issues. Lyft reports an 87% reduction in customer service support times with the use of its new AI agents, with quick solutions to common issues and hand-offs to live support as needed. Lyft's sharp improvement in complaint handling suggests the company is having significant initial success leveraging this emerging technology on behalf of customers.

While welcome, these well-focused customer experience initiatives so far do not seem to be driving substantial improvements in rider satisfaction and loyalty. The reason likely lies with riders' assessments of the value offered by both brands, which while slightly improved continues to lag assessments of their ride and technology experiences by wide margins. Both brands also show similarly modest ratings for their loyalty rewards programs, another component of their overall value proposition. In an environment of potentially sustained higher fuel costs, along with customer and driver sensitivity to inflationary pressures, value perceptions may be putting the brakes on higher satisfaction for Uber and Lyft. This may prove to be challenging as both brands continue to focus on profitability.

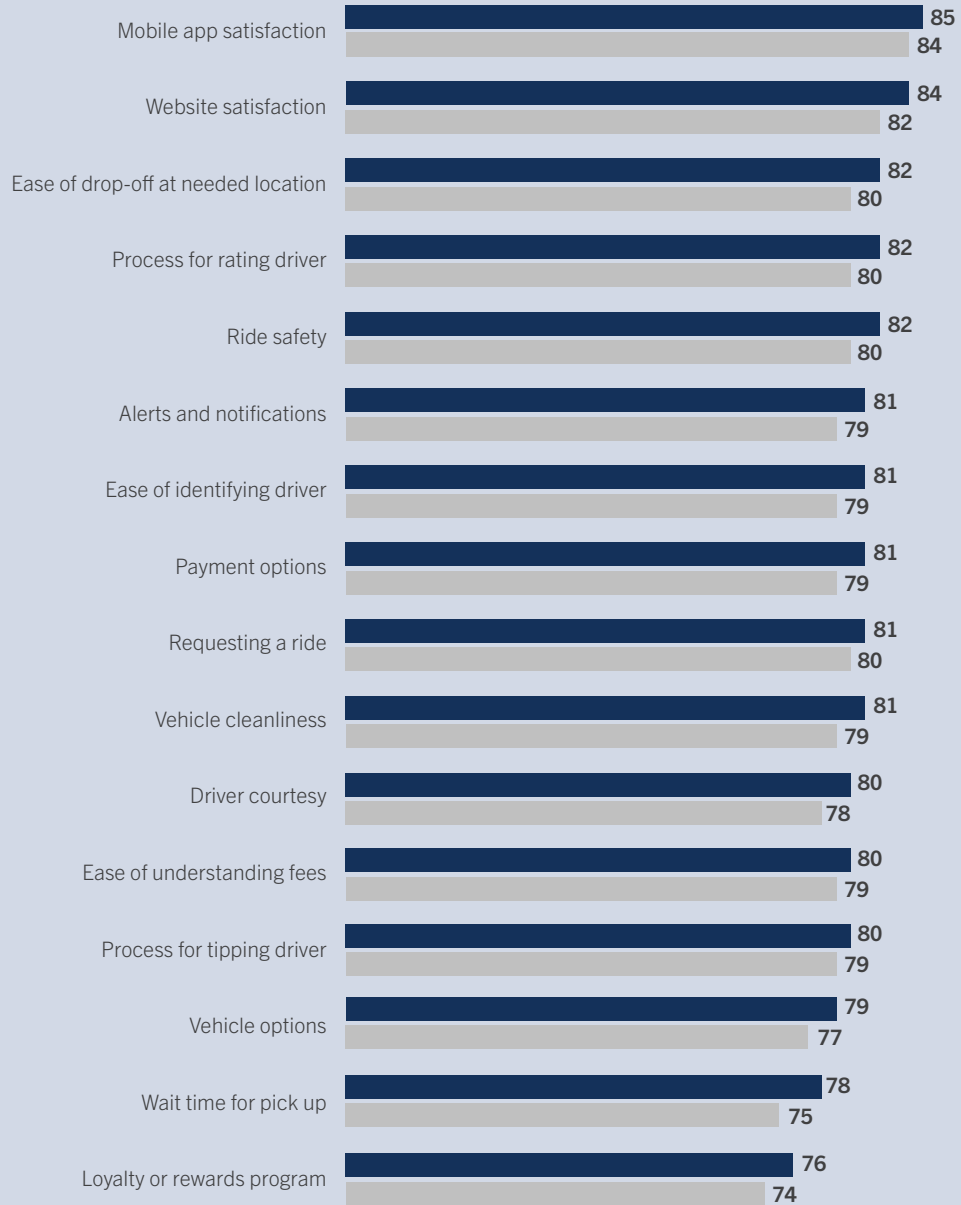
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RIDESHARE

Customer Experience Benchmarks Year-Over-Year Industry Trends

0-100 Scale

2026 2025



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ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES

As with other travel industries, online travel agencies show modest improvement in 2026, rising 1% to an ACSI score of 76. Beneath this welcome, if small, overall improvement is a mix of results across individual brands. In the lead among reported brands, Tripadvisor rises 4% to tie Booking.com at 77. Orbitz partially reverses a 10% decline from a year ago by posting a 3% satisfaction improvement, although it remains at the bottom of the rankings at 68. On the negative side of the ledger, Priceline slides 4% on satisfaction to 71 with a notable jump in customer complaints as reported by respondents, while Expedia falls 3% to 75.

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ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES

0-100 Scale

BRAND	2025 ACSI	2026 ACSI	% CHANGE
Online Travel Agencies	75	76	1%
Booking.com (Booking Holdings)	78	77	-1%
Tripadvisor	74	77	4%
All Others	76	77	1%
Trivago (Expedia)	76	76	0%
Expedia	77	75	-3%
Travelocity (Expedia)	73	72	-1%
Priceline (Booking Holdings)	74	71	-4%
Kayak (Booking Holdings)	69	69	0%
Orbitz (Expedia)	66	68	3%

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Online travel agencies meeting with success in driving customer satisfaction improvements appear to be fully leveraging key industry trends, most notably AI-enabled recommendations and travel packaging, and robust, usable loyalty programs. As customer ratings of the basic functionality of travel sites (such as navigation and ease of booking) generally have improved, online travel agencies increasingly are deploying AI to enhance site content and offer an experience that more closely resembles that of interacting with a real-world travel agent. This includes emphasizing custom packages and experiences and reaching beyond serving as merely a tool for booking flights and rooms. AI also appears to be helping drive significant improvements in complaint handling, which posts a large jump in 2026.

ACSI data suggests that with these new approaches, online travel agencies may be turning a corner among younger customers, with whom they had been losing ground in prior waves of the study. While satisfaction among those in their 40s and older remains higher, these respondents show little change in overall satisfaction or loyalty in this year's findings. Younger users under 42, however, post gains in satisfaction and loyalty, and even larger gains in areas of the customer experience most closely related to the industry's evolving business model such as the usefulness of the sites' content and help in generating compelling travel recommendations. These findings give a glimpse of a better long-term future for the industry than might have been expected even a few short years ago.

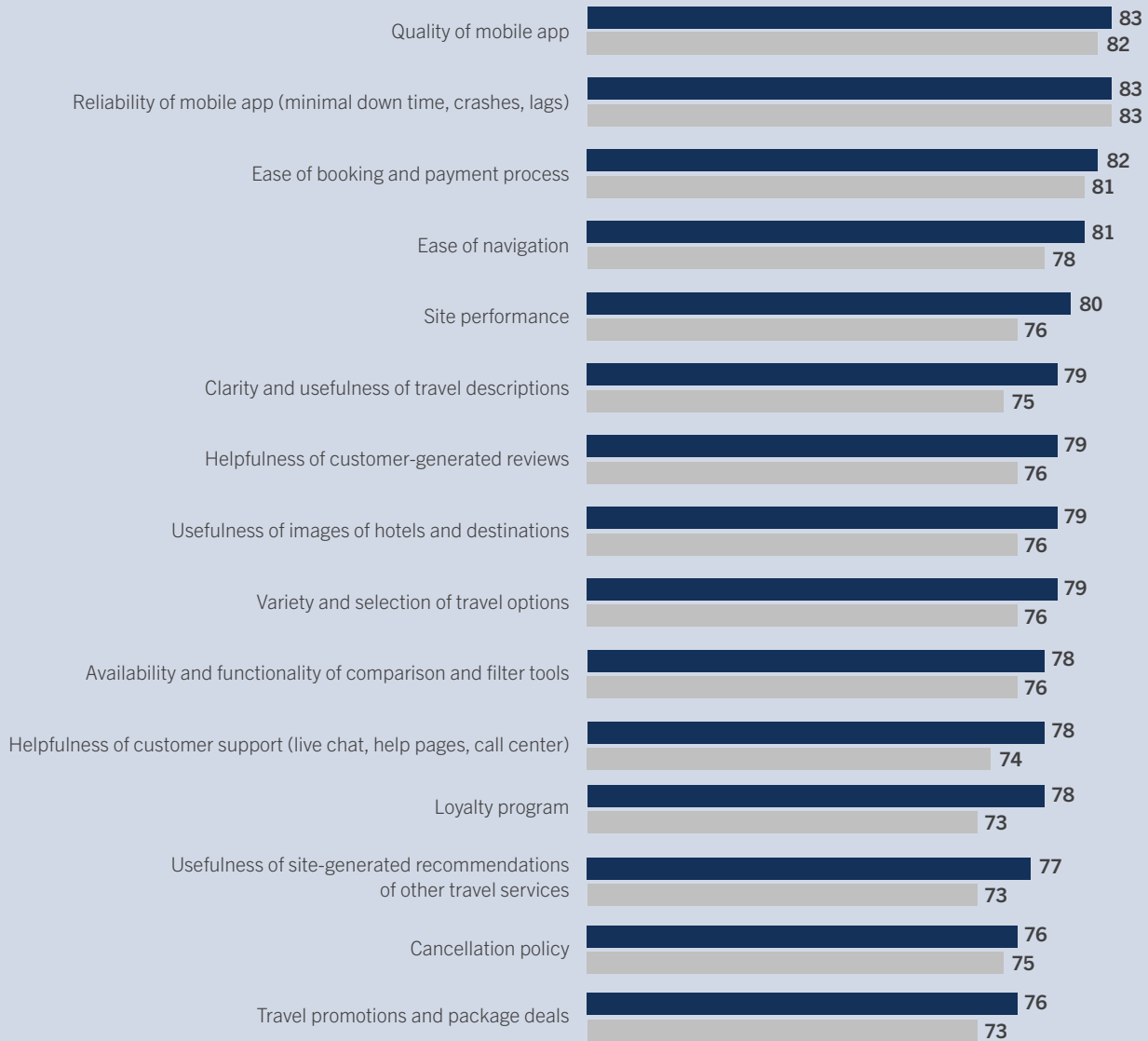
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ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES

Customer Experience Benchmarks Year-Over-Year Industry Trends

0-100 Scale

2026 2025



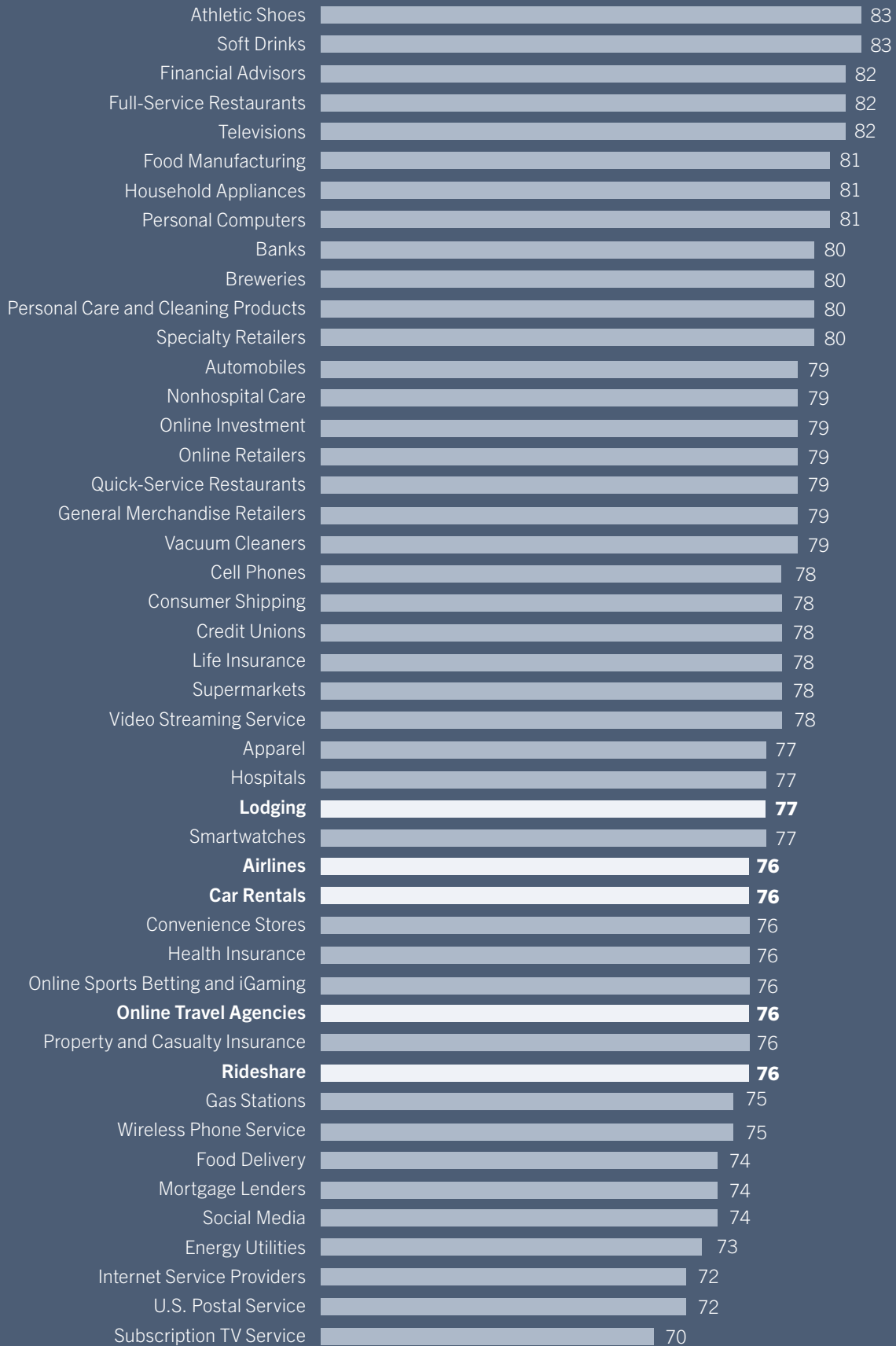
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Customer Satisfaction Benchmarks by Industry

0-100 Scale



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Methodology

The *ACSI Travel Study 2026* is based on 14,910 completed surveys. Customers were chosen at random and contacted via email between April 2025 and March 2026. 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 and a leading provider of customer analytics products that help organizations build lasting customer relationships and prove ROI on experience investments. ACSI’s AI-enhanced platform delivers intuitive dashboards and cause-and-effect analytics that pinpoint the quality drivers most predictive of customer allegiance, retention, price tolerance, and financial performance. ACSI data has been shown to correlate strongly with key micro and macroeconomic indicators, including consumer spending, GDP growth, earnings, and stock returns.

Founded in 1994 at the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business, the ACSI measures customer satisfaction with more than 400 companies in over 40 industries, including federal government services, based on approximately 200,000 annual interviews.

Contact Information

For more information regarding this study, 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:

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