Accom.ai Research Project

A personalised accommodation booking platform that refine users searches to find the perfect accommodation

Kuong Iy Seng | Research project

Consider	Research	Booking	Preperation	Stay
What is happening?	What is happening?	What is happening?	What is happening?	What is happening?
"Excited"	"Lots of back and forth" "Nervous, because there were a lot of connecting flights"	"Very simple. It just works"	"Super excited"	"Exceeded expectations" "Misrepresented, un-safe and lack of privacy"

Feelings

Activities

Goals:
• Decide on a location.
Tools:
• Travel agent - visit a travel agent and map out the route.
• Aggregators - Compare plane tickets
• Airbnb, Booking.com - Compare ac

Pain points

• Deciding the best dates
• Deciding on the best location
• Deciding on different routes
• Balancing preferences with budget
• Leave not approved

Needs and wants

• A more efficient way to decide when

Features and offerings	Accom.ai	Airbnb	Booking.com	Expedia
Bed and breakfast	✅	✅	Hotels	Hotels
Advanced research tools	✅	-	-	-
Detailed filtering e:				
Visual planning and b				
Web platfor				
Mobile app				
Loyalty prog				
Host messag				
Booking insur				
Standard support (Live				

Company name	Product	Marketing	Support	Opportunities	Score
Name of the organisation	What do they have to offer?	How are they generating awareness?	How are they helping customers?	What can we learn from them?	

Airbnb

👥 52k employees
📅 Founded in 2008
💰 $6.4B raised
🏢 HotelTonight, LuxuryRetreats
📈 NASDAQ: ABNB

Primary products:
• Accommodation (Non-hotels)

Unique selling proposition:
• Map visualisation, Great photography, Very unique accoms, Great brand and visual appeal, Simple and well thought through UX

Secondary products:
• AirCover, Reviews, AirCover for hosts, Host resources to empower them

Platform:
• Web,
Internat
• Yes
Key ta
• Since
their
listing
provi

Overall brand:
• Well designed and thought through.
• Consistent throughout.
• Focuses on the 'people'.

Channels:
• Instagram
• Twitter (Dedicated regions)
• Facebook
• YouTube

Channels:
• Help Centre
• Chat support for members
• Facebook DMs
• Phoneline

Key takeaway:
• Social media directs people to DMs.
• The pandemic caused havoc for Airbnb.
• Main complaints are around Airbnb not offering

Product:
• Great photography helps tell better stories and increases conversion rates.
• AirCover helps build confidence.
• Niche > Scale
• Fun classifications of areas
• Improve on their current map experience.

Marketing:
• Focus on the people.

Booking.com

👥 20k employees
📅 Founded in 1996
💰 Raised €500K
🏢 Kayak, Priceline.com, Agoda
📈 NASDAQ: BKNG

Primary p
• Acco
renta

Unique se
• Acco
match

Secondar
• Com
insigh

Platform:
• Web,
Internat
• Yes
Key ta
• Booki
most
fairly
'work

Agenda

1 Research strategy

2 Key takeaways

3 Further research and recommendations

4 Open discussion and next steps

Research objectives

Context

The purpose behind the research initiative was to help us gain a deeper understanding of the accomodation booking experience for travelling couples to be better informed on the validity of our product assumption.

1. The current process for researching and booking accomodation for couples.

2. The biggest struggles and frustrations for couples when they are travelling.

3. The unique preferences of what travellers look for in accomodation.

4. The non-negotiables when it comes to booking accomodation

5. What motivates a traveller (couples) to book on one platform over another.

Research strategy

1. Interview 5 participants

2. Run a competitor and feature analysis

3. Synthesize our findings to form a strategy

Selection criterias

Seeking...

Travelling couples who have booked a holiday recently.

- Lives in Australia.
- Travel more than 3x a year.
- Booked in the last 4 years (extended the timeframe due to the pandemic).
- Was the key person in decision making and booking.
- Able to screen-share their booking process.

Hypothesis

1 Product assumption

Travelling couples want a better booking experience, where they can [really] refine their searches to find the perfect accomodation.

2 Hypothesis

Travellers have unique and different expectations and preferences for booking accomodation.

3 Conclusion — TBD
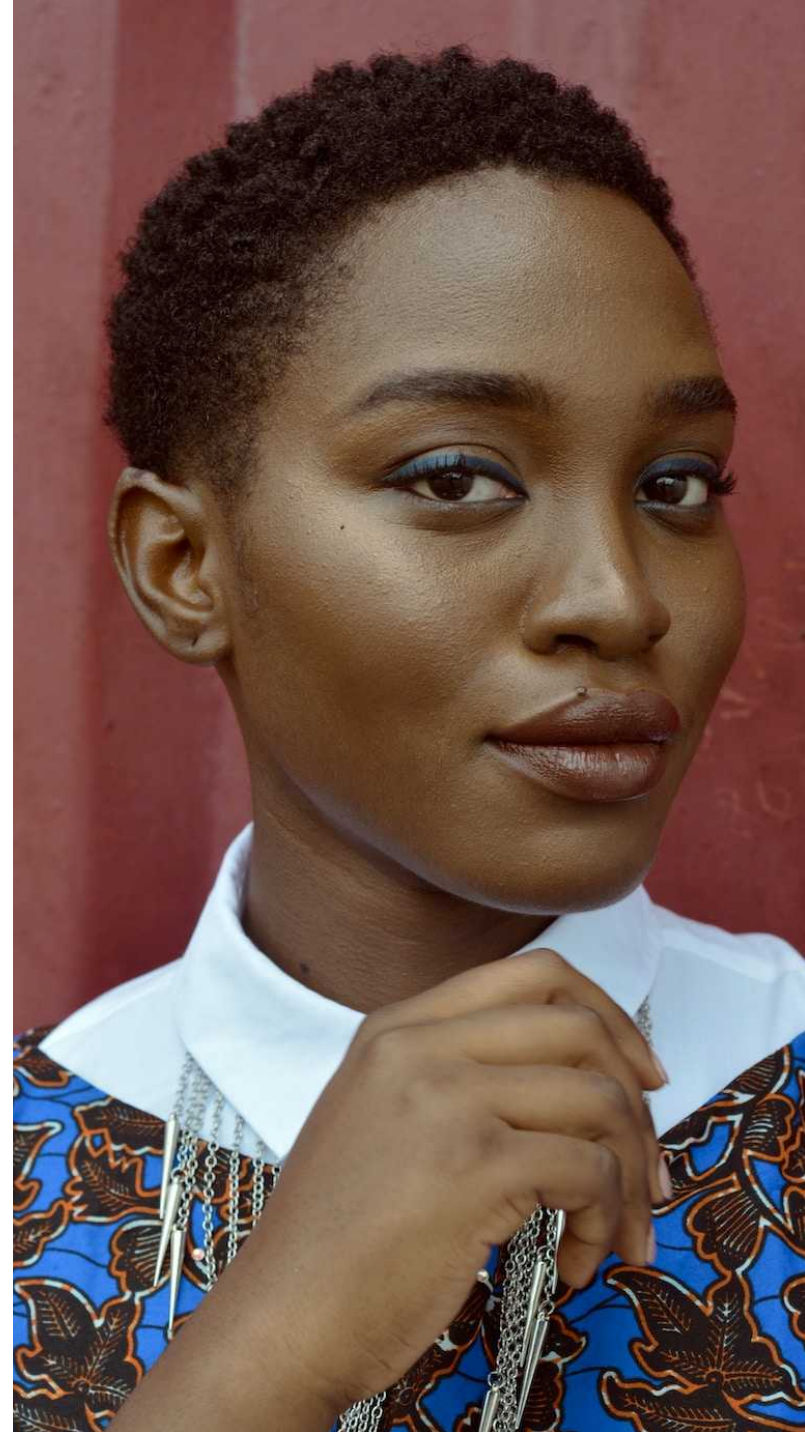
Personas

Key takeaways

Personas

Just Married
Justin and Jasmine

Long-term relationship / Married with no kids.

Age:	25-35
Employment:	Full-time
Marital Status:	Long-term relationship / Married (with no kids)
Values:	Long-term relationship / Married (with no kids)
Challenges:	• Planning and booking a holiday that meets their budget
Needs and wants:	• Culturally rich: Best value for experiences • Leisure: Convenient to activities • Romantic: Aesthetically pleasing accomodation, something special
Tools:	Booking.com, Airbnb, Tripadvisor

Young Family
Yaniv and Yvonne

Long-term relationship / Married with kids

Age:	36-50
Employment:	Full-time
Marital Status:	Married with kids
Values:	Married with kids
Challenges:	• Planning and booking a holiday that meets their budget • Balancing decisions with kids activities (the priority) • Finding the best deals
Needs and wants:	• Best deal / value for money (Price sensitive) • Quick and simple process • Extra room(s)/bed for kids • Activities suitable for kids (the priority)
Tools:	Booking.com, Airbnb, Tripadvisor, Deals websites

Customer journey

Key takeaways

Consider	Research	Booking	Preperation	Stay
Considering a holiday or getaway	Researching activities and accom	Comparing accom and booking	Further research and the wait	Arrival at the accomodation

Consider

Considering a holiday or getaway.

Feelings	Excited.
Goal (and activities):	Deciding on where to go.
Pain points:	• Making a final decision on dates, destinations, routes etc. • Getting leave approval.
Needs and wants	A better way to be informed of travel options and opportunities.

Consider

What is happening?

😄
"Excited"

Goals:
• Decide on a location.

Tools:
• Travel agent - visit a travel agent to help find and map out the route.
• Aggregators - Compare plane ticket $.
• Airbnb, Booking.com - Compare accom $.

• Deciding the best dates
• Deciding on the best location
• Deciding on different routes
• Balancing preferences with budget
• Leave not approved

• A more efficient way to decide where to go.

Research

Researching activities and accom.

Feelings	Excited but chaotic
Goal (and activities):	Research, book and build an itinerary for the trip.
Tools:	Google, Google Maps, Google Sheets, Google Docs, Tripadvisor, Airbnb, Booking.com, YouTube, LonelyPlanet and niche websites.
Pain points:	• Too many different sources. • Filtering through un-reliable and un-authentic sources. • Lack of visualisation in planning. • Co-ordinating with other people.
Needs and wants	A simpler and more visual researching process.

	Consider	Research			
	What is happening?	What is happening?			
Feelings	😄 "Excited"	"Lots of back and forth" "Nervous, because there were a lot of connecting flights" 🙁			
Activities	**Goals:** • Decide on a location. **Tools:** • Travel agent - visit a travel agent to help find and map out the route. • Aggregators - Compare plane ticket $. • Airbnb, Booking.com - Compare accom $.	**Goals:** • Research, find and compare activities and the best accomodation. **Tools:** • Google, Google Maps, Google Sheets, Tripadvisor, Airbnb, Booking.com, YouTube, LonelyPlanet and niche websites.			
Pain points	• Deciding the best dates • Deciding on the best location • Deciding on different routes • Balancing preferences with budget • Leave not approved	• No standardised way to manage and perform research. • Had to rely on too many different sources. • Having to filter through sponsored endorsements. • Don't feel confident about decisions (choice paralysis, lack of authentic feedback). • Unable to visualise the plan. • A lot of work to find things to do in cities. • Faced with low inventory. • "Sending links back and forth" • "Some websites were only in Japanese" • Finalising activities, routes etc with others.			

Needs and wants	• A more efficient way to decide where to go.	• A more visual process for planning and managing the research.
		• "Itinerary generator"
		• More authentic reviews/information/guides.
		• Reduce number of different sources.
		• Find relevant information quicker.
		• Finding very unique accom and activities on cultural trips.
		• Finding teenager/children activities if it's a family trip.
		• **Researching accomodation:**
		  • Clear breakdown of non-negotiatbles.
		  • Clear and accurately represented photos of the accomodation.
		  • Flexibility on cancellations and edits.
		  • Prompt host response times.
		  • English speaking staff, if it's a non-english speaking country			

Booking

Comparing accom and booking.

Feelings	Accomplished
Goal (and activities):	Book the best accomodation that meets their intent of the holiday.
Tools:	Airbnb, Booking.com, Qantas, Expedia, Stayz, Luxury Escapes, Google, Tripadvisor
Pain points:	• Unclear when payment is deducted. • Slow host response rates, which causes travellers to not feel confident on whether they booked or not. • Sometimes there were doubts. • Lack of inventory.
Needs and wants	A reliable experience with the best value for money (Discounts, loyalty program and relevant accoms for specific trips).

	Consider	Research	Booking		
	What is happening?	What is happening?	What is happening?		
Feelings	😆 "Excited"	"Lots of back and forth" "Nervous, because there were a lot of connecting flights" 😕	🙂 "Very simple. It just works"		
Activities	**Goals:** • Decide on a location. **Tools:** • Travel agent - visit a travel agent to help find and map out the route. • Aggregators - Compare plane ticket $. • Airbnb, Booking.com - Compare accom $.	**Goals:** • Research, find and compare activities and the best accomodation. **Tools:** • Google, Google Maps, Google Sheets, Tripadvisor, Airbnb, Booking.com, YouTube, LonelyPlanet and niche websites.	**Goals:** • Book the best accomodation that meets their intent of the holiday. **Tools:** • Airbnb, Booking.com, Qantas, Expedia, Wotif, Stayz, Luxury Escapes, Kayak		
Pain points	• Deciding the best dates • Deciding on the best location • Deciding on different routes • Balancing preferences with budget • Leave not approved	• No standardised way to manage and perform research. • Had to rely on too many different sources. • Having to filter through sponsored endorsements. • Don't feel confident about decisions (choice paralysis, lack of authentic feedback). • Unable to visualise the plan. • A lot of work to find things to do in cities. • Faced with low inventory. • "Sending links back and forth" • "Some websites were only in Japanese" • Finalising activities, routes etc with others.	• Sometimes unclear when payment is deducted. • Slow host response rates, which causes travellers to not feel confident on whether they booked or not. • Low on inventory due to demand. • Low on inventory due to regulations (Japan).		

Needs and wants	• A more efficient way to decide where to go.	• A more visual process for planning and managing the research.
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		  • Prompt host response times.
		  • English speaking staff, if it's a non-english speaking country
			• Clearer expectations for payments and what to do after.
			• Clearer and more accurate photos of the accomodation.
			• Clear breakdown of non-negotiatbles.
			• Realiable experience in booking and service.
			• Flexibility on cancellation and edits.
			• Incentives and loyalty program.
			• Best prices on the market.
			• Accomodation that matches their trip's intent.		

Preperation

Further research and the wait.

Feelings	"Nervously excited"
Goal (and activities):	Further research and prepare for the trip.
Tools:	Google Sheets, Check my trip.
Pain points:	• Buyers remose after booking. • Realising some activities are located in other regions.
Needs and wants	More confidence when finalising a booking. Better up-front planning experience, to help mitigate buyers remorse.

	Consider	Research	Booking	Preperation	
	What is happening?	What is happening?	What is happening?	What is happening?	
Feelings	😄 "Excited"	"Lots of back and forth" "Nervous, because there were a lot of connecting flights" 🙁	🙂 "Very simple. It just works"	😄 "Super excited"	
Activities	Goals: • Decide on a location. Tools: • Travel agent - visit a travel agent to help find and map out the route. • Aggregators - Compare plane ticket $. • Airbnb, Booking.com - Compare accom $.	Goals: • Research, find and compare activities and the best accomodation. Tools: • Google, Google Maps, Google Sheets, Tripadvisor, Airbnb, Booking.com, YouTube, LonelyPlanet and niche websites.	Goals: • Book the best accomodation that meets their intent of the holiday. Tools: • Airbnb, Booking.com, Qantas, Expedia, Wotif, Stayz, Luxury Escapes, Kayak	Goals: • Further research and prepare for the trip. Tools: • Google Sheets, Check my trip.	
Pain points	• Deciding the best dates • Deciding on the best location • Deciding on different routes • Balancing preferences with budget • Leave not approved	• No standardised way to manage and perform research. • Had to rely on too many different sources. • Having to filter through sponsored endorsements. • Don't feel confident about decisions (choice paralysis, lack of authentic feedback). • Unable to visualise the plan. • A lot of work to find things to do in cities. • Faced with low inventory. • "Sending links back and forth" • "Some websites were only in Japanese" • Finalising activities, routes etc with others.	• Sometimes unclear when payment is deducted. • Slow host response rates, which causes travellers to not feel confident on whether they booked or not. • Low on inventory due to demand • Low on inventory due to regulations (Japan)	• Buyers remose after booking. • Realising some activities are located in other regions.	

Needs and wants	• A more efficient way to decide where to go.	• A more visual process for planning and managing the research.
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			• Flexibility on cancellation and edits.
			• Incentives and loyalty program.
			• Best prices on the market.
			• Accomodation that matches their trip's intent.
				• More confidence when finalising a booking.
				• Better up-front planning experience, to help mitigate buyers remorse.
				• A better expectation on things to do upon arrival.	

Stay

Arrival at the accom.

Feelings	"Exceeded expectations or disappointed"
Goal (and activities):	Check-in to the accomodation on-time.
Tools:	Airbnb Messaging, Google Maps
Pain points:	• Slow host response rates. • Unable to locate property. • Waiting in un-safe areas. • Mis-represented properties. • No where to place luggage if late check-in. • Unsure how to get around. • Unsure of what to do upon check-in.
Needs and wants	Overall travelling couples need a better sense of what there is to do immediately checking-in, a better way to access keys and a more accurate expectation of the accomodation and the local area.

	Consider	Research	Booking	Preparation	Stay
	What is happening?	**What is happening?**	**What is happening?**	**What is happening?**	**What is happening?**
Feelings	😅 "Excited"	"Lots of back and forth" "Nervous, because there were a lot of connecting flights" 🙁	🙂 "Very simple. It just works"	😄 "Super excited"	😄 "Exceeded expectations" 🤔 "Misrepresented, un-safe and lack of privacy"
Activities	**Goals:** • Decide on a location. **Tools:** • Travel agent - visit a travel agent to help find and map out the route. • Aggregators - Compare plane ticket $. • Airbnb, Booking.com - Compare accom $.	**Goals:** • Research, find and compare activities and the best accomodation. **Tools:** • Google, Google Maps, Google Sheets, Tripadvisor, Airbnb, Booking.com, YouTube, LonelyPlanet and niche websites.	**Goals:** • Book the best accomodation that meets their intent of the holiday. **Tools:** • Airbnb, Booking.com, Qantas, Expedia, Wotif, Stayz, Luxury Escapes, Kayak	**Goals:** • Further research and prepare for the trip. **Tools:** • Google Sheets, Check my trip.	**Goals:** • Check-in to the accomodation on-time. **Tools:** • Airbnb Messaging, Google Maps
Pain points	• Deciding the best dates • Deciding on the best location • Deciding on different routes • Balancing preferences with budget • Leave not approved	• No standardised way to manage and perform research. • Had to rely on too many different sources. • Having to filter through sponsored endorsements. • Don't feel confident about decisions (choice paralysis, lack of authentic feedback). • Unable to visualise the plan. • A lot of work to find things to do in cities. • Faced with low inventory. • "Sending links back and forth" • "Some websites were only in Japanese" • Finalising activities, routes etc with others.	• Sometimes unclear when payment is deducted. • Slow host response rates, which causes travellers to not feel confident on whether they booked or not. • Low on inventory due to demand • Low on inventory due to regulations (Japan)	• Buyers remose after booking. • Realising some activities are located in other regions.	• Slow host response rates • Unable to locate property • Non-english speaking country is much worse. • Waiting in un-safe areas • Mis-represented properties • No where to place luggage if late check-in • Local transporation options and recommendations

Needs and wants	• A more efficient way to decide where to go.	• A more visual process for planning and managing the research.
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			• Flexibility on cancellation and edits.
			• Incentives and loyalty program.
			• Best prices on the market.
			• Accomodation that matches their trip's intent.
				• More confidence when finalising a booking.
				• Better up-front planning experience, to help mitigate buyers remose.
				• A better expectation on things to do upon arrival.
					• Clear directions to finding property, especially in non-english speaking countries.
					• Better understanding of socioeconomic stats of areas, especially when it's unsafe.
					• Better representation of listings on booking platforms.
					• Better understanding of what there is to do immediately after checking-in.
					• Better understanding of local transporation options.
					• Basic necessities provided (Shampoo etc)

Further research

Research and discovery

Competitor analysis

Competitors: Airbnb, Booking.com, Expedia

Opportunities:
- Airbnb - Great branding and quality of the experience.
- Booking.com - Compelling USP with their loyalty program.
- Expedia - Horizontal expansion and scale.

Summary:

Overall Airbnb is scored 9 as a direct competitor when it comes to competitiveness. Booking.com and Expedia are both ranked around ~6 as an-indirect competitor, as they are primarily focused around hotels. Booking.com does have a fairly well designed experience with a strong loyalty program.

It is worth keeping an eye on Booking.com and Expedia's strategic steps.

Company name	Product	Marketing	Support	Opportunities	Score
Name of the organisation	What do they have to offer?	How are they generating awareness?	How are they helping customers?	What can we learn from them?	
Airbnb — 52k employees · Founded in 2008 · $6.4B raised · HotelTonight, LuxuryRetreats · NASDAQ: ABNB	**Primary products:** · Accomodation (Non-hotels) **Unique selling proposition:** · Map visualisation, Great photography, Very unique accoms, Great brand and visual appeal, Simple and well thought through UX **Secondary products:** · AirCover, Reviews, AirCover for hosts, Host resources to empower them **Platforms:** · Web, iOS, Android **Key takeaway:** · Since the pandemic, Airbnb has leaned out their product, to bring more focus on their listings. Generally Airbnb has deemed to provide a very simple and easy to use experience.	**Overall brand:** · Well designed and thought through. · Consistent throughout. · Focuses on the 'people'. **Channels:** · Instagram · Twitter (Dedicated regions) · Facebook · YouTube **Marketing themes and initatives:** · Goodwill (Airbnb.org) · Content marketing (Hosts) · SEO · Branded partnerships (Obama) · Belonging, community · Giftcards **Key takeaway:** · A strong focus on host successes, traveller's experiences and very unique stays. · Comments are filled with complaints and unhappy customers.	**Channels:** · Help Centre · Chat support for members · Facebook DMs · Facebook · Phoneline **Key takeaway:** · Social media directs people to DMs. · The pandemic caused havoc for Airbnb. · Main complaints are around Airbnb not offering refunds for travellers that had their Airbnb cancelled. · Numerous hosts have also had their accounts suspended for no evident reason. · Other complaints: Faulty utilties, fradualent transactions · Keep support highly visible.	**Product:** · Great photography helps tell better stories and increases conversion rates. · AirCover helps build confidence. · Niche > Scale · Fun classifications of areas · Improve on their current map experience. **Marketing:** · Focus on the people. · Place more focus on the quality of hosts, people you can meet, the communities you travel to. · Dedicated regions when the product scales. · Be aware of comments and raging customers. **Support:** · Focus on the people. · Place more focus on the quality of hosts, people you can meet, the communities you travel to. · Dedicated regions when the product scales. · Be aware of comments and raging customers.	9
Booking.com — 20k employees · Founded in 1996 · Raised €500K · Kayak, Priceline.com, Agoda · NASDAQ: BKNG	**Primary products:** · Accomodation (Hotels), Flights, Combined, Car rentals, Attractions. **Unique selling proposition:** · Accomodation (Hotels), Flights, Combined, Car rentals, Attractions. **Secondary products:** · Community forum, Incentive program, price matching, reviews, local activities, Guides and inspiration **Platforms:** · Web, iOS, Android **International:** · Yes **Key takeaway:** · Booking.com has a strong loyalty program that most customers really enjoy. They also have a fairly well designed app. Participants stated it 'works' and 'reliable'.	**Overall brand:** · Feels more coprorate and transactional. · Speaks to hotels, deals and discounts. **Platforms:** · Instagram · Twitter · Facebook · YouTube · SEO **Marketing themes and initatives:** · Event-based · Generic traveling inspiration posts **Key takeaway:** · Instagram, Twitter: Focuses on awareness of new places people can explore. · Marketing team does not attend their comments. · Booking also has a dedicated business presence on social media.	**Channels:** · Help Centre · Chat support for members · Facebook DMs · Phoneline **Key takeaway:** · Social media directs people to DMs. · Complaints on social media as well.	**Product:** · Loyalty program is a great way to retain customers and increase lifetime value. · Ratings are evidently quite useful. · Horizontal expansion. **Marketing:** · Create a corporate account to also share the team culture for business purposes. **Support:** · Nothing new compared to Airbnb.	6
Expedia — 22.6k employees · Founded in 1996 · Raised $3.3B · Hotels.com, Vrbo, Wotif, Trivago, CarRentals. · NASDAQ: EXPE	**Primary products:** · Accomodation (Hotels), Flights, Combined, Car rentals, V acation packages, Cruises **Unique selling proposition:** · Brand awareness **Secondary products:** · Guides, Reviews **Platforms:** · Web, iOS, Android **International:** · Yes **Key takeaway:** · Expedia has a fairly simple and transactional product. Nothing particular stands out. Has a decent presence with hotels and travel packages.	**Overall brand:** · Corporate · Transactional **Platforms:** · Instagram · Twitter · Facebook · YouTube · SEO **Marketing themes and initatives:** · Generic inspirational posts and memes. **Key takeaway:** · Twitter: Engages audience with memes and inspirational posts. · Facebook: Travel ideas, that direct traffic to their blog. · Instagram: Inspirational reels and posts that encourage people to travel and explore. · Expedia Group also has a dedicated business presence on social media.	**Channels:** · Help Centre · Chat support for members · Facebook DMs · Phoneline **Key takeaway:** · Standard.	**Product:** · Horizontal expansion to stay relevant. · Travel packages to simplify the decision making. **Marketing:** · Expedia Group that overlooks Expedia has a fairly active corporate brand. Sharing the team's culture. · Expedia also has dedicated regions to provide specific content to travellers. **Support:** · Standard support as most competitors.	6

Feature analysis

Features and offerings	Accom.ai	Airbnb	Booking.com	Expedia
Bed and breakfast	✅	✅	Hotels	Hotels
Intent-driven research experience	✅	-	-	-
Detailed filtering experience	✅	-	-	-
Visual planning and booking exp.	✅	-	-	-
Web platform	✅	✅	✅	✅
Mobile apps	-	✅	✅	✅
Loyalty program	-	-	✅	-
Host messaging	-	✅	✅	✅
Booking insurance	-	✅	✅	✅
Standard support (Live, social, faq)	✅	✅	✅	✅

Feature analysis

Features and offerings	Accom.ai	Airbnb	Booking.com	Expedia
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Detailed filtering experience	✅	-	-	-
Visual planning and booking exp.	✅	-	-	-
Web platform	✅	✅	✅	✅
Mobile apps	✅	✅	✅	✅
Loyalty program	✅	-	✅	-
Host messaging	✅	✅	✅	✅
Booking insurance	✅	✅	✅	✅
Standard support (Live, social, faq)	✅	✅	✅	✅

Recommendations

Research and discovery

Research objectives

Context

The purpose behind the research initiative was to help us gain a deeper understanding of the accomodation booking experience for travelling couples to be better informed on the validity of our product assumption.

- ✅ The current process for researching and booking accomodation for couples.

- ✅ The biggest struggles and frustrations for couples when they are travelling.

- ✅ The unique preferences of what travellers look for in accomodation.

- ✅ The non-negotiables when it comes to booking accomodation

- ✅ What motivates a traveller (couples) to book on one platform over another.

Hypothesises

1 **Product assumption**

Travelling couples want a better booking experience, where they can [really] refine their searches to find the perfect accomodation.
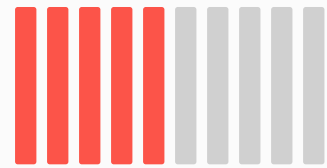
2 **Hypothesis**

Travelling couples have unique and different expectations and preferences for booking accomodation.

✅ **Conclusion**

From the research conducted, the data gathered informs us that travelling couples have different and a unique set of expectations and preferences that influenced their accomodation booking experience.
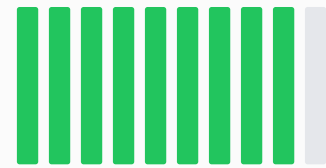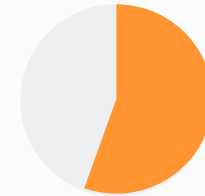
Score snapshot

5.1/10

Avg. researching
experience score

9/10

Avg. booking experience
score

60%

Participants voiced
activities + accomodation
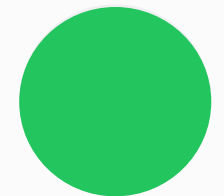
100%

Activities influenced
accomodation

Personas

Just Married Justin & Jasmine

Long-term relationship / Married with no kids.

Age:	25-35
Employment:	Full-time
Marital Status:	Long-term relationship / Married (with no kids)
Values:	Long-term relationship / Married (with no kids)
Challenges:	• Planning and booking a holiday that meets their budget
Needs and wants:	• Culturally rich: Best value for experiences • Leisure: Convenient to activities • Romantic: Aesthetically pleasing accomodation, something special
Tools:	Booking.com, Airbnb, Tripadvisor

Insight

There is always a motivation behind a couple wanting to go on a holiday. The different intents, lead to different expectations throughout the trip.

Recommendations

- Allow users to set the intent of the trip to help filter / prioritise accomodations.

- Growth hack: Launch a mini product that allows people to compare destinations (like a internet plan), to help them make a decision.

Insight

The research phase of the customer journey was said to be "lots of clicking of Google links and different websites", "filtering out sponsored links" and "still didn't feel confident about the decisions".

The lack of standardisation and fragmentation of sources can cause friction in the process.

Recommendations

- Strategy: Launching v.1 means we should focus on doing one region well, and scale over time.

- Video content on YouTube can provide authentic insights into unique experiences around an area.

- Bring through more authentic social proofing of activities and reviews.

- Encourage Accom.ai travelling and host profiles, to bring through more authenticity.

- Aggrogate relevant blog, youtube videos, articles and information for main cities at the start. Then scale out overtime.

- Provide simple weather forecast insights from third party API?

- Introduce a Tripadvisor inspired community forum on our platform.

- Provide travel guides and itineraries.

Insight

As mentioned previously, the actual 'checkout process of booking an accomodation' is quite seamless and the participants were fairly neutral about it.

With an average score of 9/10 based on Airbnb + Booking.com

In contrast the research and stay stages of the journey, displayed major opportunities.

Recommendations

- Provide a filtering / sorting option for pricing.

- Make a decision on our go to market strategy: Hotels or Airbnbs? State, National or International?

- Set the right expectation on when funds are deducted, flexibility of changing dates, cancellation upon booking of an accomodation.

- Put more attention and focus on the must haves on the details page.

- Booking.com has a leveraged and high-retention experience with their loyalty program. Eventually roll out a loyalty program to retain customers.

- To simplify the booking experience for longer trips, introduce 'milestones' for a longer trip that allows travellers to 'add new accomodations' on a timeline.

- Introduce a more visual booking experience.

Insight

There seems to be a small spike in excitement, which can then be subdued and overwhelmed by further planning and sometimes buyers remorse.

Recommendations

- Have hosts upload a set of things to do.

- Produce itineraries, which can also be community-driven.

- "After research noticed big events in other locations." - This re-inforces the fact that better research, helps with better decisions for booking accomodation. +1 to providing better contextual, research tools earlier in the customer journey.

- Provide recommended things to do in the area after booking. Especially local things for guests that check-in late, or have checked-in early.

Insight

People generally remember the highest, lowest and last segments of an experience.

It is evident, that people remember clearly when something went great or terrible.

Our goal is to try engineer every stay to a positive baseline.

Recommendations

- Strategy: Activities for kids and adults differ significantly. Decide on: Young couples vs Young families. Helps with decisions around filters + inventory as well.

- The most common negative experience is when the listing mis-represented the accomodation. Encourage hosts to upload a floorplan and submit accurate photos of their accomodation.

- Meet the baseline for 'good first impression': Personalised tours, Nice finishing touches (cleanliness), Payment and documents all handeled and check-in is seamless.

- Eventually have live messaging for hosts and guests to solve issues, but more imoprtantly to find the accomodation.

- Provide socioeconomic status of regions.

- Instructions on local transportation.

- Provide a checklist of things to consider/complete for better preperation.

- Relevant activities with distances showcased.

Competitor analysis

Competitors: Airbnb, Booking.com, Expedia

Opportunities:

- Airbnb - Great branding and quality of the experience.
- Booking.com - Compelling USP with their loyalty program.
- Expedia - Horizontal expansion and scale.

Summary:

Overall Airbnb is scored 9 as a direct competitor when it comes to competitiveness. Booking.com and Expedia are both ranked around ~6 as an-indirect competitor, as they are primarily focused around hotels. Booking.com does have a fairly well designed experience with a strong loyalty program.

It is worth keeping an eye on Booking.com and Expedia's strategic steps.

Company name	Product	Marketing	Support	Opportunities	Score
Name of the organisation	What do they have to offer?	How are they generating awareness?	How are they helping customers?	What can we learn from them?	
Airbnb 52k employees Founded in 2008 $6.4B raised HotelTonight, LuxuryRetreats NASDAQ: ABNB	**Primary products:** • Accomodation (Non-hotels) **Unique selling proposition:** • Map visualisation, Great photography, Very unique accoms, Great brand and visual appeal, Simple and well thought through UX **Secondary products:** • AirCover, Reviews, AirCover for hosts, Host resources to empower them **Platforms:** • Web, iOS, Android **Key takeaway:** • Since the pandemic, Airbnb has leaned out their product, to bring more focus on their listings. Generally Airbnb has deemed to provide a very simple and easy to use experience.	**Overall brand:** • Well designed and thought through. • Consistent throughout. • Focuses on the 'people'. **Channels:** • Instagram • Twitter (Dedicated regions) • Facebook • YouTube **Marketing themes and initatives:** • Goodwill (Airbnb.org) • Content marketing (Hosts) • SEO • Branded partnerships (Obama) • Belonging, community • Giftcards **Key takeaway:** • A strong focus on host successes, traveller's experiences and very unique stays. • Comments are filled with complaints and unhappy customers.	**Channels:** • Help Centre • Chat support for members • Facebook DMs • Phoneline **Key takeaway:** • Social media directs people to DMs. • The pandemic caused havoc for Airbnb. • Main complaints are around Airbnb not offering refunds for travellers that had their Airbnb cancelled. • Numerous hosts have also had their accounts suspended for no evident reason. • Other complaints: Faulty utilities, fradualent transactions • Keep support highly visible.	**Product:** • Great photography helps tell better stories and increases conversion rates. • AirCover helps build confidence. • Niche > Scale • Fun classifications of areas • Improve on their current map experience. **Marketing:** • Focus on the people. • Place more focus on the quality of hosts, people you can meet, the communities you travel to. • Dedicated regions when the product scales. • Be aware of comments and raging customers. **Support:** • Focus on the people. • Place more focus on the quality of hosts, people you can meet, the communities you travel to. • Dedicated regions when the product scales. • Be aware of comments and raging customers.	9
Booking.com 20k employees Founded in 1996 Raised €500K Kayak, Priceline.com, Agoda NASDAQ: BKNG	**Primary products:** • Accomodation (Hotels), Flights, Combined, Car rentals, Attractions. **Unique selling proposition:** • Accomodation (Hotels), Flights, Combined, Car rentals, Attractions. **Secondary products:** • Community forum, incentive program, price matching, reviews, local activities, Guides and inspiration **Platforms:** • Web, iOS, Android **International:** • Yes **Key takeaway:** • Booking.com has a strong loyalty program that most customers really enjoy. They also have a fairly well designed app. Participants stated it 'works' and 'reliable'.	**Overall brand:** • Feels more coprorate and transactional. • Speaks to hotels, deals and discounts. **Platforms:** • Instagram • Twitter • Facebook • YouTube • SEO **Marketing themes and initatives:** • Event-based • Generic traveling inspiration posts **Key takeaway:** • Instagram, Twitter: Focuses on awareness of new places people can explore. • Marketing team does not attend their comments. • Booking also has a dedicated business presence on social media.	**Channels:** • Help Centre • Chat support for members • Facebook DMs • Phoneline **Key takeaway:** • Social media directs people to DMs. • Complaints on social media as well.	**Product:** • Loyalty program is a great way to retain customers and increase lifetime value. • Ratings are evidently quite useful. • Horizontal expansion. **Marketing:** • Create a corporate account to also share the team culture for business purposes. **Support:** • Nothing new compared to Airbnb.	6
Expedia 22.6k employees Founded in 1996 Raised $3.3B Hotels.com, Vrbo, Wotif, Trivago, CarRentals. NASDAQ: EXPE	**Primary products:** • Accomodation (Hotels), Flights, Combined, Car rentals, V acation packages, Cruises **Unique selling proposition:** • Brand awareness **Secondary products:** • Guides, Reviews **Platforms:** • Web, iOS, Android **International:** • Yes **Key takeaway:** • Expedia has a fairly simple and transactional product. Nothing particular stands out. Has a decent presence with hotels and travel packages.	**Overall brand:** • Corporate • Transactional **Platforms:** • Instagram • Twitter • Facebook • YouTube • SEO **Marketing themes and initatives:** • Generic inspirational posts and memes. **Key takeaway:** • Twitter: Engages audience with memes and inspirational posts. • Facebook: Travel ideas, that direct traffic to their blog. • Instagram: Inspirational reels and posts that encourage people to travel and explore. • Expedia Group also has a dedicated business presence on social media.	**Channels:** • Help Centre • Chat support for members • Facebook DMs • Phoneline **Key takeaway:** • Standard.	**Product:** • Horizontal expansion to stay relevant. • Travel packages to simplify the decision making. **Marketing:** • Expedia Group that overlooks Expedia has a fairly active corporate brand. Sharing the team's culture. • Expedia also has dedicated regions to provide specific content to travellers. **Support:** • Standard support as most competitors.	6

Feature analysis

Features and offerings	Accom.ai	Airbnb	Booking.com	Expedia
Bed and breakfast	✅	✅	Hotels	Hotels
Advanced research tools	✅	-	-	-
Detailed filtering experience	✅	-	-	-
Visual planning and booking exp.	✅	-	-	-
Web platform	✅	✅	✅	✅
Mobile apps	✅	✅	✅	✅
Loyalty program	✅	-	✅	-
Host messaging	✅	✅	✅	✅
Booking insurance	✅	✅	✅	✅
Standard support (Live, social, faq)	✅	✅	✅	✅

Next steps...

1. Open discussion

2. Prioritize roadmap

3. Define project brief