

Calling home? You'll probably use social media

WHITE PLAINS, US: Waiting for word from a loved one on the road? Don't sit by the phone - just use social media to make contact... According to a survey released yesterday, 16 November 2010 by Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, the chances are people will keep in touch through social media rather than by using a phone.



According to the survey, more than 60% of respondents in the global social media study use social media to stay in touch with family and friends while travelling; more than a third (36%) say they'd rather log on than make a call to share good news.

Social media: One of life's necessities?

Overall, survey respondents ranked social media somewhere near air and water as a must-have in their lives. Four-fifths of respondents said they access social networking sites throughout the day, while 39% said they "could not live without" social media sites. One-third of respondents said they log in multiple times each hour. Habits barely shift on the road. One fifth of respondents say that they check social networking sites multiple times throughout the day while travelling.

The global study was conducted by STUDYLOGIC LLC, which surveyed 4204 people via phone in the US, UK and China. Sheraton recently completed the roll-out of its signature offering "Link@Sheraton experienced with Microsoft," - a technology-driven social hub designed to keep travellers connected 24/7 at nearly 400 hotels around the world.

Social networking blurs lines between business, pleasure

Be careful what you post. Before meeting a new business contact, more than half of those surveyed check out their new contact's social networking profiles (54%) and almost 60% say they have not hired a candidate based on a negative impression from a social-media profile. More than half (54%) of respondents say they know someone who has been fired for something said or posted online.

Regardless of pitfalls, social networking's popularity as a networking tool continues to grow. More than half of all respondents (56%) agreed about the importance of doing business with people active in social media channels; 55% use

online social networking to meet new business contacts and maintain current ones.

Moreover, many use social media to mix business and pleasure - literally. More than half of those surveyed have arranged a romantic interlude on the road using social networks, with men more likely to do so (45%) than women (40%).

Fact or fiction?

Don't always believe what you read. Nearly 70% of respondents say they aren't honest on social networking sites; 27% of those fib "a little," 21% flat-out "lie," and 20% admit that their postings are total fabrications. Women are more inclined to tell little white lies online; men were more likely to be 100% honest (46%) versus their female counterparts (18%).

Who are people visiting while on the road?

More than 50% of all Sheraton guests use the Link@Sheraton during their stay. Facebook is the most visited site at the Link@Sheraton, with 75% of Link users logging in during their stay. More than 60% of those surveyed (62%) find that social media makes it easier for them to meet people while travelling for work.

Social media as a travel planning tool: 64% say 'Yes'

64% said they use social media to make their travel plans and within the 25-34 year old participant group, the number is even higher; 76% look to popular social media sites to plan their next getaway.

"Along with the bigger shift toward social media from other forms of communication, what the survey drove home for us was that an experience like Link@Sheraton isn't a luxury for guests, but a necessity," said Hoyt Harper, SVP and global brand leader for Sheraton Hotels & Resorts. "They expect total connectivity, and that's what Sheraton's delivering,"

The Link@Sheraton experienced with Microsoft is a signature component of the Sheraton brand's US\$6 billion (about R43 billion) global effort to enhance the brand and differentiate the guest experience at properties worldwide. The service's lobby lounge is designed to enable today's travellers to stay connected with instant access to information and technology for work, leisure and social networking. Designed as a social environment, The Link@Sheraton invites guests to interact with each other while they check their email, research local attractions and even print boarding passes using free Wi-Fi and Internet-enabled computer stations. It also features a Link@Sheraton Café, TVs and daily newspapers.

The brand's online community can share their travel experiences, recommendations and more at SheratonBetterWhenShared.com. The hotel chain's global community will continue to stir up conversation in Twitter ([@SheratonHotels](https://twitter.com/SheratonHotels)) and Facebook (facebook.com/sheratonhotelsandresorts) with contests, travel ideas and special offers.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>