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Hotel Owners at an AI Crossroads as Confidence and Growth Plans Hold Firm, Wyndham Owner Trends Report Finds

Owners and developers embrace AI's next phase while optimism, brand loyalty and expansion plans remain at the forefront amid evolving market conditions

PARSIPPANY, N.J., Jan. 26, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Artificial intelligence has rapidly shifted from an emerging concept to a business imperative for hotel owners—and now the focus is on adopting AI at scale. Findings from Wyndham Hotels & Resorts' newly released, second-annual, *Owner Trends Report* show the industry has reached an AI inflection point: hotel owners and developers are embracing AI but are increasingly in need of greater guidance on how to convert early adoption into long-term returns.

Drawn from a comprehensive survey of hundreds of hotel owners and property developers across the U.S., Canada and the Caribbean and representing a broad cross-section of the lodging industry across multiple brands and hotel companies, non-exclusive to Wyndham, the findings also reveal continued confidence in hospitality's long-term outlook, despite mounting pressure from rising costs, economic uncertainty and operational complexity. Amid these trends, owners are looking to established brands for reliable guidance, proven technology and long-term partnerships, especially as AI becomes an ever more integral part of hotel operations.

"Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping hospitality—opening new opportunities while adding fresh layers of complexity. With years of early and significant foundational investment, Wyndham is well positioned to help hoteliers navigate this evolving landscape, offering not only the guidance they seek but also proven, scalable platforms that make it easier to apply AI where it matters most, helping turn innovation into real revenue, greater efficiency and stronger returns."

- Scott Strickland, Chief Commercial Officer, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts

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AI at Crossroads: Transforming Interest into Impact
Nearly all hotel owners (98%) say they have begun incorporating AI into their business, signaling that broad adoption of AI in hospitality is already here. While enthusiasm is high, execution remains uneven, with less than a third (32%) saying AI is embedded across most aspects of their operations and nearly three-quarters (73%) wanting to do more but feeling overwhelmed and unsure where to start.

- **AI Is Already Delivering Operational Value**
  Of those owners and developers who have already adopted AI in some form, the

common uses are for driving operational efficiency (64%), energy efficiency (54%) and revenue optimization (53%)—all areas with a direct impact on profitability.
- **Untapped Opportunities in Design and Construction**
  Asked about their plans for 2026, hoteliers most commonly (61%) want to see AI play a larger role in construction planning (e.g. assisting with permitting and zoning) followed by revenue optimization (30%).

The Vital Role of Brands as AI Reshapes Operations
As AI adoption accelerates and hotel operations grow more complex, owners and developers continue turning to brands as strategic partners to help vet, integrate and support best-in-class technology solutions. Nearly nine in ten hoteliers (89%) say working with a hotel brand is beneficial when it comes to incorporating AI into their business with more than a third (34%) deeming it essential.

- **Perceived Barriers**
  Asked to cite the top three factors keeping them from adopting more AI, hoteliers most commonly cite data privacy and security concerns (46%), costs of investing in AI tools (42%) and difficulty integrating AI with legacy systems and technology (40%).
- **Not Yet Ready to Fully Let Go**
  When it comes to AI making business decisions, hoteliers are mixed in their views of how much human oversight is required. Only two-in-five (40%) are comfortable with AI making operating decisions without human oversight while 57% require human oversight to be comfortable.
- **Beyond AI: Continued Optimism with Plans for Growth**
  Despite ongoing economic shifts and other pressures, hoteliers are entering 2026 with continued confidence in both the short and long-term trajectory of the industry—echoing similar sentiments shared in Wyndham's first Owner Trends Report last year. The vast majority (90%) say they're optimistic about 2026 while an even higher number, 95%, are optimistic about the next five years.
- **Expansion Remains on the Agenda**
  Nearly 8-in-10 hoteliers (79%) are planning to expand their portfolio over the next 5 years, a number virtually unchanged from last year's report, while 97% say they are open to joining or switching brands if the right opportunity presents itself.
- **Loyalty as a Foundational Advantage**
  Nearly two-thirds of hoteliers (65%) say a strong loyalty program is of great importance to their success, while top obstacles include operating costs, talent shortages and rising competition.
- **Investing in the Guest Experience**
  When it comes to investing capital, nearly a quarter of hoteliers (24%) will be prioritizing increased staffing in 2026, while others plan to invest in property improvements (20%), sales and marketing improvements (20%), technology investments (19%) and enhanced amenities (17%)—suggesting that even amid economic uncertainty, owners continue to prioritize service and the guest experience alongside operational efficiency and marketing.

"This year's report shows once again the overwhelming confidence hoteliers have in

the long-term resiliency and proven ROI of our industry. The results also underscore improving market conditions, with 61% of hoteliers seeing easier financing and a near even split when it comes to interest in new construction versus conversion opportunities. Taken together, the findings point to a market where Wyndham's scale, experience and platforms help create a real advantage, supporting owners' growth decisions while driving value through every phase of the cycle."

- Amit Sripathi, Chief Development Officer, Wyndham Hotels & Resorts

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Embedding AI into The Wyndham Advantage

As AI reshapes the hospitality landscape, Wyndham is helping set the pace, turning innovation into real, measurable results for franchisees. Through solutions like Wyndham Connect, the Company's industry-leading guest engagement platform, and Wyndham Connect PLUS, an advanced version of the platform with expanded capabilities, hotels are embedding AI across nearly every stage of the guest journey—from automated messaging and mobile check-in to dynamic upsells, voice assistance and more. To date, more than 5,000 hotels have adopted Wyndham Connect, logging nearly 12 million guest interactions, with the average hotel on Wyndham Connect PLUS seeing nearly 200 bps improvement in direct voice conversion and 400 bps in overall guest satisfaction.

Beyond guest engagement, Wyndham continues to leverage both new and existing partnerships with leading technology providers—such as Google, Amazon and others—to strengthen hotel visibility across traditional digital channels as well as the rapidly evolving world of AI-powered search. In doing so, the company is helping franchisees stay ahead of shifting consumer behavior, with the goal of capturing demand wherever and however guests choose to book, both today and in the future.

Together, these efforts reinforce The Wyndham Advantage, Wyndham's comprehensive franchisee value proposition uniting marketing, technology, global distribution, revenue management and operational support into a fully integrated ecosystem built around owner success. Fueled by more than $375 million in technology investments since 2018 and strengthened by Wyndham Rewards, the industry's #1-rated hotel rewards program as named by readers of USA Today, it gives franchisees the scale, tools and confidence to help compete more effectively, innovate faster and build lasting long-term value in an increasingly complex hospitality marketplace.

Wyndham's second annual Owner Trends Report is available for download here. For more information, including franchising opportunities, visit www.wyndhamdevelopment.com.

About Wyndham Hotels & Resorts

Wyndham Hotels & Resorts (NYSE: WH) is the world's largest hotel franchising company by the number of franchised properties, with approximately 8,300 hotels across approximately 100 countries on six continents. Through its network of over 855,000 rooms appealing to the everyday traveler, Wyndham commands a leading presence in the economy and midscale segments of the lodging industry. The Company operates a portfolio of 25 hotel brands, including Super 8®, Days Inn®, Ramada®, Microtel®, La Quinta®, Baymont®, Wingate®, AmericInn®, ECHO Suites®, Registry Collection Hotels®, Trademark Collection® and Wyndham®. The Company's award-winning Wyndham Rewards loyalty program offers approximately 121 million enrolled members the opportunity to redeem points at thousands

of hotels, vacation club resorts and vacation rentals globally. For more information, visit www.wyndhamhotels.com.

Survey Methodology
Managed by Wakefield Research, the Wyndham Survey was conducted among 325 Hotel Owners & Hotel Property Developers across multiple brands and companies, non-exclusive to Wyndham, with minimum seniority of VP+, in the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean, between November 24th and December 4th, 2025, using an email invitation and an online survey. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. For the interviews conducted in this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 6.2 percentage points for the total data, 6.9 percentage for the U.S., 9.8 for Canada, and 19.6 percentage points for the Caribbean, from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

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