From Interaction to Connection:

AI and the New Paradigm of Traveler Experience

ATENTO

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✚ Introduction

Maria landed in Madrid two hours later than scheduled due to a delayed flight. Her suitcase didn't arrive. While she was on hold with customer service, she received a WhatsApp message:

"Hi Maria, we're sorry for the inconvenience. Your suitcase will arrive this afternoon at 6:00 PM and a courier will deliver it to your hotel.
Is there anything else we can help with?"

In that small moment, what began as a frustrating process turned into a genuine connection—and that made all the difference. Maria felt like she wasn't speaking to a machine, but to someone who already understood her situation, had solved it, and, most importantly, empathized with her.

In the world of travel, every second matters. What was once an industry focused on logistics—schedules, bookings, rates—has evolved into one centered on perceptions, emotions, and experiences. Traveler expectations have shifted significantly, not only in how they plan and book, but in what they demand from the experience itself.

At the same time, emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and data analytics are transforming how the travel industry engages with its customers. The tourism sector as a whole is undergoing a profound shift—from operational focus to emotional resonance. According to the 2025 Gitnux Report [1] :

- **78%** of travelers value AI-driven personalization,
- **77%** prefer seamless digital experiences, and
- **82%** of travel companies are planning to invest in customer experience technologies.

[1] Gitnux Report 2025: Customer Experience In The Tourism Industry Statistics Statistics: Market Data Report 2025

Major players like Expedia, Booking, and Google are integrating AI to enhance trip planning and personalization. Airlines such as Virgin Australia and Emirates are using AI to optimize rescheduling, streamline flight routes, and even tailor in-flight menus.

In parallel, studies from Qubit Capital [2] reveal that travel agencies that adopt AI and chatbot technologies can boost cross-selling by up to 25% while reducing operational costs by 20%. The value of investing in customer experience, automation, and advanced technology is clear—it drives growth, boosts efficiency, and enhances satisfaction.

In this paper, we explore the current landscape of the tourism industry—its challenges, trends, and strengths—and examine how AI, automation, and personalization strategies are unlocking value while optimizing operations and improving traveler experience.
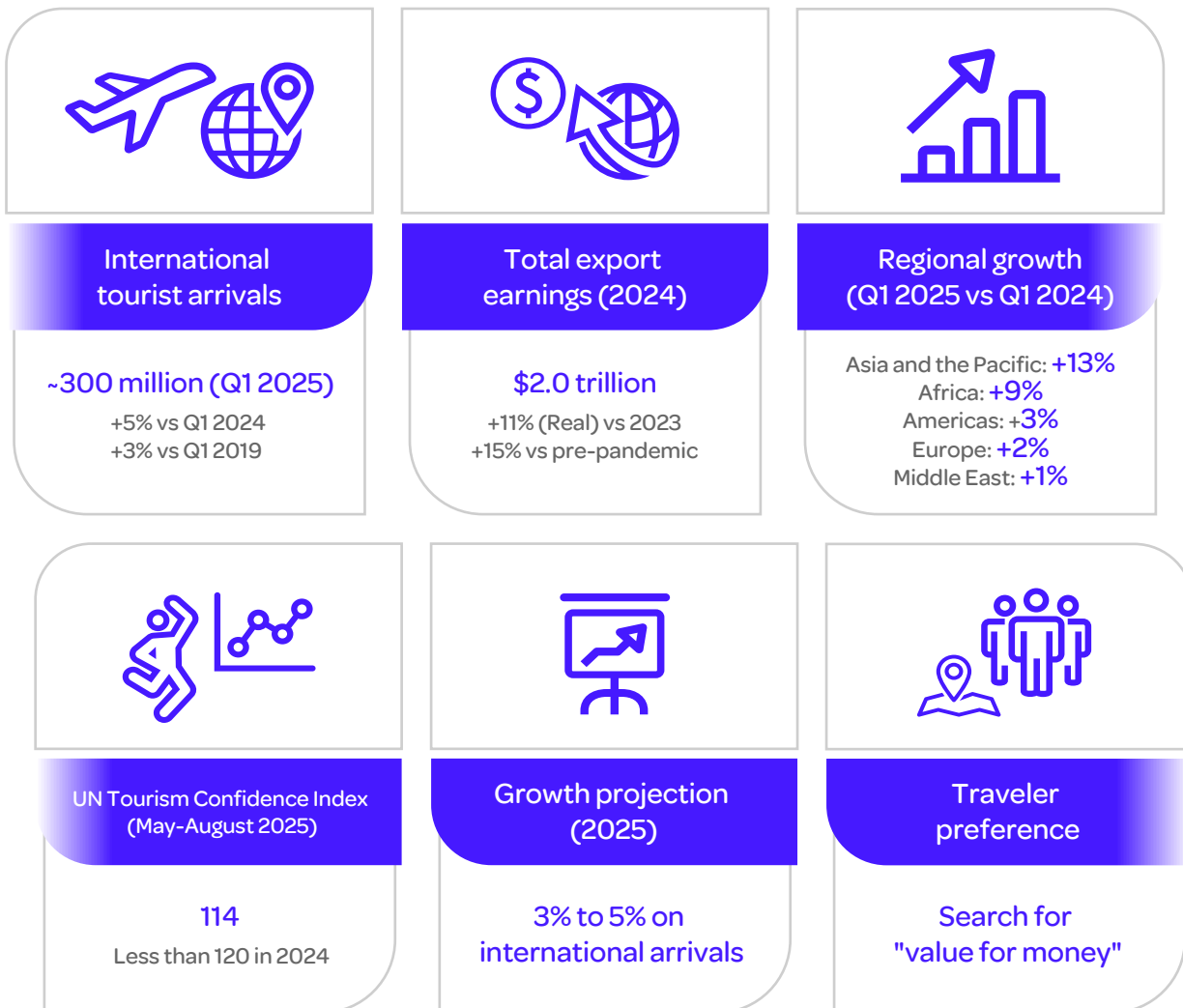
[2] Qubit Capital: Investing in Travel: Technology and Global Market Insights - Qubit

Global Tourism Trends and Performance

(First Quarter 2025)

KEY INDICATORS:

International tourist arrivals

~300 million (Q1 2025)

+5% vs Q1 2024
+3% vs Q1 2019

Total export earnings (2024)

$2.0 trillion

+11% (Real) vs 2023
+15% vs pre-pandemic

Regional growth (Q1 2025 vs Q1 2024)

Asia and the Pacific: **+13%**
Africa: **+9%**
Americas: **+3%**
Europe: **+2%**
Middle East: **+1%**

UN Tourism Confidence Index (May-August 2025)

114
Less than 120 in 2024

Growth projection (2025)

3% to 5% on international arrivals

Traveler preference

Search for "value for money"

According to the latest UN Tourism Barometer [3] , global tourism has continued its steady recovery in 2025, showing promising momentum after the setbacks of the pandemic. In the first quarter of the year, international arrivals reached nearly 300 million—up 5% compared to the same period in 2024, and 3% higher than 2019 levels.

This rebound has been accompanied by solid growth in tourism export revenues, which hit $2 trillion in 2024, reflecting an 11% real increase over 2023 and a 15% rise compared to pre-pandemic figures.

[3] UN Tourism World Tourism Barometer https://www.unwto.org/un-tourism-world-tourism-barometer-data

Regionally, the most robust growth was recorded in Asia and the Pacific (+13%), followed by Africa (+9%), the Americas (+3%), Europe (+2%), and the Middle East (+1%) compared to Q1 of 2024. However, the UN Tourism Confidence Index noted a slight dip, registering 114 points between May and August 2025—down from 120 the previous year—indicating some lingering caution among industry players.

Forecasts for the remainder of the year suggest moderate growth of 3% to 5% in international arrivals. Travelers are increasingly focused on value-for-money options, creating both challenges and new opportunities for destinations and tour operators worldwide.

The Challenges Facing the Global Tourism Sector

Data such as these endorses the need to incorporate advanced technologies at all levels to maximize the profitability that can provide sustained and exponential growth as expected. And, at the same time, they highlight the challenges of the immediate future of the tourism sector, influenced both by the development of new technologies and by the evolution in the expectations and behaviors of travelers. We analyze the main factors that define this transformation.

Scaling Without Losing Personalization: Seventy-five years ago, just 25 million people traveled internationally; today, that number exceeds 1.3 billion annually and, according to projections by the World Tourism Organization, could reach 1.8 billion by 2030 [4]. This sustained growth of global tourism poses a structural challenge of great relevance: how to scale the tourism offer without sacrificing the quality, authenticity and closeness that characterize a truly enriching experience.

Changing Traveler Profiles: Today's traveler profile has evolved towards omnichannel behavior, where the search, planning and management of their trips is carried out seamlessly between multiple platforms and devices. This new traveler expects a consistent, personalized, and real-time experience, whether they're interacting via social media, mobile apps, websites, or physical points.

Crisis Management: In today's tourism industry, the value assigned to the trip itself has reached a relevance comparable to that of the destination. The contemporary tourist may not accurately retain every technical aspect of his itinerary, but he clearly retains the experience lived during critical situations, such as flight cancellations, lack of availability in accommodation or unexpected emergencies.

[4] OMT. (2024). International Tourism Highlights, 2024 Edition. International Tourism Highlights, 2024 Edition | UN Tourism

Adapting to Sustainability and Safety Standards: On the one hand, factors such as climate change, environmental degradation and health crises have exposed the vulnerability of the tourism sector. And on the other hand, travelers, investors, and regulatory bodies are increasingly demanding responsible practices, verifiable certifications, and security assurances. Adapting to sustainability and safety standards remains a structural challenge for the tourism sector for several reasons. First, according to the World Tourism Organization, many destinations operate with old or poorly planned infrastructure, making it difficult to comply with current environmental regulations or integrate robust safety protocols [5]. In addition, the fragmentation of the sector – largely made up of small and medium-sized enterprises – limits the capacity to invest in certifications, clean technologies or risk management systems. Added to this is the pressure to balance immediate profitability with long-term investments in sustainability, something that is not always feasible [6].

Multilingual and Seasonal Scalability: Recent data highlights the critical need to integrate advanced technologies at every level of the tourism industry to fuel long-term, sustainable growth. At the same time, these trends also underscore the growing challenges brought on by shifting traveler expectations and evolving global conditions. Let's explore the main factors shaping this transformation.

Seventy-five years ago, just 25 million people traveled internationally each year. Today, that number exceeds 1.3 billion and could reach 1.8 billion by 2030, according to projections by the World Tourism Organization.

This dramatic growth presents a core challenge: how can the tourism sector scale without losing the authenticity, quality, and personal touch that define a memorable travel experience?

Today's travelers behave omnichannel by default. They search, plan, and manage their trips across websites, apps, social media, and physical locations—often simultaneously. These travelers expect seamless, real-time, and highly personalized interactions across every touchpoint, raising the bar for travel brands.

In modern tourism, the quality of the traveler's experience during moments of disruption—canceled flights, overbooked accommodations, unexpected emergencies—can be just as important as the trip itself.

These stressful moments often define the traveler's memory of the brand, making it essential for companies to respond swiftly, empathetically, and effectively.

[5] Organización Mundial del Turismo (OMT). (2020). Turismo y sostenibilidad. https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development
[6] World Economic Forum. (2020). Measuring Stakeholder Capitalism: Towards Common Metrics and Consistent Reporting of Sustainable Value Creation Measuring Stakeholder Capitalism: Towards Common Metrics and Consistent Reporting of Sustainable Value Creation | World Economic Forum

Environmental threats, public health crises, and growing pressure from regulators and travelers alike have revealed the tourism sector's vulnerability and the urgent need for compliance with sustainability and safety standards.

Many destinations still operate with outdated infrastructure and limited resources, especially among small and medium-sized businesses. This limits their ability to invest in certifications, clean technologies, and robust safety systems.

Balancing short-term profitability with long-term sustainability remains a major hurdle, especially for those with constrained budgets or fragmented operations.

Tourism is inherently global, and language diversity adds layers of complexity. Providing culturally accurate, multilingual support is resource-intensive, technologically demanding, and difficult to maintain at scale.

Compounding this is the seasonality of tourism. Sudden demand spikes require fast operational scaling—without compromising the customer experience.

Managing both linguistic and seasonal scalability at the same time magnifies the challenge and makes robust technological solutions essential.

The Power of Technology to Address These Challenges

Hyper-Personalization to Enable Scalability

As tourism demand grows, the risk of depersonalization increases. Hyper-personalization has become a critical strategy to deliver individual relevance at scale. Through technologies like artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and real-time recommendation engines, brands can tailor experiences based on traveler preferences, behaviors, and expectations [7]. This doesn't just enhance satisfaction and loyalty. It also helps optimize resource usage, drive sustainability, and reinforce the cultural value of each destination [8]. In short, hyper-personalization enables growth without sacrificing the human element.

CRM, Chatbots, and Omnichannel for the New Traveler

To meet the expectations of today's always-connected traveler, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tools play a pivotal role. Tourism-specific CRM systems collect and centralize traveler data, from booking history to browsing habits, providing a 360° view of the customer [9].

AI-powered chatbots extend that capability, offering 24/7 multilingual support, resolving inquiries, and assisting with bookings in real time. When integrated into an omnichannel ecosystem, these tools ensure consistent, contextual, and personalized engagement across every platform—from mobile apps to social media to live agents.

Additionally, chatbots with artificial intelligence play a crucial role in providing immediate and personalized attention across all channels. These virtual assistants not only resolve doubts automatically, but also optimize sales processes, loyalty and 24/7 support, as Zendesk points out [10]. According to ResearchGate [11], this seamless experience builds trust and fosters loyalty at every stage of the journey.

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[7] Accenture. (2021). The future of travel: New realities for a post-COVID world. https://www.accenture.com/us-en/insights/travel/future-travel-covid19 and World Economic Forum. (2017). Digital Transformation Initiative: Aviation, Travel and Tourism Industry. https://www.weforum.org/reports/digital-transformation-initiative-aviation-travel-and-tourism-industry

[8] WTTC. (2022). Sustainability and the Travel & Tourism Sector: A Review of Trends, Policies and Recommendations. World Travel & Tourism Council. https://wttc.org and OECD. (2020). OECD Tourism Trends and Policies 2020. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. https://doi.org/10.1787/6b47b985-en

[9] Inforserv: CRM in Tourism

[10] Zendesk: The 7 best travel chatbots for 2025

[11] ResearchGate (2024): (PDF) The Role of AI Enabled Chatbots in Omnichannel Customer Service

Operational Efficiency During Crises

In moments of disruption, operational efficiency becomes a brand's greatest asset. Rapid, coordinated, and empathetic responses are crucial for preserving trust and minimizing negative consequences [12]. Integrated CRM systems, automated service platforms, and proactive notifications help companies maintain real-time communication with travelers. A well-designed omnichannel strategy ensures support is consistent across phone, chat, email, mobile apps, and more [13] [14].

This not only reduces customer frustration. It also demonstrates a brand's resilience, responsiveness, and commitment to care.

The BTO Model for Sustainability and Safety

The Business Transformation Outsourcing (BTO) model offers a strategic way to embed sustainability and safety from the ground up. By consolidating planning, execution, and operations under a unified framework, it becomes easier to integrate international certifications (LEED, ISO), disaster resilience protocols, and other critical standards [15]. This structured approach also attracts institutional capital and access to green finance, as it offers long-term performance guarantees [16]. In essence, BTO projects create an enabling environment so that sustainability and safety are not an "additional cost", but an integrated value from the origin of the tourism business model.

[12] Deloitte. (2023). Tourism and crisis management: Strategies for resilience. Deloitte Insights. https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/consumer-business/articles/tourism-crisis-management.html

[13] Zendesk. (2024). How AI and chatbots are transforming customer service in travel. Zendesk Customer Experience Report. https://www.zendesk.com/service/ai/travel-chatbots/ and AIMultiple (2024). Travel chatbots and AI adoption trends in tourism. AIMultiple Research. https://research.aimultiple.com/travel-chatbot/

[14] Davincibot. (2024). Omnichannel in tourism: Improving the traveler's experience. https://www.davincibot.io/omnicanalidad-en-el-turismo/

[15] International Finance Corporation (IFC). (2022). EDGE Buildings. https://edgebuildings.com/, International Organization for Standardization (ISO). (2015). ISO 14001:2015 Environmental management systems — Requirements with guidance for use. https://www.iso.org/iso-14001-environmental-management.html and the US Green Building Council (USGBC). (2021). LEED Rating System. https://www.usgbc.org/leed

[16] World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). (2021). Safe Travels: Global Protocols & Stamp for the New Normal. https://wttc.org/

AI-Driven Scalability for Multilingual and Seasonal Peaks

Artificial intelligence and machine translation are powerful allies in addressing language diversity and seasonal surges. Virtual agents and automated systems can provide round-the-clock support in multiple languages, reducing strain on human teams and accelerating response times.

At the same time, scalable omnichannel platforms enable travel companies to manage customer service across multiple channels, including email, social media, live chat, mobile apps, and contact centers, without compromising consistency.

This infrastructure adapts quickly to seasonal peaks or sudden changes in demand while delivering a unified view of the customer for smarter, more strategic decision-making.

Use Cases

1   Omniquality to Personalize the Experience

Marina Bay Sands in Singapore integrated a virtual chatbot across platforms like Facebook Messenger and Instagram. This tool allowed guests to book rooms and restaurants, receive personalized recommendations for shops and attractions, build dynamic itineraries, and recover bookings through retargeting ads.

Benefit:
It made it possible to attract more customers, maximize interactions, and improve service efficiency.

Impact:
User acquisition through the chatbot **grew by more than 730%** [17].

2   AI for Fraud Detection and Cybersecurity

AccorHotels implemented a machine learning system to monitor transactions and bookings in real time. The system flagged suspicious activity including fraudulent payments and unauthorized access.

Benefit:
Improved customer confidence, complied with current regulations, and protected their revenue.

Impact:
Fraudulent transactions were **reduced by 40% during the first year** [18].

[17] AiChat: https://www.aichat.com/blog/how-travel-hospitality-brands-can-transform-guest-experience-with-ai-chatbots
[18] SmartDEV: https://smartdev.com/ai-in-hospitality-industry/

3 AI and Automation to Improve Crisis Efficiency

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Lufthansa faced overwhelming volumes of customer inquiries, refund requests, and flight changes. To manage this crisis, the airline deployed AI-powered chatbots to answer frequently asked questions, process cancellations and refunds, and implemented RPA (Robotic Process Automation) to streamline internal admin tasks. All service channels—phone, chat, email, app—were unified into a single platform.

Benefit:

They reduced waiting times, optimized staff use by freeing up agents to manage complex cases and improved customer experience.

Impact:

Achieved a **40% increase in productivity and a 60% reduction in case management time**.

Atento's Solution: A Consultative Model That Transforms Experiences

At Atento, we apply a comprehensive, consultative approach tailored to the tourism industry—merging operational excellence, innovative technology, and a human-centered strategy. Our **Business Transformation Outsourcing (BTO)** model is designed to support the entire traveler journey, from acquisition and loyalty to post-sale service and collections.

With a global team of specialized consultants and operational hubs, we develop customized solutions powered by:

• Omnichannel engagement
• Intelligent automation
• Predictive analytics

This enables real-time personalization, operational efficiency, and proactive behavior modeling. Our travel ecosystem includes:

• Community management
• Reservation assistance
• Multilingual support
• Post-pandemic safety protocols

All of these elements deliver measurable value for airlines, hotel chains, OTAs, and digital platforms.

We also provide **seasonal scalability of up to 250%** and multilingual service continuity to maintain quality and consistency across peak travel seasons. With tools like **Atento Insights** and **Atento Knowledge**, travel organizations can:

• Develop data-driven personalization strategies
• Automate key customer journeys
• Build long-term brand loyalty

Beyond functionality, our commitment to sustainability and innovation positions our BTO model as a catalyst for transforming tourism into a smarter, more efficient, and people-first industry

✚ The Journey, 10 Phases to Truly Connect

The traveler journey is no longer linear. It requires a 360° approach. That's why Atento has developed integrated solutions for every stage, creating continuous value and connection before, during, and after the trip:

1   **Discovery - Captivate with Precision:** With **Atento Travel Intelligence**, we use big data and AI to predict traveler interests even before they start planning. Our analysts transform contact center data into personalized messages that improve ad relevance and drive up to **25% more clicks**.

2   **Comparison - Guide without overwhelming:** Through our Atento Academy, agents are trained in systems like Amadeus and Sabre. We also provide a B2B marketplace where users can compare and book services with a single click—reducing decision time by **15%**.

3   **Decision & purchase - Convert with confidence:** While Booking.com's FAQ walk-through helps answer questions, Atento goes further. Our AI-enabled e-commerce platform offers tailored upsells like seat upgrades or insurance, increasing add-on sales by up to **12%**.

4   **Preparation - 360° Advice:** Our **Advisor Bot** creates smart itineraries and detects user hesitation through sentiment analysis, enabling timely, personalized support before departure.

5   **In-Route Notifications – Support Without Stress:** Delays, cancellations, and gate changes can frustrate travelers. We mitigate this with proactive messaging via SMS, WhatsApp, and app notifications, plus on-the-ground **Airport Support Teams** to manage rebookings and logistics in under **20 minutes**.

6   **On-Site Experience – Simplify Every Step:** Our Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) solution integrates taxi, train, and carpool options. We also encourage cultural immersion by offering ticketing for museums and events—leading **30% of users** to engage with upsells..

7   **Post-trip - Listen and Learn:** We provide multichannel feedback tools with built-in sentiment analysis, helping partners improve **CSAT scores by 18%** and fine-tune experiences continuously.

8   **Loyalty - Reward and Retain:** Our gamification programs engage travelers beyond the trip. In fact, **70% of users** stay active for more than five years, creating lasting customer relationships.

9   **Insurance & Health – Deliver Peace of Mind:** We integrate the multichannel sale of travel insurance and health services into the booking flow. Travelers can purchase coverage in less than **90 seconds with voice authentication** for validation.

10   **On-Destination Services – Go Beyond the Trip:** Our platform provides in-trip conveniences like foreign currency purchases, consular assistance, and accessibility info—all from the same ecosystem. These services help position brands as trusted travel companions.

CX Solutions for Travel

Technology with human touch	Atento Services	Demands of the sector	Results
Acquisition	• Marketing Digital • RR. SS & Community Management • Sales Support • Booking Assistance • Multi-channel support for travelers	• Personalized experience • Digital transformation • Omnichannel Engagement	**Improve CX Increase sales**
Experience	• Itinerary management • General Customer Service • Frontline care • Support for travel agencies • Ticketing Support • Ticket/travel changes • Notification of Schedules	• Personalized experience • Digital transformation • Health and safety improvements • Omnichannel Engagement	**50% reduction in resolution time**
Retention	• Loyalty, PPP Management • After-sales and loyalty services • CSAT Surveys	• Personalized experience	**12% improvement in customer satisfaction**
Billing	• Invoicing and billing management • Handle pay stubs	• Operational efficiency	**BMT: 25% reduction TCO: 91% reduction**
Technology Solutions	• Atento Insights • Atento Knowledge • Atento Conversations • Xtrabot • Intelligent automation	• Hyper-personalization at scale • Operational efficiency • Proactive Support • Data-driven decisions	**65% chatbot resolution rate** **50% reduction in human intervention**

✚ Atento's Success Stories

Case 1:

Boosting Operational Efficiency with AI

Challenge:

During peak season, A Global Airline faced an overwhelming spike in customer service demand. Call wait times exceeded 40 minutes, satisfaction scores dropped, and their Net Promoter Score (NPS) reflected growing frustration. Their customer experience, crucial in the airline industry, was at risk.

Solution:

Within just 45 days, Atento implemented a complete omnichannel solution. This included a multilingual chatbot for real-time service, digital channels integrated with human agents, and a smart alert system that prioritized urgent requests.

Results:

: In the first three months, response times were reduced by 35%, complaints fell by 40%, and NPS saw a 22-point increase. However, beyond the metrics, the most valuable aspect was the change in travelers' perception. As one of them commented, "Finally, someone responds like we're face to face."

Case 2:

Driving Sales Through Omnichannel Strategy

Challenge:

A hotel chain needed to modernize its digital customer support. Guests were demanding fast service for bookings, spa appointments, late check-outs, and other requests—particularly through WhatsApp. Their phone-only model wasn't cutting it.

Solution:

Atento rolled out an omnichannel support model centered around WhatsApp, while also maintaining traditional voice channels. We deployed dedicated teams, automated workflows, and centralized request tracking to streamline response and sales conversion.

Results:

Atento managed to increase customer interactions by 60% and sales close by 20%.

Case 3:

Enhancing Quality and Access to Information with AI

Challenge:

A U.S. government agency handling disaster relief had 58 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), which overwhelmed agents and slowed responses during urgent moments.

Solution:

Atento deployed its AI-based Knowledge Assistant to instantly search and deliver the right SOP answers in real time. The assistant was trained using machine learning and integrated into the contact center workflow—augmenting agent performance without disrupting routines.

Results:

Quality assurance (QA) scores have improved by 25 p.p. since the solution was implemented

➕ Conclusion

The tourism sector is at a pivotal moment. Technology is no longer a differentiator. It's a strategic necessity in a globalized, fast-changing, and customer-driven environment. The integration of artificial intelligence, automation, data analytics, and flexible operating models is not just meeting traveler expectations, it's generating tangible results in efficiency, profitability, and brand resilience.

Through models such as BTO, omnichannel strategies and advanced hyper-personalization capabilities, companies can scale without losing their human touch. They can flex with seasonal demand without sacrificing service quality. They can offer multilingual experiences without skyrocketing costs.

As we've seen through real-world examples, this blend of technology and consultative expertise doesn't just optimize processes—it strengthens traveler loyalty, boosts satisfaction, and drives long-term business growth.

Atento plays a critical role in orchestrating this transformation. Our philosophy is simple: every experience starts with a conversation. Whether it's a virtual assistant that speaks naturally, an agent who anticipates a need, or an automated alert that guides travelers at the right moment—each interaction reinforces the bond between brand and customer.

We don't deploy AR/VR, AI, or automation just for innovation's sake. We implement these technologies to create emotionally meaningful, efficient, and seamless travel experiences.

Because travelers today aren't just looking for information or convenience. They want to feel understood, safe, and supported—even in a digital-first world.

In an industry where decisions are shaped by both logic and emotion, trust is built through consistency, empathy, and responsiveness. It's not about the channel—it's about the connection.

At Atento, we design intelligent, human-centered experiences that turn digital interactions into moments of real connection. With tools like conversational AI, predictive analytics, and secure data handling—combined with culturally aware, multilingual human talent—we ensure that every interaction represents your brand with care and confidence.

Because in tourism, every conversation counts. And in a market as exposed and competitive as this one, that difference is what sets you apart.

Ready to transform your travel experience?   **Contact us**

Contact us for a free consultation on your travel customer experience and and discover how we can elevate your NPS, reduce costs, and become your trusted travel partner.