

Ux Case Study

Rethinking the Hotel Booking Flow

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The Challenge

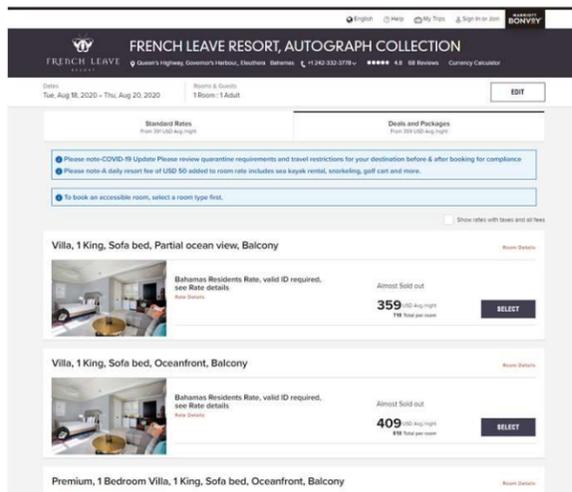
Hyatt and most hotels have historically presented booking in the same way...and it doesn't match the guests' mental model

Across the industry, most hotels require that after the property selection, the user must choose all aspects of their room(s) in one or two laborious steps

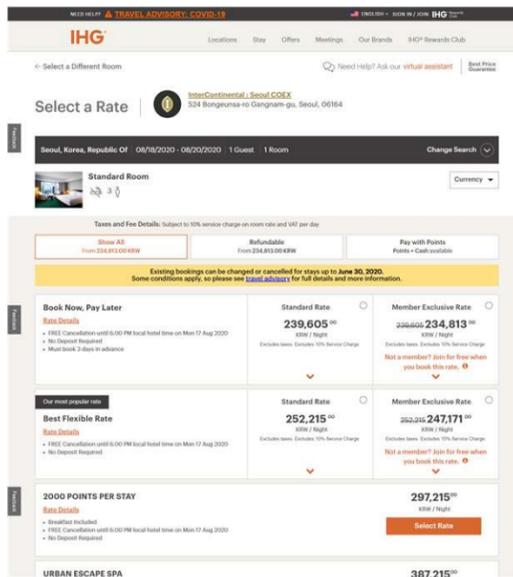
This results in the tight clustering of several decision at a single point in the process instead of providing a natural, more personalized selection process.

In addition, personalization is further limited by the lack of additional products and services in the flow.

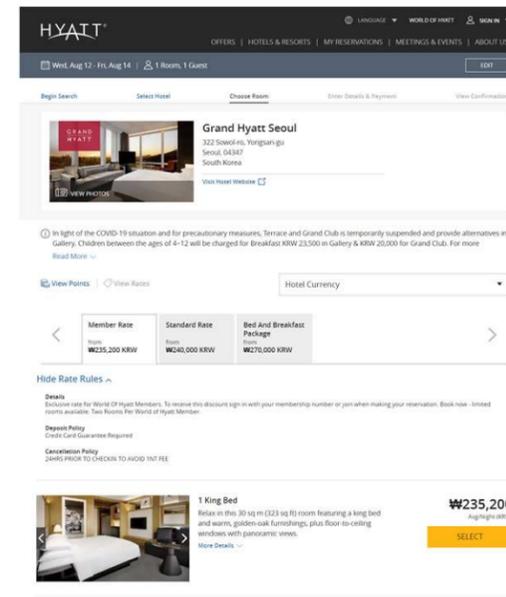
Marriott



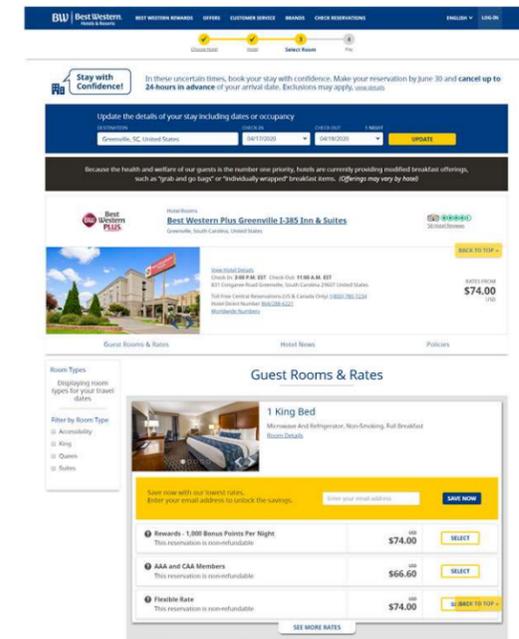
IHG



Hyatt



Best Western

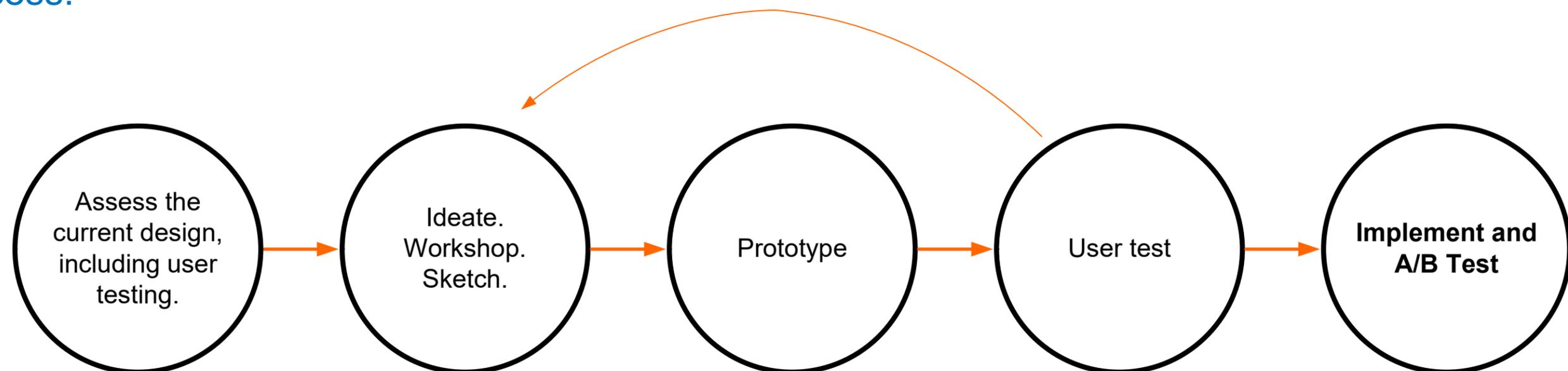


The Goals & Process

Goals:

- Help customers get to the room type they want *faster* and *easier*
- Make it less work and more fun to book a room
- Enable guests to add on additional products a la carte -- and see the savings
- Simplify decisions to improve confidence and satisfaction
- Reduce cognitive load
- Disrupt the industry model of presenting rooms and make it better

Process:

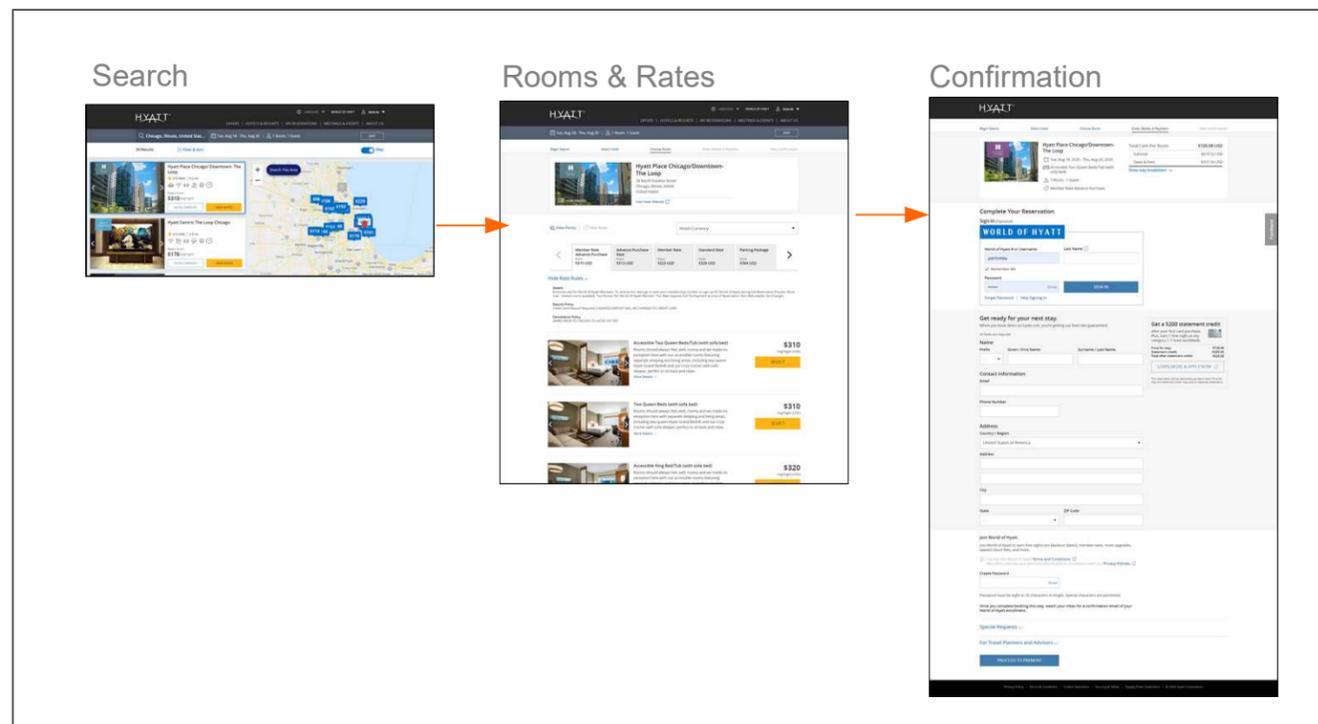


Hyatt's Rooms & Rates Page

Hyatt's current Rooms & Rates page combines multiple types of information and decision points on one page, including:

- Number of beds
- Size of beds
- Room type
- Rate type
- Package rates (Bed & Breakfast, etc.)
- Payment types - points vs. cash
- Advance purchase vs. pay later

Hyatt's Current Booking Flow



Hyatt's Rooms & Rates Page

The screenshot shows the Hyatt website interface for the 'Choose Room' step. It features the Hyatt logo, navigation links, and search parameters (Tue, Oct 9 - Wed, Oct 10 | 1 Room, 1 Guest). The main content area displays the hotel name 'Hyatt Regency Dallas' and its address. Below this, there are several key elements:

- Points and Rates:** A section with 'View Points' and 'View Rates' buttons, and a 'Hotel Currency' dropdown.
- Rate Packages:** A carousel of rate options:

Member Rate Advance Purchase from \$285 USD	Member Rate from \$294 USD	Standard Rate from \$299 USD	JFK Museum Package from \$315 USD	Bed And Breakfast from \$329 USD
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- Room Selection:** A 'Guest Room Queen' is highlighted with a price of \$285 Avg/Night (USD) and a 'SELECT' button. The description includes: 'Relax in this 350 sq ft room with two queen sized Hyatt Grand Beds™, contemporary décor, a refrigerator, 32" flat screen TV, and city or park views.'
- Details and Policies:** A 'Hide Rate Rules' section containing 'Details', 'Deposit Policy', and 'Cancellation Policy'.

Points

Rates

Packages

Bed & Room Type

Too Many Choices

Through qualitative research, we observed and heard...

- There are too many attributes to review and comprehend on the page
- Some of the options are hidden – to the right of the carousel
- Comparing rooms across rates is difficult because guests have to click across every tab
- Guests have to scroll up and down, left and right to find what they are looking for
- In some cases, when we have multiple tabs and room types, we create a situation of too many choices (Paradox of Choice) and decision paralysis

The screenshot shows the Hyatt website interface for a hotel booking. The page is titled "Hyatt Regency Dallas" and displays various options for rates, packages, and room types. Annotations highlight specific areas:

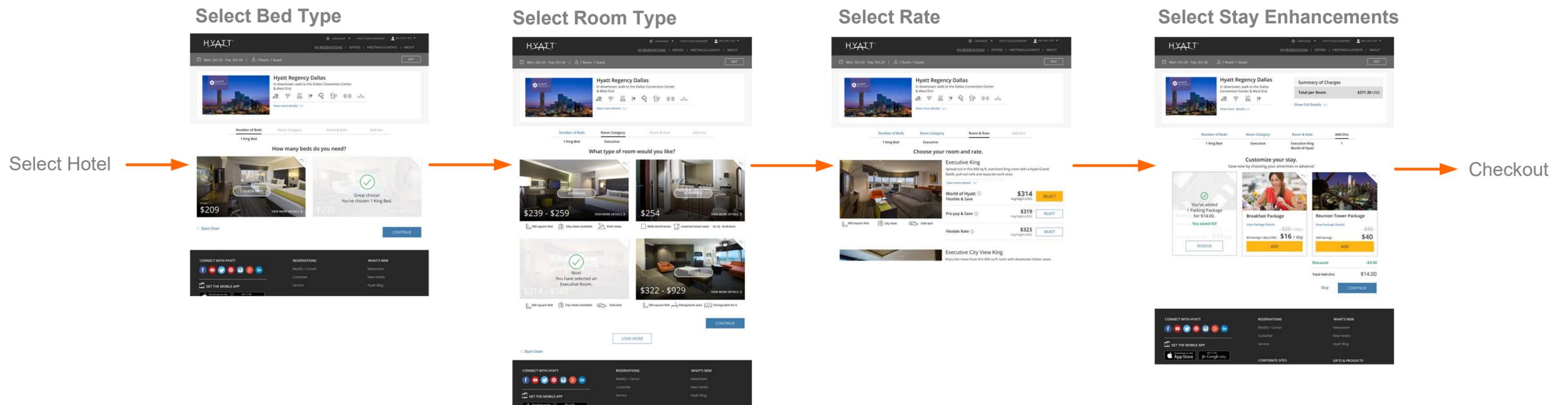
- Points:** Points to the "View Points" and "View Rates" buttons.
- Rates:** Points to the rate cards for "Member Rate Advance Purchase from \$285 USD", "Member Rate from \$294 USD", "Standard Rate from \$299 USD", "JFK Museum Package from \$315 USD", and "Bed And Breakfast from \$329 USD".
- Packages:** Points to the "Hide Rate Rules" section.
- Bed & Room Type:** Points to the "Guest Room Queen" room type, which is priced at \$285 Avg/Night (USD).

Unbundle the Decisions

Our hypothesis was that the user wants to make room selections in a process based on their travel and trip needs...

1. The user knows the bed type(s) they want. This is their natural first selection
2. The room types should be presented based on the bed type choice and the available rooms
3. The rates naturally follow based on the bed and room types selected
4. The user wants to select options/add-ons to enhance their stay

Prototype screens and flow:



Allow for Adding Stay Enhancements

Further, our hypothesis was that guests would be more open to booking package rates (e.g., Breakfast, City Tour, Parking) and even book multiple add-ons if we:

- Present add-ons contextually, after they decided on a room
- Enable guests to customize their booking by selecting add-ons a la carte
- Create transparency around the cost of individual add-ons
- Show the value of selecting add-ons while booking
- Allow for the selecting of multiple add-ons

The screenshot displays the Hyatt website interface for a booking at Hyatt Regency Dallas. The top navigation bar includes the Hyatt logo, language selection, user account (MR CHRIS TEST), and links for MY RESERVATIONS, OFFERS, MEETINGS & EVENTS, and ABOUT. The booking details show dates from Mon, Oct 23 to Tue, Oct 24 for 1 Room, 1 Guest. The hotel name is Hyatt Regency Dallas, with a description: 'In downtown; walk to the Dallas Convention Center & West End'. A 'Summary of Charges' box indicates a 'Total per Room' of \$357.30 USD. Below this, a table lists the booking details: 1 King Bed, Executive Room Category, and Executive King World of Hyatt rate. The 'Customize your stay' section encourages users to 'Save now by choosing your amenities in advance!' and features three add-on packages: Parking Package (original \$17/day, savings \$3/day, current \$14/day), Breakfast Package (original \$20/day, savings \$4/day, current \$16/day), and Reunion Tower Package (original \$80, savings \$40, current \$40). Each package has an 'ADD' button. At the bottom right, the 'Total Add-Ons' are \$0.00, with 'Skip' and 'CONTINUE' buttons.

Number of Beds	Room Category	Room & Rate	Add-Ons
1 King Bed	Executive	Executive King World of Hyatt	

Customize your stay.
Save now by choosing your amenities in advance!

Package Name	Original Price / Day	Savings / Day (USD)	Current Price / Day	Action
Parking Package	\$17 / day	\$3 Savings / day (USD)	\$14 / day	ADD
Breakfast Package	\$20 / day	\$4 Savings / day (USD)	\$16 / day	ADD
Reunion Tower Package	\$80	\$40 Savings	\$40	ADD

Total Add-Ons: \$0.00

Skip CONTINUE

Apply the Appropriate Principles

Our goal was to create a booking flow that matches the user's expectations and serves as a pleasant – fun – experience for them as they plan their upcoming travel. To do that, we drew from Hick's Law and Fitt's Law...

- We unbundled the decisions and created multiple, more user-centric steps, removing the overwhelming number of choices and allowing for quicker understanding over 3 steps (Hick's Law)
- We provided content made up of large images that are readily understood and easy to acquire (Fitt's Law)
- The ease of comprehension and movement from step-to-step negates any increases in the number of user selections

Hick's Law...

Essentially, increasing the number of choices will increase the decision time

Fitt's Law...

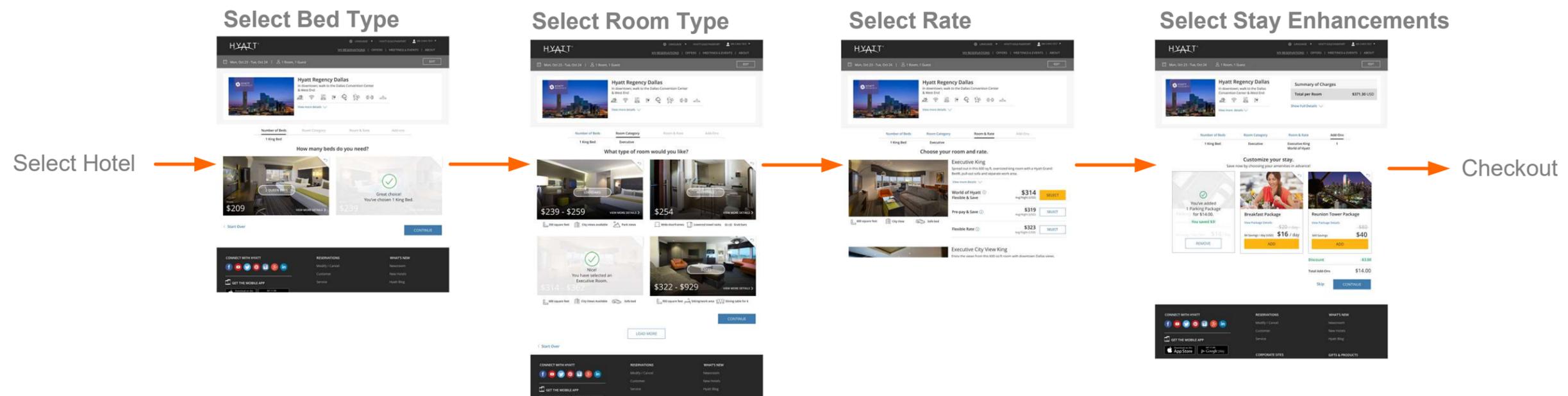
- The time it takes someone to select an object depends on how far they are from the object and the size of the object
- Small objects that are far from their starting position or related objects that are far from each other take the longest time to select
- Large objects that are close to your starting position or related objects that are close together take the shortest time to select

Positive User Feedback

We user tested the prototype and the result was positive and encouraging....

- Participants were pleasantly surprised by the simpler model and were more successful in selecting a room that fit their needs when options were presented as steps
- Participants were very open -- and ready -- to consider adding on to their booking *after* they had made decisions about their room
- Participants did not notice additional steps and said it seemed faster than on Hyatt.com
- Participants described the new flow as “easy,” “fun” “guided,” “like a “wizard” and “step-by-step”
- Unanimous preference for step model

Prototype screens and flow:

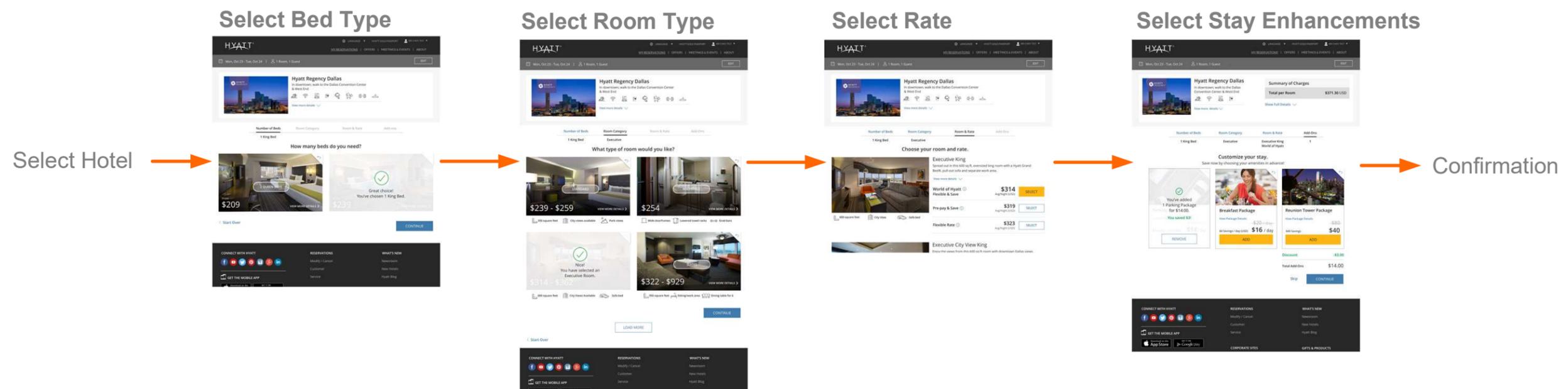


Constructive User Feedback

There was also helpful feedback to assist us in improving the design...

- Most participants did not realize the cards could be flipped to view more information on the other side
 - Flip icon missed or misunderstood - some thought it indicated a 360 view
 - Most did see “View Details” link when it was added to the card
- Some felt each step should auto-progress instead of clicking on the “continue” button
- Progress bar not always seen/noticed -- but didn't take away from the experience
- On add-ons, many missed the savings message or were unsure why they were getting a savings

Prototype screens and flow:

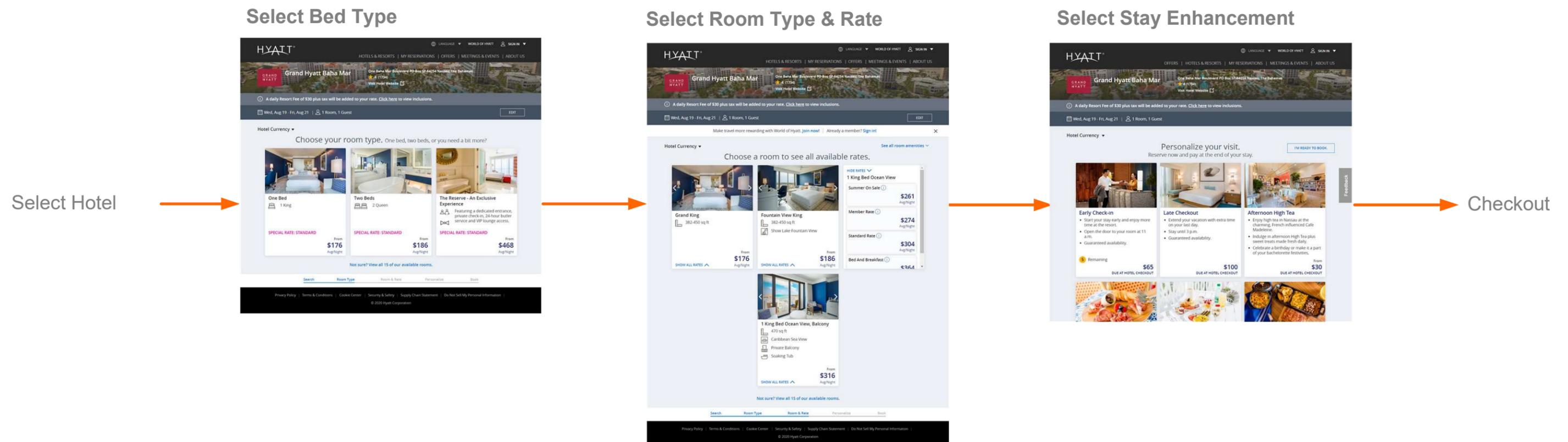


Implementation and A/B Testing

Over the course of many months following our testing and iterative concept refinement, a version has been implemented and is in A/B testing.

- The updated flow has been released to a select 13 hotels
- As a part of A/B testing protocol, the new flow is exposed to varying percentages of users booking hotel rooms

Implemented Improved Booking Flow:



The Tentative Results

So far, the new design is performing well in the A/B test...

The 13 hotels in the test group have collectively experienced a **~\$2.5 million increase** in revenue for Q1 of 2020 when compared to Q1 of 2019

The screenshot displays the Hyatt website interface for the Grand Hyatt Baha Mar. At the top, the Hyatt logo is on the left, and navigation links for LANGUAGE, WORLD OF HYATT, and SIGN IN are on the right. Below the logo, there are links for OFFERS, HOTELS & RESORTS, MY RESERVATIONS, MEETINGS & EVENTS, and ABOUT US. The main header features the hotel name "Grand Hyatt Baha Mar" with a "GRAND HYATT" badge, a 4-star rating (1734 reviews), and the address "One Baha Mar Boulevard PO Box SP-64254 Nassau, The Bahamas". A note indicates a daily Resort Fee of \$30 plus tax. The stay dates are "Wed, Aug 19 - Fri, Aug 21" for "1 Room, 1 Guest".

The main content area is titled "Personalize your visit. Reserve now and pay at the end of your stay." with an "I'M READY TO BOOK." button. Three promotional offers are featured:

- Early Check-in:** Start your stay early and enjoy more time at the resort. Open the door to your room at 11 a.m. Guaranteed availability. Price: \$65 (5 Remaining). DUE AT HOTEL CHECKOUT.
- Late Checkout:** Extend your vacation with extra time on your last day. Stay until 3 p.m. Guaranteed availability. Price: \$100. DUE AT HOTEL CHECKOUT.
- Afternoon High Tea:** Enjoy high tea in Nassau at the charming, French influenced Cafe Madeleine. Indulge in afternoon High Tea plus sweet treats made fresh daily. Celebrate a birthday or make it a part of your bachelorette festivities. Price: From \$30. DUE AT HOTEL CHECKOUT.

At the bottom, there are three images showing food and drink options. A vertical "Feedback" button is located on the right side of the page.

What's Next?

Further research is required to gain a full perspective on user responses to the new flow as a whole

The increases in revenue are promising but continual, ongoing refinement is required to ensure the user is being presented with the correct information and the correct amount of information at the appropriate time.

- Iterative user testing and revision
- Application of A/B testing protocol in all areas of the flow and revising iteratively based on results
- Assessing customer satisfaction via other available methods

Implemented Improved Booking Flow:

