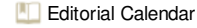




SUBSCRIBE NOW



**BIG THINGS**  
are on the horizon...  
**Sabre** Hospitality Solutions.  
Property Management System

High Potentials?

Think you know distribution?  
  
Think again.  
www.siteminder.com

**REAL ESTATE AUCTION**  
Auction - June 8th  
Oceanfront 51-room  
Full Service Hotel  
Palm Beach Shores, FL  
Fisheirauction.com  
FISHER 800.331.6620

Share |

PURCHASE PDF ARTICLE

**HotelExecutive.com**  
YOUR VIEW FROM THE TOP  
Maximize Your Reach: Advertise with  
HOTELEXECUTIVE.COM



Ms. Frank

Website / Online Merchandising / SEO

## Setting Priorities for Hotel Website Improvements

By [Tema Frank](#), President, Web Mystery Shoppers International Inc.

### Site Goals Are Key

How you set priorities depends on what your goals are for the site. If your main goal is to get more conference and event bookings you'll focus on different aspects of the site than if you are primarily after foreign tourists, which will again differ from a target market of repeat business travelers.

### Website Statistics

One of the most useful ways to get clues about what changes are needed is to look at your website statistics. These are also called "metrics" or "analytics", and you probably have access to some of this data already through your internet hosting company (or "ISP", in the industry jargon).

At a minimum, your hosting company should be able to tell you where people found your site, how many visitors you are getting, and how many visited each specific page. If there's a page you think is crucial but almost no one is seeing, that's a good indication that either your site structure needs changing, or what you are saying is simply not compelling enough for people to want to read it and continue on your site. Change is needed.

The cost of site analytics packages ranges from free to tens of thousands of dollars, depending on how sophisticated you want to get. At the more expensive end, you can find out what exact paths people are taking through your site, and details such as where their mouse traveled and/or where most users' eyes rested on each page. This will give you further clues about where trouble spots are.

### Study Customer Feedback

Next, you want to combine that insight with customer or user feedback to figure out not just where people are getting stuck or turned off, but why. You'll be able to collect some of this user feedback from talking with the people who deal directly with your customers, such as call centre staff and front-desk staff. But unless there are glaring problems and your customers are loyal enough to be willing to tell you about them rather than clicking over to a competitor's site, you still won't know how typical these customer experiences were, nor exactly where on the site they ran into problems.

Even more important, you won't hear from those who were so uninspired by your site that they skipped over it with barely a glance. People who volunteer feedback tend to be at the extremes. If they love something or hate something they'll tell you, but if they are only mildly positive or negative they won't, even though their mild skew will affect how they respond to your sales efforts.

### Usability Testing

Receive our daily newsletter with the latest breaking news and hotel management best practices.

SIGN UP



Hotel Business Review on Facebook

Like

1189 likes. Sign Up to see what your friends like.

### RESOURCE CENTER - SEARCH ARCHIVES

Select a topic...

Select an author...

Select a Feature Focus...

General Search:

Search



## Feature Focus

Discussions on Emerging Growth Markets

**MAY: The Hotel Spa High Value Marketing**



## Hotel Wi-Fi: Balancing Budget & Bandwidth

By [Craig Ziegler](#), President, SuiteLinq, Inc.

Ten to fifteen years ago, the need for Wi-Fi connectivity in a hotel was based on the guests' needs for basic data and voice transfer. Today, multiple technologies are converging thus creating a major stress point on bandwidth allocation. Bandwidth that was once more than sufficient is no longer efficient. With the ever-increasing demand for bandwidth via guests' personal devices and desire for video transmission, hotels must analyze the metrics between costs and ROI. The debate now becomes... does the hotel offer it free of charge, thus "eating the cost for the increased demand", or do hotels create incremental revenue through various streams to help cover the cost increase in bandwidth to deliver this content? And, if the hotel wants to increase its revenue streams, in what unique ways can it be supplemented? [READ MORE](#)



## Wi-Fi's New Revenue Opportunity and Operating Liabilities

By [Colby Goff](#), Senior Vice President of Strategy and Business Development, Boingo Wireless

Formal usability testing can help you figure out why people are responding the way they are, and provide ideas about how to make the necessary fixes. If the testing only involves a few testers, you have to look at all the recommendations that come out of the research and use your judgment about the seriousness of each of the issues identified.

Often you'll get contradictory views expressed, which poses its own decision-making challenges. I was chatting with a friend the other day who was telling me how he loved the feather pillows at a hotel chain I had stayed at recently. I'm allergic to feathers, so I was actually annoyed when I couldn't find any non-feather pillows in the room. How do you know which of us is more typical of your customers? Likewise, looking at your website, some will love the home page image; others will hate it. Should you change it or not?

There are two main ways of approaching this problem: trial and error, or test with a statistically significant sample size. If your analytics or small sample size usability test have pointed to a possible problem page, you can make some changes to the page, put it up on the Web and measure the impact of the change on conversion rates (the percentage of site visitors who call or book online). If it has little impact (or a negative one), you know you still haven't addressed the key issue(s).

With a significant sample size test (statisticians usually insist on a minimum of about 30 people in a sample), you get a much clearer sense of which issues are affecting the majority of your target customers, and how to change your site to meet their concerns. You'll be able to find out if most people liked or disliked the home page image, for example, and act accordingly.

### Return on Investment

There's one final, but crucial, issue to consider in setting website priorities: the expected cost/benefit tradeoff of making the changes. Let's say these two recommendations emerge from testing:

#### Which should be your priority?

First, try to figure out how many of your target customers would be affected by either change. If your target customers are families, # 1 may be the more urgent issue to fix. If yours is a hotel that is mainly aimed at busy, impatient business travelers, implementing #2 may be the higher priority.

Next, look to your research to find out which of these issues is actually causing significant problems, and try to estimate the increase in bookings if the problem were solved. If you discover that a large proportion of users begin to fill out forms but do not complete the process, it is likely that many of them are getting errors, losing their data, and are too annoyed to re-enter their information. If fixing # 2 could get even an extra 10% of those who begin to fill out forms to complete them, you can easily calculate how much that would contribute to your profit margin. How likely is it that changing issue #1 would yield a similar increase in your sales conversion rates? If your target market is families, it might have an even bigger impact than fixing #2. Parents may be so thrilled by the level of detail you now offer on kids and pets that they'll go to the effort of phoning you or trying again if their data gets lost due to an error message.

(Sadly, there are not yet any industry standards that can predict exactly how much of a conversion increase you would get from any particular change. Norms will probably evolve over time, but the Internet is still too young and evolving too quickly for that. We recommend you start tracking the impact of your changes though, so that you'll be able to tap into that knowledge in future site revisions.)

While your marketing folks are making these calculations, have your technical staff estimate how much it will cost to make each change. Put the cost and marketing projections together and, bingo, you'll be able to project where the greatest return on your investment is likely to be. That then becomes the basis for setting your website revision priorities.

Tema Frank is president of Web Mystery Shoppers International Inc. Her company's proprietary website assessment uses an ever-changing panel of some 50,000 people testing web sites from their own computers and providing detailed feedback. Her company has produced research insights that have been valued by companies such as Expedia, Sabre Holdings (Travelocity), Travelweb, OctopusTravel, and many others. She serves on the research committee of the Web Analytics Association and on the Editorial Board of User Experience magazine. Ms. Frank can be contacted at 780-444-5645 or [tema@webmysteryshoppers.com](mailto:tema@webmysteryshoppers.com) [Extended Bio...](#)

*HotelExecutive.com retains the copyright to the articles published in the Hotel Business Review. Articles cannot be republished without prior written consent by HotelExecutive.com.*

Over the last five years, the wireless data world experienced fundamental changes that shifted the focus of Wi-Fi network operators from a niche market of laptop users to a mainstream base of smartphone users. The proliferation of devices and the explosion of data intensive apps have placed increasing pressure on Wi-Fi networks to support the digital lifestyle of a larger audience. This market growth is accompanied by a rise in security exploits and an increase in requests for information from government agencies. The newest opportunity in this landscape – 3G/4G data offload – presents a revenue opportunity that offsets increased operating costs and capital improvements required. [READ MORE](#)



## Hotel Internet Security Concerns

By Ian Millar, Deputy Director of INTEHL, Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne

For many months now the internet has not been one of the nicest places to exist. From the actions of anonymous, to the implementation of SOPA (Stop Online Piracy Acts) implemented by U.S representative Lamar S. Smith, the work of the movement Antisec, and even NASA admitted early this month that Hackers gained "full functional control" of key NASA computers in 2011, which unsurprisingly came from Chinese IP addresses. Mr Martin of NASA outlined how the agency suffered "5,408 computer security incidents" between 2010 and 2011. [READ MORE](#)



## Hotel Wi-Fi: The Biggest Challenges and Recommended Solutions

By Jeremy Rock, Principal & Founder, RockIT Group

Wireless Internet is changing the way business gets done in the hotel industry. There's a tremendous demand for wireless access - for overnight guests and even for conferences and trade shows where video streaming, audio streaming and voice-over-IP are all competing for the same Internet pipe. It's not just for email and web surfing anymore. Wireless has also created new ways for hotels to connect with their guests to generate loyalty. Wi-Fi has become a standard amenity. It's becoming a determining factor on where guests choose to stay. But few guests would say they're happy with the current sign-up and security concerns of hotel Wi-Fi. With mobile media hitting the mainstream, hotels are eager to find affordable and non-disruptive solutions to meet guest demand for reliable, consistent in-building cellular coverage. [READ MORE](#)

 **Hotel Newswire**

Free Daily Industry News Updates

Post your hotel business news over the Hotel Newswire and reach over 50,000 hotel executives for FREE

[SUBMIT NEWS](#)

 **Hotel Newswire** The internet's leading business news resource

Warning: this comments plugin is operating in compatibility mode, but has no posts yet. Consider specifying an explicit "href" as suggested in the [comments plugin documentation](#) to take advantage of all plugin features.

**Find us on Facebook**

**Sign Up** Create an account or **log in** to see what your friends like.

**Hotel Business Review**

**Hotel Business Review**

Bill Kotrba of JDA Software explores hotel pricing, and provides an interesting perspective on the psychology behind numbers and how hotels can maximize revenues by sticking to a numerical formula. A very interesting article indeed!

**HotelExecutive.com - Business Review - Do Hotel Prices Really Need to End In 9?, by Bill Kotrba**  
[hotelexecutive.com](http://hotelexecutive.com)

Is pricing ending in 9 an outdated 20th century carryover from the pre-e-commerce era? Does anyone care anymore what the last digit of a price is, when

1,189 people like **Hotel Business Review**.

Facebook social plugin

*Coming Up In The June Online Hotel Business Review*



*"Hotel Business Review offers weekly articles for hotel management and operation and discussion on emerging growth markets."*

**FEATURE FOCUS**

**Hotel Sustainable Development: Principles and Best Practices**

Sustainability is now a daily topic that affects every facet of hotel development and operations. As hotelier Hervé Houdré recently noted "The goal of Sustainable Development is clearly to secure economic development, social equity, and environmental protection. As much as they could work in harmony, these goals sometimes work against each other". In the June Hotel Business Review, some of the industry's most recognized sustainable development experts come together to identify emerging trends and discuss how sustainability is currently affecting the hotel industry. Each author presents the most important aspects of sustainable development of much interest to hotel owners, operators,

**INSIGHTS FOR INDUSTRY LEADERS BY INDUSTRY LEADERS**

**"300,000 Rooms Complete, 15,700,000 to Go"**

*By Larry Mogelonsky, President and Founder, LMA Communications*

**"Destination Earth: A Customized Approach to Sustainability"**

*By Mark Hickey, Senior Vice President of U.S. Hotel Operations, Destination Hotels*

**"Why This New Standard is Going to change Hotel Energy Management Forever?"**

*By Robert Allender, Managing Director, Energy Resources Management*

**"How Two Major Hotel Companies are Turning Sustainability into Tangible Business Advantage"**

*By Christopher Wood, Director of Social Responsibility, ASAE Convene Green Alliance*

**PLUS: Green Certification - Development & Investment Outlook - Case Studies - Green Design & Sustainable Development Strategies - Green Luxury - CSR Programs - Green Facility Management**

investors and developers. We include perspectives and case studies on best practices from leading hotel groups and other industry players.

---

Copyright © 1996-2011. All content on HotelExecutive.com is exclusively copyright to HotelExecutive.com and cannot be republished without prior written consent by HotelExecutive.com.

[Contact](#) [Advertise](#) [Submit a News Release](#) [Terms of Access & Use](#) [Unsubscribe Hotel](#)  
[Newswire](#) [RSS](#)

For 15 years, the Hotel Business Review journal has been a leading online resource for hotel executives, providing white papers on best practices in hotel management and operations. With a dedicated board of more than 300 contributing editors - some of the most recognizable names in hotels - the Hotel Business Review maintains a progressive flow of exclusive content every week, so that owners, operators, senior executives, investors and developers can stay informed on the constant changes in the hotel industry.