

The Center for Hospitality Research

Hospitality Leadership Through Learning

www.chr.cornell.edu



SUBSCRIBE NOW



Think you know distribution?



Think again.

www.siteminder.com

BIG THINGS

are on the horizon...

Sabre Hospitality Solutions.

Property Management System

Need a Better Strategy to Retain Your....



REAL ESTATE AUCTION

Auction - June 8th

Oceanfront 51-room Full Service Hotel Palm Beach Shores, FL

Fisherauction.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

Ten Traps to Avoid on Your Hotel Website

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

You know from experience that there's more to creating that wonderful hotel environment than just a good looking lobby. You need staff who greet guests well, facilities in good repair, comfortable beds, clean bathrooms, and so on. The same goes for your website: the best-looking website in the world might still not generate more bookings for you if you commit one or more of these common hotel website errors:

1. Hide the lobby

When people get to your website they don't want to waste time trying to figure out the basics before they can get started on their booking. They are not interested in waiting for a flash demo to load, even if it does show how elegant your facilities are and help create a luxurious mood. Your home page should contain a booking search tool. The home page can (and should) also have images that convey your style, and links to the key information people need to have answered before they book. But let them start the process right away if they are ready.

2. Only show the lobby

Looking through comments made by hundreds of users on dozens of hotel websites one of the most frequently heard is that they want to see pictures of the rooms. It makes them feel more confident about what they'll be getting than does a mere description of the hotel rooms and/or a picture of the common areas. A picture won't tell them if the beds are comfy, but at least reassures them that the rooms look reasonable.

3. Assume that everyone has a broadband connection

About half the US population still do not have high speed internet connections. This poses a challenge for hotel sites, since, as noted above, users want to see pictures of the hotel rooms, facilities and, ideally, surroundings. Ensure that whatever graphics you provide do not slow the site down significantly for modem users. Use image compression and/or offer two versions of your site: one for those who have broadband connections and another, simpler, one for those who do not.

4. Hide

These things seem obvious, but are surprisingly often overlooked:

5. Be unprofessional

Even if yours is a small hotel, you need to assure site visitors that you are knowledgeable and trustworthy. If your facility is small, you can turn that into a positive by still looking professional, but providing lots of information about the owners, pictures of them and/or the staff, and client testimonials. These things will all help create a sense of trust at the same

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



Hotel Business Review on Facebook

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:

 **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

time as playing to your strength: the personal experience you can deliver for your guests.

6. Forget your target market

How is your hotel different? Why would people stay with you instead of somebody else? On the internet, you've got a lot more competition than if somebody just stepped off a train with a heavy suitcase and is looking up and down the block for a place to stay. Make sure that your site clearly spells out your point of differentiation. You can be more expensive than the rest, but your site has to make it clear why it is worth paying more. Show the luxury. Stress it. If you have a low-price strategy, emphasize your pricing on the site. You could even have a price comparison tool to help prove that your prices are the best. For a personal service focus, see the suggestions in point 5, above.

7. Hide room prices and taxes

This is crucial information, so why do many sites neglect to include it? Even business travelers are usually on some sort of a budget. Everybody wants to know what their stay will cost. And to them, all the taxes that drive up the bill are part of the cost. They feel misled if you've told them that a stay will cost \$150 a night but the bill comes closer to \$200 once the taxes are added on. By all means, split out the amount of the cost that is your price from the taxes, but don't pretend that the taxes are irrelevant in the decision-making process.

8. Alienate your prospective non-American customers

We all have trouble seeing ourselves as others see us. So it is easy to give offence without meaning to. On hotel sites, one way this often happens is companies using flags as stand-ins to indicate the language of a site. Canadians, the British, Australians, New Zealanders, and others may be upset to be lumped in under a US flag to signify "English". And some countries, like Canada, Belgium, Switzerland, India, and others have more than one official language. So does a Canadian flag mean the site is in English or French?

9. Ask for irrelevant information

You may have sound marketing reasons for wanting to know as much as possible about your site visitors and hotel guests, but why should they have to tell you? One hotel site we recently tested asked not only how many children would be staying in the room (a reasonable request) but the names of the children. Tester after tester complained that this was an unwarranted invasion of their privacy. When you really do need some information that might seem odd (perhaps there is a law in your jurisdiction that requires you keep a record of the names of all people, even children, staying in your hotel), be sure to explain that reason on the site, right at the spot where you are asking for the information.

10. Force membership

Most retailers are past this by now, but many hotels are still forcing people to "join" or become "members" in order to book a stay, or in some cases, even to see the rates. Consumers hate this. They haven't even stayed with you yet, why would they want to become members and run the risk of being subjected to what they see as spam e-mail? Why should they trust you with their personal information? Once they've booked, you may suggest to them that if they'd like to become a member at this point they can benefit by not having to re-enter their information next time they want to book with you, and from discount offers, etc. At that point they may choose to join. But even then, keep it optional. And don't make them re-enter the information they just entered! Pre-fill the form with the data you just got from their booking. Also be sure to have a link to your privacy policy visible when you are asking the membership question.

You many not remember all these specific rules, so let's sum it up like this: Make sure your website is a true reflection of your corporate values and of the kind of experience you want your hotel visitors to have. For most consumers today, that experience starts long before they walk through your doors.

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 [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](#)



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
hotlexecutive.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**.

Diana

Kim

Tatiana

John

Courtney

Hayden

Carmen

Diann

Mohit

Margaret

Emily

Onnoleigh

Harald

Tanya

Gary

Guillermo

David

Diane

Hong

Ahmed

Angelica

Vincent

Wingate

Lisa

Laura

Sandeep

Susanna

Carolanne

Thomas

Chrissy

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.