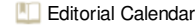




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Ms. Frank

Website / Online Merchandising / SEO

## Your Hotel Website: How to Rise Above the Crowd

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

I plan to be in Crete for a conference this spring. My husband and I love Greece, so we are thinking of bringing our children along, and stopping in Athens for a couple of days on our way to Crete. Not knowing where to stay, I started with a Google search for "hotels Athens". Google returned 1,510,000 results. Gee, that narrows it down. So what will make me decide which results to click on?

Obviously, results on the first page, or first couple of pages, are the most likely to get looked at, so search engine optimization of your site and/or search engine advertising are crucial. But let's assume for a moment that you've done that successfully, and landed on the first page of results. Now what? The listings all relate to hotels in Athens, Greece. None of the headings particularly stands out over the others. All but one headed Rule #1 of search engine advertising: make sure the search terms (in this case, "hotels" and "Athens") appear in the title, because they'll be highlighted when the results appear.

The next thing people will naturally look at is the description below the header. For most major cities, the first few results of a city hotel search will be comparison or ratings websites. Apart from paid content on those sites, you've got little control over how you appear within those sites.

But in smaller centers, and sometimes even in major cities, people will search using terms that give your hotel a chance to pop up on the first page. For example, if I were going to give a talk at Stanford University in California, I might type in "hotels Stanford University". Two of the top three natural listings are for specific hotels. This is when page description tags become crucial. The description tags are words that you can instruct your website designer to enter on each page to provide a description of what the page is about. It is your way of enticing viewers to open the door a little further, and come check out your website.

It is in writing those page descriptions that you must find a way to differentiate yourself. You've only got a few words in which to do so, so make every word count.

Think about what makes your hotel special. Why would people choose it over a competitor? What are the key pieces of information they will want to know? It may be price. It may be luxury. Maybe location, history, views, amenities, pet-friendliness, .... whatever. Just make sure you know what it is, and use it to make your description stand out.

The Stanford Park Hotel does a good job of capturing my interest. It tells me right away that it is near the University, it implies quality ("sets the standard") and conveys stability - we know that it has been around for at least 13 years. At this point, I'd either check it out, or glance quickly at the other listings to see if anything else looks tempting.

The Palo Alto Cardinal Hotel also sounds interesting if you read the secondary description ("Historic Palo Alto hotel near Stanford University, the Cardinal Hotel delivers an elegant,

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## 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

nostalgic atmosphere, an ideal proximity to local attractions ..."), but many people won't read that far. Typically they'll read the first description and only look at the indented one if they think it might tell them more.

Yet in this case, the first description, even though it is on a page that is presumably about the relationship between their hotel and Stanford University ([www.cardinalhotel.com/stanford-university.html](http://www.cardinalhotel.com/stanford-university.html)) tells me about the University, but nothing about the hotel. I already know I want to go visit Stanford University. If I wanted to learn about the University, I'd visit its website, or sites about universities, not a hotel website.

Given that I searched for "hotels" near Stanford, they should recognize that I want to learn more about the hotel, not the university. The page description from their home page (the indented listing) would have been much more appropriate on this page.

They may have worded the description as they did assuming people would get to that page by searching for Stanford University, and, while thinking about the University, realizing that they'd need a hotel to stay in while visiting it. But realistically, the odds of their site showing up anywhere in the top few pages of "Stanford University" search results are virtually non-existent. (In fact, all but one of the first page of listings are for departments or programs of Stanford University. The other one is its Wikipedia listing.)

They would have been better off to design the page for a search term that gives them a reasonable chance of coming up in the top 10 or 20. But what if you've got no idea which search terms those would be? Those of you who have sophisticated website analytics programs, may be able to find out from them which search terms are sending the most traffic to specific pages. Those are likely the terms for which that page is ranking pretty high. So you know that your page description should reflect those key search terms. But remember: you want to reflect all of the words in the search phrase, not just one (e.g. hotels near Stanford University, not just Stanford University itself). You do that by answering the questions people using those terms would be most likely to have. (Like why your hotel near Stanford University is special.)

If you don't have such an advanced website analytics program, just do searches on as many terms as you can think of that might lead people to your site, and look to see where you rank on those terms. If you find any where you are in the top couple of pages, go back and rewrite your page description to be sure it answers the relevant questions. Then you can end up in a "virtuous circle": people will be more likely to click on your listing because of the great page description, and the more they click, the higher you'll go in the rankings.

And if your hotel doesn't show in the top 10 listings for any keyword combination you can think of? In that case, you probably need to take the harder step of reassessing not just your page descriptions, but your page content and design. But that's a separate article!

Most people will start by looking at the natural listings, although as Google (and other search engines) have improved their matching of ads to search terms, their eyes will probably also glance over at the paid listing.

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...](#)

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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](#)



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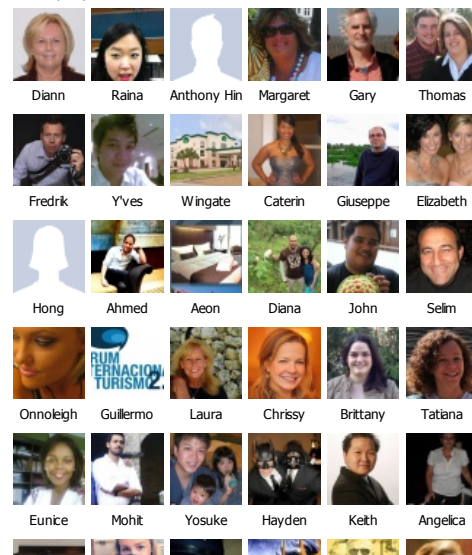
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Bill Kotrba of JDA Software explores hotel pricing, and provides an interesting perspective on the psychology behind numbers and how hotels can maximize revenues by sticking to a numerical formula. A very interesting article indeed!



**HotelExecutive.com - Business Review - Do Hotel Prices Really Need to End In 9?, by Bill Kotrba**  
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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

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## 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*

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