

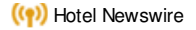
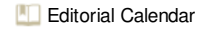
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Ms. Frank

*Sales & Marketing*

## Protecting Customer Relationships While Building a Prospect Database

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

Have you ever stood outside a restaurant looking at its menu, trying to decide whether to choose it or one of the half-dozen other restaurants on the same street? How would you react if the maitre d' suddenly came out and asked you how many seats you needed? A little affronted, perhaps? You might feel that he's coming on a bit strong. What about if instead he came out and covered up the prices on the menu, telling you that you have to come inside and sit down before you could see the prices? Seems ridiculous, doesn't it. Yet that's exactly what a surprising

number of hotel sites still do online, insisting that prospects register in order to fully explore the hotel's offerings and prices. Nothing turns away potential customers faster.

There are obvious reasons for wanting prospects to register and give you information about themselves, many of which can even benefit them. The more you know about them, the more relevant the information you can present, both while they are on your site and in later e-mails. This is good for both of you. But consumers are wary of unwanted e-mails, concerned about the security of any personal data they enter, and, quite rightly, reluctant to share information before they are certain yours is a site they are truly interested in, comfortable with, and might want to use again.

If you want to collect information from visitors to your site, think about:

The less you ask for, and the later in the process you ask it, the more likely you are to get it without scaring away new business. Here's how one typical prospect reacted when faced with a request to register at the site of a high-quality, well-known, hotel chain:

"I feel uncomfortable with them asking for a reservation name this early because as of now [I've made] no commitment to make an actual reservation."

There is no need for you to know anything about the customer, other than when and where they would like to stay, before they reach the point of wanting to finalize a booking. And what information do you really need then? Be sure not to demand too much. You need their contact information and credit card number. That's all. Anything else should be optional.

Even when someone is making a booking, why do you need them to "create a profile"? That presumptuously assumes that they will be repeat visitors. Many customers resent this assumption. Instead, ask for the information you need to make the reservation, and only that information. Once they've provided that, ask them if they'd like you to save that information for them to save them time in case they return at a future date. If, and only if, they agree then ask them to add a password so they can access their profile in future. That's also when you can offer to store other information about their preferences, again to save them time in future. Stress the benefit to the customer! The difference is a subtle one, but crucial. Asking them at this stage, and explaining why, makes it seem like you are doing them a favor, rather than the reverse.

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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


One hotel chain we studied asked for the children's names if someone was reserving a room where children would be sleeping. From a hotel's perspective, it might be great to be able to have a personal greeting awaiting the children when they arrive. Make the kids feel special. They'd love it. And happy children help build loyalty with parents. But without an explanation of why you are asking and what you plan to do with the information, a request for their names will automatically trigger security fears in the minds of most parents.

"But what if we want to build a prospect database?" I hear you asking. "Everyone says e-mail marketing is the way to go!" Again, it comes down to giving the consumer a benefit for sharing information with you. Recognize that there is a tradeoff in the amount you can ask for an the number of people who will provide it. People who vaguely think they might want to stay with you someday may be willing to give you permission to send them e-mail marketing, especially if you offer an incentive for signing up to your e-newsletter list, such as a draw for a free weekend getaway. But if the information you later send them is not well targeted, you will have a high drop-off rate in your readership. Some will bother to unsubscribe. Many more will merely delete your e-mails without reading them, put you on their blocked e-mail lists, or even report you as a spammer. If too many block, bounce or complain about your newsletters, you risk being blocked by the major internet service providers (ISPs), which could ultimately mean that even people who did appreciate your e-mails will be prevented from getting them.

If, however, you can get richer information about their tastes and interests, you can send better targeted mailings to more likely prospects. These are much more likely to generate sales and less likely to get you into trouble with ISPs. But to get consumers to provide detailed information, you will likely need to offer a significant incentive (the weekend getaway will still do, especially if you have a luxurious hotel. If yours is a more basic offering you may wish to partner with local attractions to make the package more tempting) and explain clearly that you need this level of detail so you can tailor the mailings specifically to their interests and not waste their time. If you position it as helping them avoid spam instead of risking getting more, you'll get much greater buy-in and, ultimately, make more sales.

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**  
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

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

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**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,

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