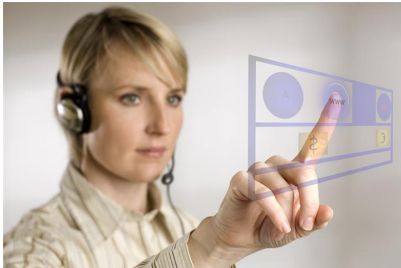# Your Hotel's Website Is Your Ultimate Sales Tool!

Your hotel website is vitally important in acquiring reservations. It is the first and more often the last experience a potential guest may have of your hotel. Hoteliers must therefore cast a critical eye over the website and address the fundamental question: Is your hotel website doing its job properly?

To reveal the true performance of your website, you must identify the number of reservations you generate through your website. **The easiest way to measure your site's production is to look at your web booking engine's analytics**. This will tell you in detail how many reservations you have received over a particular time period. I would recommend that you use web analytics for the website as a whole, to identify how many visitors you have received to your site and where they have come from. Most website analytic software will also tell you at the very least how long your visitors remain on the site, the pages looked at the longest; it will even tell you what pages received the highest bounce rate.

You can pay for many web analytics softwares and systems, or you can use Google Analytics for free. For use in its simplest form, Google analytics will allow you to see the total number of visitors to the site and where the visitor came from. When used comparatively against your reservations statistics, these numbers will give you a conversion rate. This rate is vital in determining the performance of your website.

Of course, we must not ignore other factors that can have an impact on reservation rates. Amongst others, room rates, room availability, value and convenience will all play a part. These are also important considerations and must be viewed so when analyzing the data from your analytics.

As a 21st century hotelier weathering the all too apparent recession, you must realize the importance of the internet to sell your hotel rooms. To be unaware of the ratio of visitors to reservations is akin to burying your head in the sand. Your website should be treated as a sales tool and measured as such.

Unfortunately, during the last 10 years there has been a changing fashion in website design. This can arguably be held responsible for the all too "flashy" hotel website that is difficult to navigate, contains little general information about the area and has a distinct lack of presence in the search engines. **Hotel websites should be designed by people who understand hotels and have experience working for**

or with hotels. A hotel website should look great, but to the detriment of its content, usability and search visibility? Certainly not.

Research indicates that travelers choose a destination, attraction or activity first and foremost. Specific hotel choice is a secondary consideration; the chosen hotel will usually fit criteria in line with the destination. Therefore, it is common sense that a hotel website should include information about the destination. Travelers are very much looking for value as well – not just best rates, but value in terms of convenience.

{%C3,4%}

Search visibility is also of the utmost importance for a hotel website. What is the point in having a great website if no one can find it? The importance of visibility on leading search engines should not be underestimated. Best practice Search Engine Optimisation must be incorporated in your website, and that is just to get you started. Remember, updating your content regularly will encourage the search engines to keep coming back and re-indexing your page. Send out press releases and articles about your hotel to other websites to form in-bound links to your site. **Remember, relevant links are key**. They serve to increase your site's position over time and they will enable you to receive traffic to your site from new sources as well. Using social media to promote your hotel will equally increase your inbound links and is great for creating communities engaged with your hotel brand.

The clear message to take from this is that your website is your most important sales tool and should be evaluated, amended and re-designed if necessary. **Your hotel's website should be your potential guest's first of many experiences of your hotel, not the last and the only experience**.

By Samantha Hasler

Date: 2009-08-31

Article link:

http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-your-hotels-website-is-your-ultimate-sales-tool-article933