

Reputation management: impact on your hotel's revenue



Hotel online consumer reviews still hold sway over many travel decisions. Serge Chamelian, H-Hotelier managing director offers practical advice on how hoteliers can increase reviews

In a previous issue of Hospitality News a definition of reputation management was provided, with reasons for its importance to the hotel sector. Part two aims to be a guide and offer practical advice so hotels can increase the number of their online reviews.

The amount of online reviews a hotel collects can have an impact on its revenue. Would you trust a hotel with only two reviews? It is crucial that prospects are exposed to a higher volume of testimonials, which help to create a stronger sense of reliability and credibility for the hotel, thus increasing the chances of bookings.

6 tips on how to create more reviews

Getting customers to talk to you online is the most important seal of approval a hotel can receive.

- 1. Remarkable experiences:** it is of the utmost importance that a hotel creates an experience worth talking about (wow effect) with many magical moments, and creative amenities among many others.
- 2. Expectations exceeded:** positive reviews come from customers who are pleasantly surprised by what they received; thus avoid setting unreal expectations in advertising and marketing communications.
- 3. Have the right team in place:** recruiting the right people, and encouraging them to work to exceptional standards, places an emphasis on the interaction employees have with customers.
- 4. Ask for reviews:** customers can be approached in a variety of ways such as

during check-out processes, in follow-up emails, and on social media channels.

- 5. Promote your presence at key review sites such as TripAdvisor.** Bridging to the offline world is also important to ensure the word gets out. For instance, place table tents in restaurants, put stickers around the hotel, and send invitations to Yelp, TripAdvisor or leading review sites.
- 6. Stimulate guest engagement by:**
 - Adding special touches to spark conversation, such as offering a 15-minutes neck and shoulder massage complimentary upon check-in.
 - Involving customers in creating online content such as uploading a kids' guestbook on the hotel's Facebook page, which will stimulate interaction and "share" effect, meaning spreading the word becomes effortless
 - Having online conversations in real-time with the employees through social media channels.

Improving customer satisfaction

Encouraging online customer reviews is a challenge for many hotels, as they need to respond and tell their side of the story when a review that is posted is negative and requires explanation. Effective reputation management requires an understanding that things will not always happen as a hotel wishes. Thus hotels need to know how to respond in a satisfactory and effective manner.

Online reviews: hotels improve customer satisfaction and increase revenue growth by:

- Knowing everything that is being said online.
- Identifying areas of improvement based

REPUTATION MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE COMPANIES

ReviewPro

reviewpro.com

Revinatate

revinate.com

TRUSTYOU
the standard for reputation

trustyou.com

RateGain

rategain.com

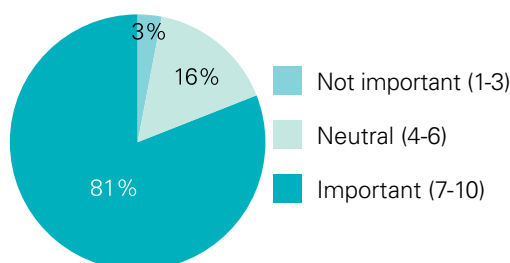
LET THE FIGURES SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

81 percent of travelers said reviews were important when deciding which hotel to stay at. (Source: Forrester research survey Q1 2011)

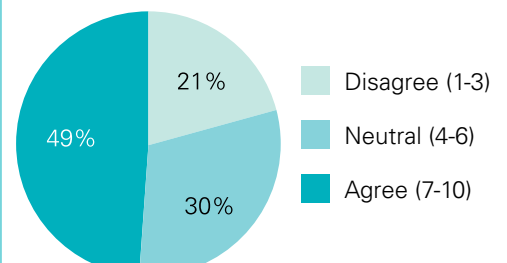
75 percent of travellers said their holiday was better because they used reviews to make sure they picked the best place for them to stay at. (PhoCusWright's European Consumer Travel Report Q2 2010)

83 percent of respondents usually or always consult TripAdvisor reviews before booking a hotel (According to a July 2011 PhoCusWright survey)

How important are user reviews to you when determining which hotel to stay at?



I won't book a property unless it has reviews?



Source: A commissioned survey conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of TripAdvisor, "2010 Q4 Forrester/TripAdvisor Custom Online Survey"

upon point scores and customer feedback in reviews.

- Increasing revenue: ADR, direct conversation, online distribution revenue.
- Integrating existing customer surveys to see all customer feedback in one place.
- Automating reports and getting the whole team involved in the improvement process.
- Benchmarking by hotel, group, brand or chain.
- Training and support on both a corporate and property level.

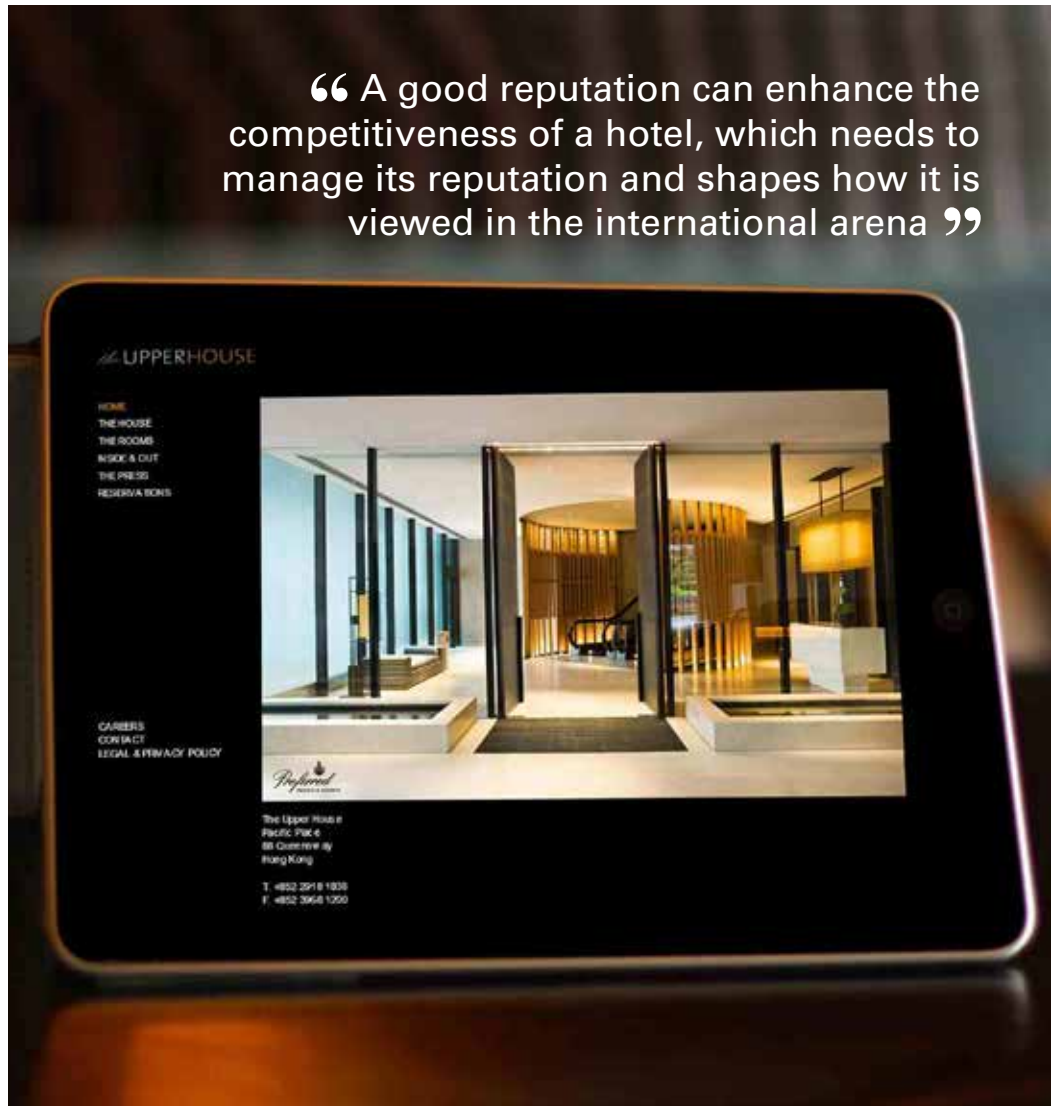
While online reputation management tools play a positive role in helping hotels to monitor what's being said on key networks, they don't always factor into account what is being said on blogs or various social networks at large.

As the volume of reviews continues to increase, this user-generated-content becomes gradually important in customer booking decisions. Review scores have a strong effect on both conversion rates and pricing; indeed, customers are willing to pay more for a hotel with a higher review score. Thus, hoteliers need to emphasize online reviews; as they have the opportunity to increase revenues. When review scores start improving, hoteliers will witness an increase in conversion rates and a chance to optimise prices.

h-hotelier.com



“ A good reputation can enhance the competitiveness of a hotel, which needs to manage its reputation and shapes how it is viewed in the international arena ”



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