



How to get your guests to write reviews

31 OCT 2014 | Get Free Access to Breaking Hospitality News Here ([/login/create](#)), *SERGE CHAMELIAN*
[Insights, Commercial]

I've previously written on Reputation management: its impact on hotel revenue



(<http://ehotelier.com/insights/2014/09/04/reputation-management-its-impact-on-hotel-revenue>)
which provided a definition of the concept and explained its importance to the hotel sector. Now let's take a closer look at some practical advice on how to increase the number of reviews customers write about your hotel.

This is crucial as the number of online reviews a hotel collects does impact its revenue. Customers today simply won't trust a hotel with only two reviews. If prospective customers are exposed to a higher number of testimonials, a stronger sense of reliability and credibility is created about the hotel. Thus, this increases the chances customers will book with that hotel instead of moving on to research other properties.

Getting customers to talk to you online is the most important seal of approval a hotel can get, but getting them to actually write them is another issue. Here are some things that can help.

- **Remarkable experience** - It is of utmost importance that a hotel creates an experience worth talking about (WOW effect) with many magical moments and creative amenities among many others.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Ask for reviews** - Customers can be approached in a variety of ways such as during check-out processes, in follow-up emails, and in social media channels.
- **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, put table tents in restaurants, put stickers in the hotel, and send invitations to Yelp, TripAdvisor or any favourite review sites.
- **Stimulate guest engagement by:**
 - Adding special touches to spark conversation such as offering a 15-minute neck and shoulder massage complimentary upon check-in;
 - Involving customers in creating online content such as uploading kids' guestbook on the hotel's Facebook page which will stimulate interaction and "share" effect allowing spreading the word effortlessly; and
 - Having online conversations in real-time with the employees through social media.

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

Through online reviews, hotels improve customer satisfaction and increase revenue growth by:

- Knowing everything that is being said online
- Identifying areas of improvement based 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 corporate and property level

While online reputation management tools will help hotels monitor what's being said on key networks, it doesn'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 more important in customers' 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 on 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.

About the author



Serge Chamelian is the managing director of h-hotelier, (<http://www.h-hotelier.com/>) a hospitality services firm that offers a holistic approach to business intelligence solutions, revenue management consultancy and training and development programs among many others.

h-hotelier product h-enigma simplifies the concept of business intelligence, making it affordable and very easy to use and understand, while at the same time keeping its rich aspect as one of its main strong points. h-enigma consist of a reporting tool with a yield, CRM and shopping module incorporated in it.

h-hotelier brings together talented professionals in the hotel industry to help your company streamline its processes to enhance its profitability and improve its overall performance.

Source: h-hotelier (<http://www.h-hotelier.com/>)