



Say hello to shoppers that say goodbye to Expedia & Co.

When it comes to online hotel reservations, more and more travelers not only turn to online travel agencies because of their booking-engines, but also the convenience of their shopping-engines as a first stop of reference when researching and planning their upcoming hotel stay.

That holds especially through for resort hotels where consumers require more information than currently available on the sites of online travel agencies. If you stay for a week or your valuable short break, you would like to know exactly what you are getting, and not just some stamp-sized pictures.

According to a recent report by PhoCusWright¹, online travel agencies are increasingly loosing potential customers to hotels directly, as three out of ten travelers shopping at online travel agencies ultimately purchase directly from a hotel.

What's more, twice as many online travelers (36%) believe that the supplier-direct channel provides the best customer service compared to 15% who choose the online travel agency channel. And while 45% of shoppers think that online travel agencies offer the lowest prices - still nearly four out of 10 (38%) online travelers believe that suppliers offer the lowest prices.

Combine those findings and you have a solid foundation for a targeted marketing campaign that has the potential to bring you many happy returns with minimal costs of sale. And here is how:

Dress for success

Before they can embark on a trip to find you directly, make sure they first can easily find you on the websites of the major online travel agencies. Make use of the many promotional opportunities offered by online travel agencies and improve the position of your hotel on the search result pages for your destination. Some sites like hotel.de go even that far, as to offer you a direct link to your website.

Get found

HTB's hotel e-Marketing success formula: TRACK. ANALYZE. OPTIMIZE.



There is a high likelihood that they will use Google to find you and will search with a combination of "destination" and "hotel name" keywords. Therefore make sure your site ranks on the first search result page for your keyword combinations on Google - and 80% of those looking for you will find their way from Expedia & Co. via Google to your website.

Get help from an experienced search engine marketer if your site currently does not rank on the first result page of Google for your "destination" and "hotel name" keyword combinations. Not only will the investment pay for itself (with the friendly help of Expedia & Co.), but if you're serious about your online business, customers may expect to find you on Google's first result page when searching for your business name.

Connect, engage, convert

Now that they have successfully found you, make sure they find what they are looking for - more and better quality pictures, additional information and timely offers - all wrapped up in a professional website with easy to use navigation.

But don't over do it. Too much information may just lead to confusion or make them aware of a problem, need, or opportunity. You don't want them to leave without an action. And please, get rid of your link page.

Priced right. Guaranteed.

Online travel agencies do it, major hotel groups do it, and there is no reason why small hotel groups or individual properties should not do it: offer a Best Rate Guarantee, prominently placed on every page of your site.

In fact, if you would like to ensure that your newly welcomed prospect does not return to Expedia & Co. you will have to offer the same rate.

Better yet, if you can offer an incentive that makes the direct-booking with you just right now so irresistible attractive - and does not conflict with your existing rate parity agreements - go and offer it. And make sure you test which incentives work best.

Easy as one, two, three

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Make no mistake, you will not successfully convert shoppers from Expedia & Co. without a booking-engine on your site that offers real-time availability and rates. If you currently don't have one, get one - there are some great systems out there, that don't cost a fortune anymore.

But don't stop there. Prominently feature your phone number for those that feel more comfortable to book via phone or require additional assistance. Even better, target the millions of Skype users (a little program for making free calls over the internet) and prominently feature your "Skype Me" button on your pages.

Track it, fix it

Ideally, you have access to a website statistic program that tells you how many times somebody found its way to your site by searching for a combination of your "hotel name" and "destination" keywords in Google.

While that will not tell you if they finally also booked directly with you (unless you have connected your website statistic program with your booking-engine), it will at least over time give you a good feeling if your marketing campaign works and your getting your fair share of Expedia & Co. shoppers that are searching for your directly.

On the same time your website statistics will also tell you which pages they visited on your site and how quickly they left again. Use this data to work on your sites content focusing on lowering your single page access pages (these are the pages where visitors arrive and leave immediately without seeing any additional pages). The more time a visitor spends on your site the more likely she is to book with you.

And finally, while Expedia & Co. in some ways currently are to consumers what the Hotel & Travel Index in the good old days was to travel agents, chances are great that the big guys among online travel agencies are already heavily involved in counter strategies on how to capture a share of those visitors abandoning their booking-engines - like loyalty points or up selling the customer to packages with multiple travel components. Three out of ten is just too big a market to pass over. In the meantime, happy returns to you!

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About Hotel Traffic Builders (HTB):

We are a full-service digital marketing agency dedicated to the boutique hotel &

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residential resort industry.

Our mission is very simple: ***"To maximize sales success by providing our clients with exceptional internet marketing results"***.

Our clients consistently enjoy industry leading success because of our dedicated focus and experience. Our use of state-of-the art tools, best in class technology and wealth of industry experience enable us to provide full solution applications. We recognize that our clients are experts at running their hotels, and our role is to develop and maintain online marketing leadership for our client hotels.

We differentiate ourselves through:

Industry Expertise

We have a singular specialized focus on boutique hotel, resort and vacation home e-Marketing. Our sole goal is to be the best at what we do by ensuring maximum success for all of your e-marketing activities. Our 52 person design and development technology team delivers unparalleled quality and results. Our sole focus is resort marketing.

Individual Customized Creative Approach & Solutions

Every client has unique needs, opportunities and priorities, our e-Marketing plans are always custom built and based on in-depth research of your specific hotel.

Cutting Edge Technology

We use proprietary state of the art tools and applications that enable project efficiency, measurability and success of your e-marketing. We not only promise success, we document it in a 24/7 real-time secured private reporting platform that we create for every hotel client. Our clients never wonder about how hard their marketing dollars are working because they always know!

Return On Investment

The true measurement of our success is our proven ability to deliver reservation bookings. We grow booking results year over year, and we grow advance bookings, which result in higher occupancy levels and ADRs.

Contact us at: www.HotelTrafficBuilders.com or call us 954-421-6399

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