



## Why optimizing search keywords is mission critical for hotels

Why is optimizing for the right keywords so important for companies in the travel industry? Several prominent reasons immediately come to mind.

For one, data from a comScore study commissioned by DoubleClick indicates that online travel shoppers conduct an average of six relevant travel-related searches in the three months preceding any transaction, with 77 percent of these searches based on generic terms (as opposed to merchants' brand names).

Second, a considerably higher proportion of travel shoppers (73 percent, according to comScore/DoubleClick) perform relevant searches in the 12 weeks prior to completing a purchase online than buyers of computer hardware, apparel and sports and fitness goods.

Third, for online travel shoppers, 55 percent of the searching activity takes place two or more weeks prior to purchase, making the ability to track the latency effect of paramount importance.

One way to measure the impact of consumers' travel-related search habits on an optimization campaign is by developing visibility indices for a set of industry-specific keywords. By gathering all relevant information on the position of a given non-branded keyword and calculating it against the major search engines, the estimated number of monthly searches and competitors' position on the same keyword (using the same formula), it is possible to determine an index or ranking for each individual travel keyword as well as an overall index for all the keywords selected for optimization for a group of companies in a competitive set.

This overall index demonstrates the visibility of a company, on a sliding scale for a set of keywords, where a score of one signifies high visibility for natural search and a score of greater than three indicates dominance.

A quick look at the data we have collected for the hospitality sector, for example, reveals that generic, non-branded terms such as "luxury hotel" rank high in terms of estimated monthly searches (close to 120,000) as well as in proportion to the total number of search users (close to 20 percent), but low in terms of overall visibility (not higher than 0.25 for any company in the competitive set).

By contrast, a more specific term like "New York luxury hotel" generates a far lower number of searches (just 1,514 per month), representing just two percent of searches, but delivers a much higher page ranking on the major search engines, with a visibility score that reaches as high as 2.73. Looking at visibility results for a broad set of keywords can, in turn, help to define a roadmap for optimization targets and avenues for targeting competitors.

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



Capturing consumer eyeballs and dollars is especially acute in light of the fact that according to a September 2005 "How America Searches: Online Shopping" study, conducted in conjunction with Harris Interactive, 72 percent of online adults now purchase travel online more than offline. Travel aggregators such as Expedia and Travelocity, which appear to be losing ground to direct suppliers, stand to gain the most from increased keyword visibility.

As a final thought, data collected by my former colleagues at eMarketer indicate that growth in the online travel market continues to be robust, with 2008 bookings up over 20 percent from last year and revenues forecast to rise to more than \$60 billion. In such a competitive environment, no company, great or small, can afford to lose a sale, least of all due to a failure to appear prominently in relevant search rankings.

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**About Hotel Traffic Builders (HTB):**

We are a full-service digital marketing agency dedicated to the boutique hotel & 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](http://www.HotelTrafficBuilders.com) or call us **954- 421-6399**

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