



The Complete Guide to Hotel Marketing

26 Tips and Ideas that Drive ROI



Intro

Would you believe that when prospects call you to inquire about space availability, they have already made up their decision?

**It's true: according to CEB,
57% of customers made up
their purchasing decisions
before contacting a supplier.**

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For a hotelier, ensuring customers want to sign a contract with your property begins and ends with your hotel marketing efforts. By investing valuable time into how your hotel brand is represented online, you'll be able to stay top of mind with the consumers that matter most, gain an edge over your comp set, and book the business that matters to boost your bottom line.



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Social Media

5 Mistakes You're Making With Your Social Strategy

Social media can be a powerful tool in promoting your hotel and building your brand's online presence. With a clever hotel social media strategy, you can drive engagement with potential guests, boost your bookings, and increase your brand loyalty for future visits.

Unfortunately, many hoteliers either don't know where to begin when it comes to their social media, or they end up making rookie mistakes that can sometimes cost them their reputation and lose potential clientele.

Are you making any of these common mistakes in your social media strategy?

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1. Not Being Active

Don't let your hotel social media accounts become zombies. Social media platforms are driven by constant real-time updates. They're exciting. They're full of life. You should be logging on to your social media accounts a few times each day to keep things alive and monitor activity. Be present on your pages and always interact with your followers through messages and comments.

However, just because you're logged on every day, does NOT mean you need to post every day. Avoid posting too often or simply posting just for the sake of it. Always have something interesting to share with your followers. About three to five posts per week is a happy medium. Can't log on even just a few times a week to post? Automate half of your posts (we love tools like Buffer and Hootsuite) and then post the others live.

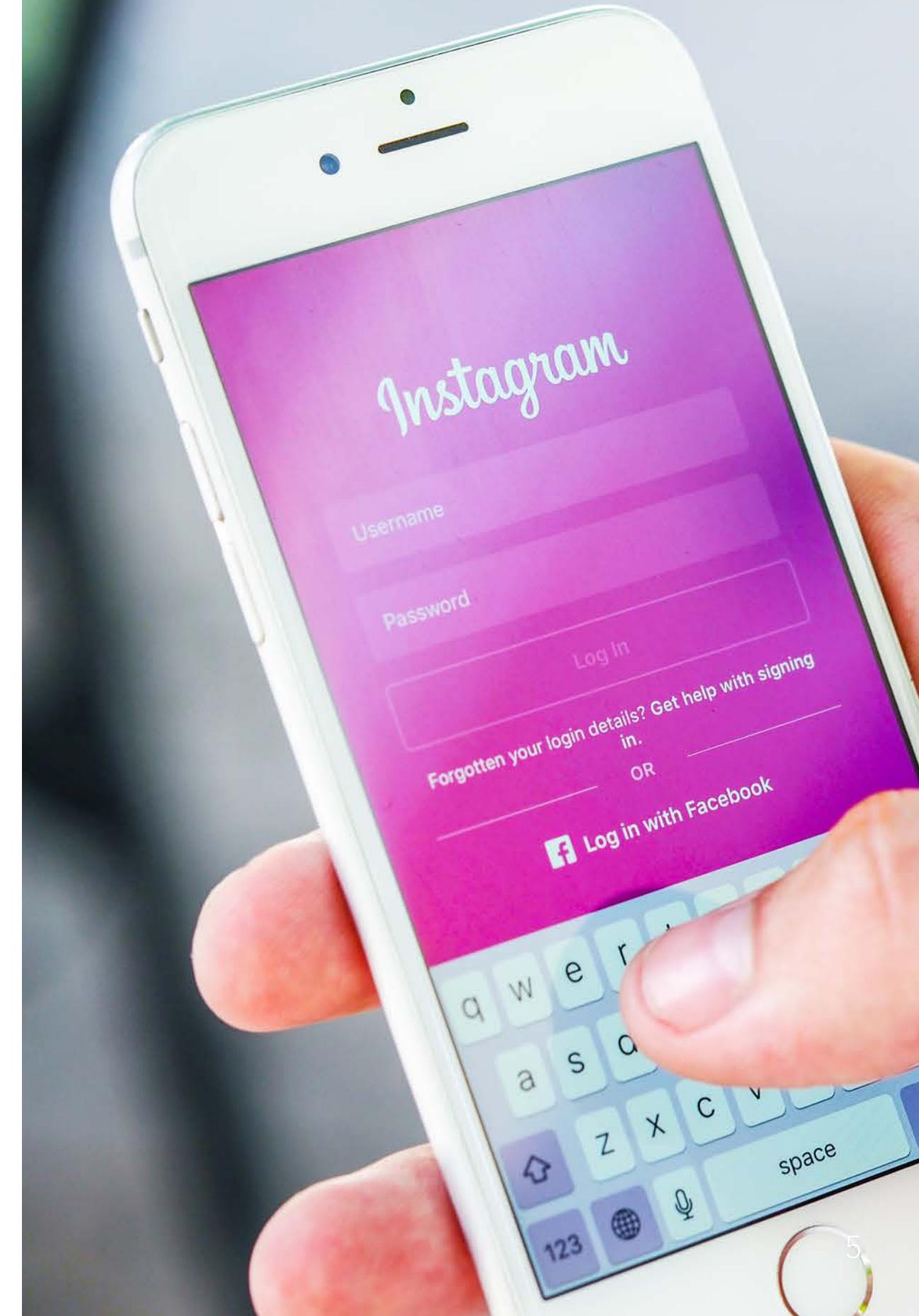
2. Not Responding

Social media is exactly that – SOCIAL! Unlike traditional channels, social media allows for a two-way conversation, and gives your followers the chance to actively engage with your brand.

Be accountable, acknowledge your guest's complaints and offer a positive solution.

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So, how do you drive engagement? You engage! Invite your followers (who may be potential guests) to interact with your posts, and be sure to consistently respond. If you receive negative feedback from a guest on your page, don't ignore it. And never delete it (unless it contains offensive material). Be accountable, acknowledge your guest's complaints and offer a positive solution, just as you would when dealing with customers face-to-face. Leaving comments unanswered shows you don't care if prospects or customers engage. So treat every comment like a two-way conversation.



3. Lacking Creativity and Beautiful Imagery

Social media is a highly visual medium. Any successful social media strategy will devote a significant amount of time to the creation of well-composed, high-quality graphics and images. Consumers' attention is captured by beautiful imagery, so be selective when posting images of your hotel.

When your prospective guests are casually scrolling through Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest for hotel inspiration, you want your photos to have the impact and the beauty to stop them in their tracks.

Consumers are bombarded with non-stop posts and photos in their social media feeds every day. This calls for less generic, more authentic content. Make your posts count; give them a unique angle specific to your hotel. Be creative, and avoid lengthy and mundane posts at all costs. If you can say it with an image, even better!

Monitor which images and posts receive the most engagement from your followers, and use this information to shape your future content plan.





4. Bad Spelling, Grammar, or Errors

People on social media can be like vultures when it comes to spelling or grammatical mistakes. Of course, an occasional typo is no big deal, but consistent errors or unfinished posts look totally unprofessional, careless, and will send your hotel's credibility straight out the window.

People on social media can be like vultures when it comes to errors or grammatical mistakes.

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Don't let flawed content slip through the cracks. Check, double-check and triple-check your social media posts before they go live. Or, use browser extensions to help catch grammatical errors before your social posts go live. One of our favorite tools is Grammarly which can catch grammatical errors and make suggestions on how to fix them.

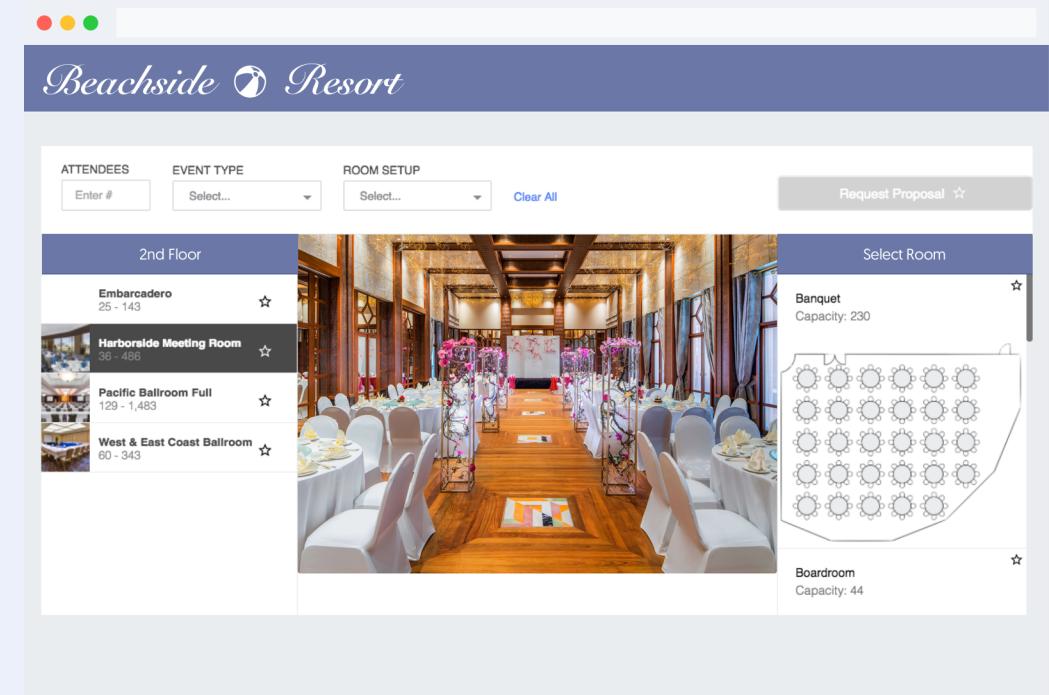
5. No Call to Action

So, you've got a killer hotel social media strategy. You've engaged potential guests with your witty and interesting content. They're interacting with your posts on Facebook and liking all of your beautiful Instagram photos. You're keeping your hotel's brand top-of-mind. But, when it's time for your followers to take a vacation, how do you convert their positive engagement into a booking?

The answer is to make it as simple and easy for them as possible. Give your guests a clear and direct online path-to-purchase that requires minimal time, effort, and searching on their behalf. Facebook and Instagram both offer Call-To-Action buttons so you can ensure your potential guests are only one click away from booking.

Get your hotel social media strategy back on the right track by avoiding these common mistakes, and help your brand start to shine online

Convert



Showcase your venue on your website and grow group bookings with standardized branded assets.

[Learn More](#)

Email Marketing

5 Basics to Know Before Hitting Send

Few marketing channels are as low-cost as email, making it a popular vehicle for hotel owners and operators. However, this also means email is one of the most common and likely to be immediately deleted by recipients. Don't let your email find its way to the spam folder with these five basics in email marketing for hotels.

The dark truth is: if your email marketing isn't mobile-friendly, you could be losing two-thirds of recipients right off the bat...

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1. Make It Mobile-Friendly

Did you know most people open emails via their mobile device? The dark truth is: if your email marketing isn't mobile-friendly, you could be losing two-thirds of recipients right off the bat because they'll most likely delete an email they can't read.

It's not enough to just test the email on your phone. Test on both Android, iPhones, and even Windows and Blackberry if your list is large enough. Email tests should also be done for different email apps like Mac Mail, Outlook, Thunderbird, Gmail, etc.

Another option is to send an all text email. Most email automation software gives you the ability to do both an HTML and text email. By sending a text version, your email messaging can still be read by email clients that strip out HTML formatting. In which case, the copy and links should be compelling enough to get recipients to click through.

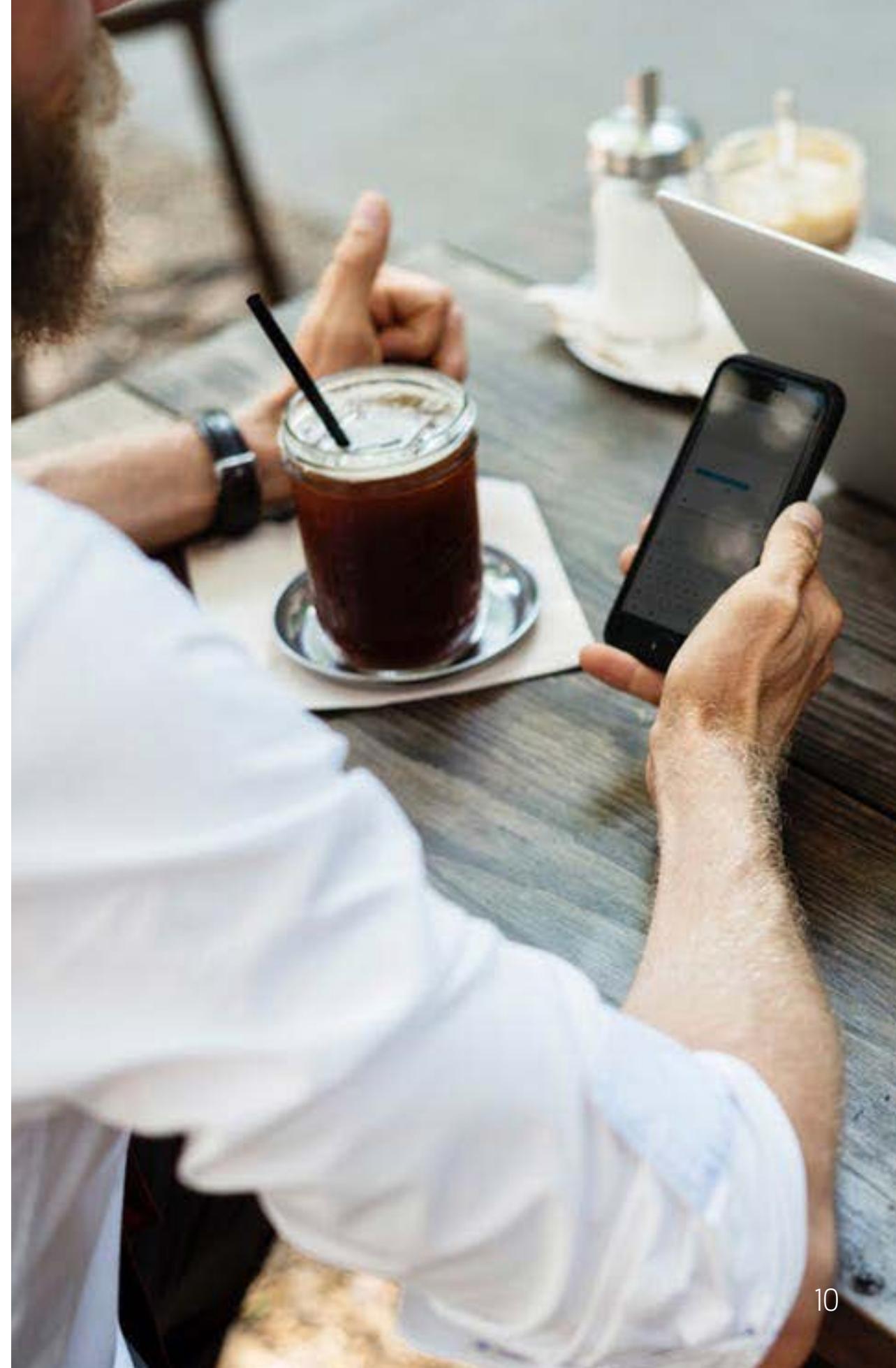
2. Give It a Great Subject Header

Imagine you meet a prospective customer. You want them to stay at your hotel but here's the catch: you can only say one sentence to get them to convince them. While this is an extreme example, email marketing for hotels is very similar to this scenario. Hoteliers have one shot to even get their email opened by recipients. And it all starts with a compelling subject header.

Emojis in subject headers can increase open rates by 56%!

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First rule of thumb is to keep the subject header short so it can be seen on mobile screens. Want to try something really new? Try using an emoji in the header. It's been proven that emojis in subject headers have increased the unique open rates by 56%! But just be forewarned: not all email clients can display emojis so make sure the content is just so good, you'd be crazy not to click.



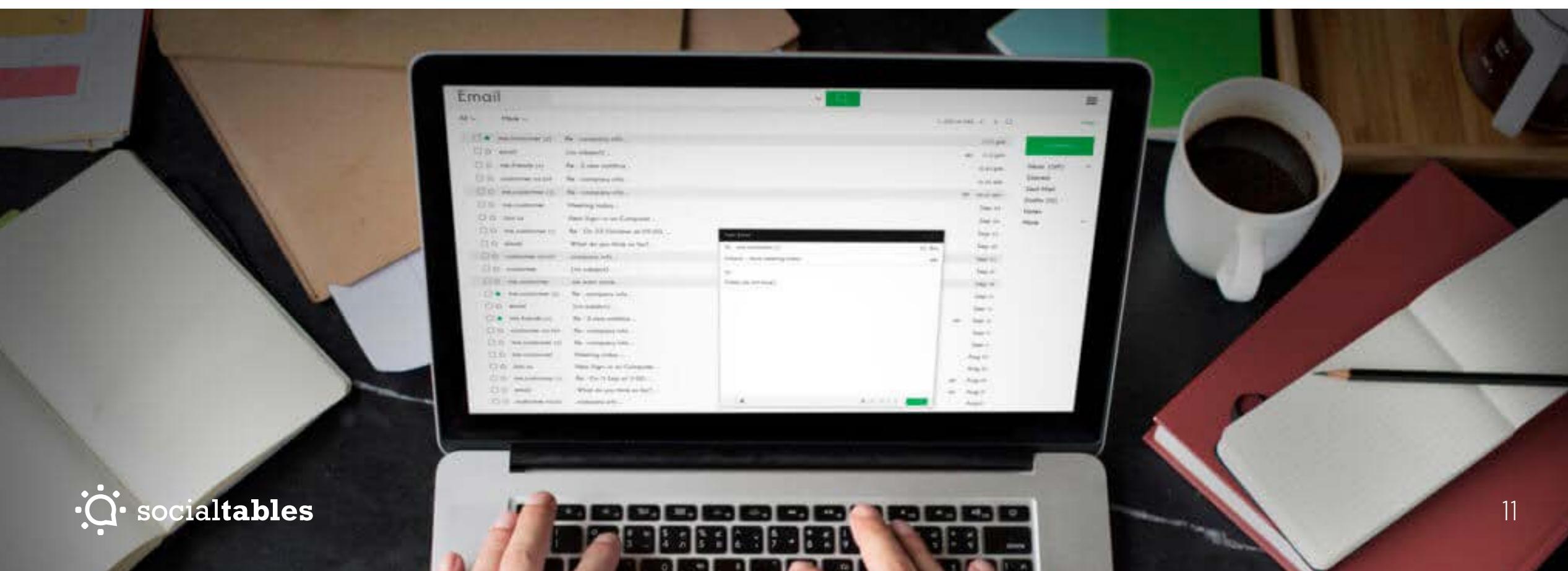
3. Add a Visual Element

So your recipient opened your email, great! Nothing will make someone click the trashcan icon quicker than a block of plain, solid text. Get creative and add in visual elements. Use images, banners, graphics, and other visual elements to break up the monotony of your text.

Do you have an amazing video about your hotel? Send it out via email with a simple header and a few lines of text. Better yet, include a short GIF as a video preview directly in the body of the email.

Make sure your visuals fit the content. If you're communicating an interesting statistic, use a chart or infographic to demonstrate it visually. For example; show how prices drop during the off-season, to let recipients know that now's the time to buy.

If you have an ask in an email, (such as to leave a review, book a room, or contact your sales for an event space) make it clear. Use easy to read text and colors and a linked button that clearly states what the next step will be when a recipient clicks.





4. Find Out What Resonates Most

One way to find out how to get recipients to click into your email is to figure out what messaging resonates with them. While this may sound like a cart before the horse situation, it's doable even if you haven't a clue where to start.

How often do recipients take the action you want them to?

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Not sure how to begin? Have a look at successful email campaigns you've run in the past. Look through your email automation analytics to see where customer clicked through, how long they stayed on the email, and if it was forwarded. Look at the subject headers: what kind of wording did you use? Did your email only have a single image or multiple? What was the CTA? Did recipients take the action you wanted them to? These key indicators can tell you what did or didn't catch your reader's eyes. Test what worked in a new email campaign and see the clicks roll in.

5. Hurry Up and Wait

According to the Campaign Monitor’s “2016 Year in Review” report, email marketing returned \$44 for every \$1 spent. So if you’re looking for a way to maximize your email campaigns along these lines, be patient.

Email marketing for hotels involves a lot of trial and error, A/B testing, and above all, time. You have the most knowledge on your hotel. Get creative and test different messages, images, and offers to see what resonates with your audience.

Email marketing campaigns
return \$44 for every \$1 spent.

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Content Marketing

5 Reasons It's Time to Embrace Content

Content marketing. You've heard the term thrown around a lot over the past few years, but do you know how important content marketing to a successful online strategy?

Let's get down to the five big reasons why content marketing for hotels should be incorporated into your digital marketing strategy.

Good content isn't a sales pitch. It should inform, entertain, and tell your hotel's story.

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1. Tell, Don't Sell

Consumers have become hyper-aware of the fact that they're being sold to. And they are much more discerning when it comes to the information they receive and engage with. For hotels, it's more important than ever to connect with potential and returning guests in a creative and authentic way.

Unlike traditional advertising, content marketing for hotels focuses on telling, not selling. Good content is not a sales pitch. It should inform and entertain. It should tell your hotel's story and share your expertise and knowledge. Above all, it should inspire your guests to get excited about experiencing your hotel and its destination. Producing relevant and interesting content will drive guests to your website and social channels, and entice them to spend more time on your pages.

This encourages a higher quality of traffic, and in turn, a higher chance of bookings.

2. Build Trust

Since content marketing aims to provide consumers with useful or interesting information, rather than selling to them, this can help build trust and credibility in your hotel's brand.

Offer helpful advice or insider tips on what to do and where to go in your city.

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By not overtly pushing your hotel into your prospective guests' faces, but rather offering helpful advice or insider tips on what to do or where to go in the area, you are positioning your brand as an authoritative source of reliable and valuable information. Potential guests will look to your insights when planning their trip. And with the right content, they will begin to trust your hotel to make their stay enjoyable. This is an excellent way to increase new clientele, build guest loyalty and boost engagement with your brand online.



3. Encourage Engagement

Where traditional advertising is very a one-sided communication, you can use content marketing as a means to open interaction between guests and your hotel's narrative. Good content is made to be shared.

Let's face it, if you post an ad for your hotel on Facebook, there aren't too many people who will voluntarily share it on their own wall. Unless, of course, there's a worthy incentive involved, such as winning a free night's stay! But, let's say you create a fun piece of content on your website about the best

bars to visit in your area, then share it out to your Facebook page – the post strikes up a conversation amongst your followers, who then share it out to their friends, and so on. As the piece of content garners more reach, the more visitors you're receiving to your website, and the more you're getting your brand in front of interested parties.

Using content marketing to foster engagement with your hotel significantly helps to increase your brand's presence online.





4. Drive Quality Traffic for Higher Conversion Rates

It couldn't be more obvious, but it's easier said than done. Deliver relevant content suited specifically to your guest's interests or needs. By doing so, you'll attract consumers who are genuinely interested in your expertise and actively seeking information for their travel plans. No one wants irrelevant traffic. Avoid 'clickbait' headlines where you drive clicks promising one thing but delivering another.

Good content has the power to motivate consumers on their path-to-purchase.

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By using content marketing strategies, you are able to strike a chord with the right audience. This helps to increase the quality of the traffic to your site and cultivate a much more engaged consumer. The content you produce has the power to motivate this highly-engaged consumer on their path-to-purchase. This leads to lower bounce rates and more direct booking conversions.

5. Give Your Website the Upper Hand on Google

If your hotel has a website, then you've probably heard of 'SEO' or Search Engine Optimisation. Good hotel SEO helps your website rank higher in online search results. By regularly publishing relevant content to your website, you are helping to increase your site's SEO and in turn, make your hotel more visible in online searches.

In the current digital landscape, content marketing is essential to any hotel's digital marketing strategy. By producing relevant and authentic content around your hotel, you'll be able to see a boost in your online engagement. And with some hard work, higher conversion rates.

From blog posts to tweets, to videos, content marketing for hotels helps to attract and retain your audience's interest. But that's not all! Ultimately, content marketing aims to turn this interest into profitable consumer action and create an opportunity earn trust among your customers.



Search Engine Marketing

Maximize Your Search Rankings in 3 Steps

Search engine marketing is an important tool when it comes to attracting new guests or event planners to your property. Google and other search engines employ sophisticated algorithms that determine search engine rankings. Web pages that appear on the first page of results for a given keyword receive nearly 95% of all search traffic, which means your hotel's webpages could start seeing some serious traffic with a few modifications.

If you want to maximize your hotel search marketing opportunities you need to take these three steps.

For a given keyword, websites that appear on the first page of results receive nearly 95% of all search traffic.

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1. Regularly Update Your Social Media Sites

Here's a fact that probably won't surprise you: people spend more time on social sites than any other websites by a large margin. Often some of the top search results for hotels are social media sites, even above a hotel's own website.

You need to make sure your hotel social media sites have accurate information, active links, and attractive images of your property. You also need to post regularly to signal to both potential guests, planners, and search engines that you are active on social media.

Keeping your social profiles updated also gives you more chances to interact with guest and potential guests. It is a low-cost way to build awareness of your property's features and special offers.

2. Leverage Customer Review Sites

The most important factors in search engine placement are strong back links. One of the best ways to get strong back links is to leverage your good reviews on sites like Yelp and TripAdvisor. Make sure you have a branded page on these sites that links back to your hotel's website.

You can also leverage the power of review sites by actively encouraging guests to leave reviews. The more reviews you have the higher those reviews will show up in search engine results.

When you leverage your reviews you could have your brand website, social media sites, and positive reviews on multiple sites all show up on the first page of a keyword search.

The most important factors in search engine placement are strong back links.

CLICK TO TWEET 



3. Test Paid Ads for Greater Brand Awareness

Organic search engine traffic is a wonderful way to boost your bookings. However, it can take months, to build up a regular flow of organic traffic. The good news that you can start driving traffic to your website and online content right away through paid ads.

Ads are a key part of your any marketing strategy. The best way to get started is to set a small budget and test what types of ads and approaches work best. Start small until you know what's most effective.

Paid ads can be used to build your brand or to make prospects aware of a special offer. Paid ads on search engines can also make it look like your hotel ranks higher than it really does in search engine rankings.

Once you have learned what your ideal guests are most likely to respond to, you can use paid ads as a secret weapon to fill vacant rooms, to get the jump on competitors during the busy convention season, or the keep your hotel top of your guests' minds.

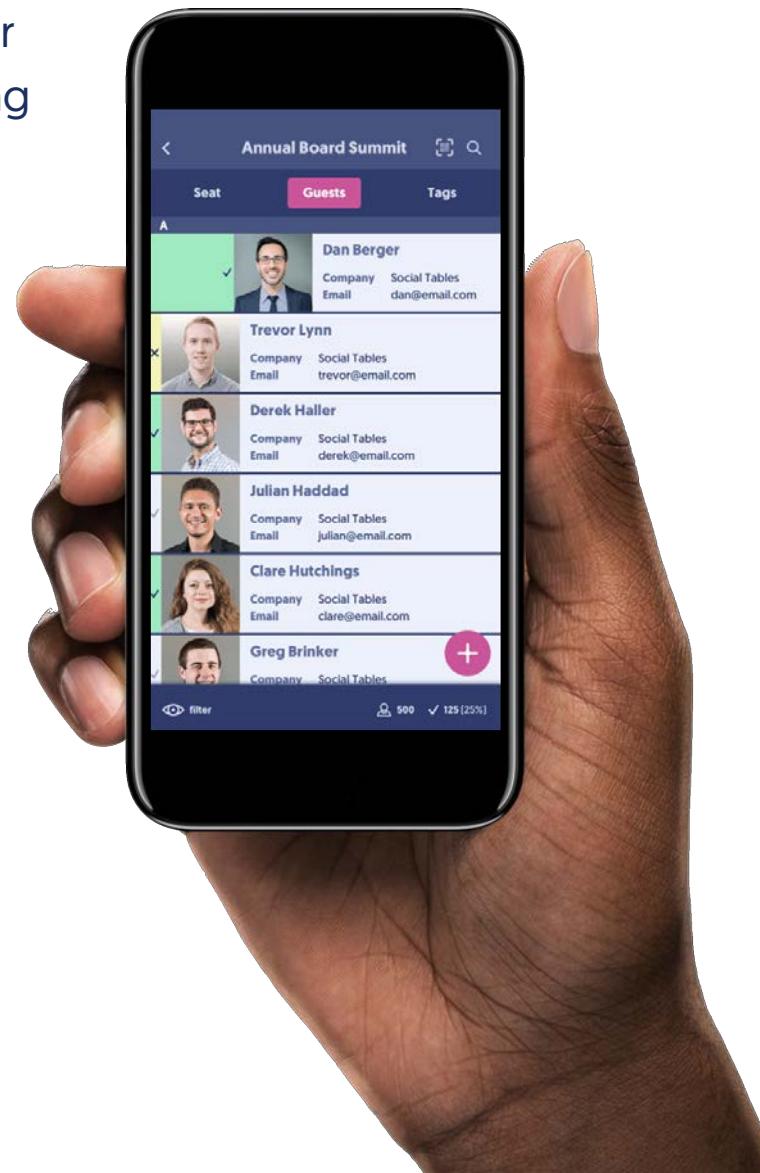


Measuring Success and Improving Efficiency

4 Types of Marketing Tools Every Hotelier Needs in Their Arsenal

Managing a hotel can be an all-consuming role. With so many competing priorities, how can you be sure that all of your efforts lead to maximizing return on investment and that you're boosting brand affinity at the same time.

The only way to know for sure is by using measuring tools that make it easy to track results. Here's a look at four types of marketing tools hoteliers can use to stay on top of their business.



1. Social Listening Tools

Today, everyone has a voice. So what are people saying about your brand on social media? Wouldn't it be great to know when your audience mentions your hotel brand?

The good news is, you can listen in on those conversations with social listening tools. These tools allow you to monitor conversations by flagging certain keywords, hashtags, or brand mentions online. Ideally, if someone mentions your brand in a positive way (for example, through an Instagram post, commending your property on a fun stay), you could express your gratitude through a reply.

Social media listening tools will help you identify these conversations happening in the sea of content online. Some of our favorite tools are Mention, Hootsuite, and Tweetreach.

2. Google Analytics

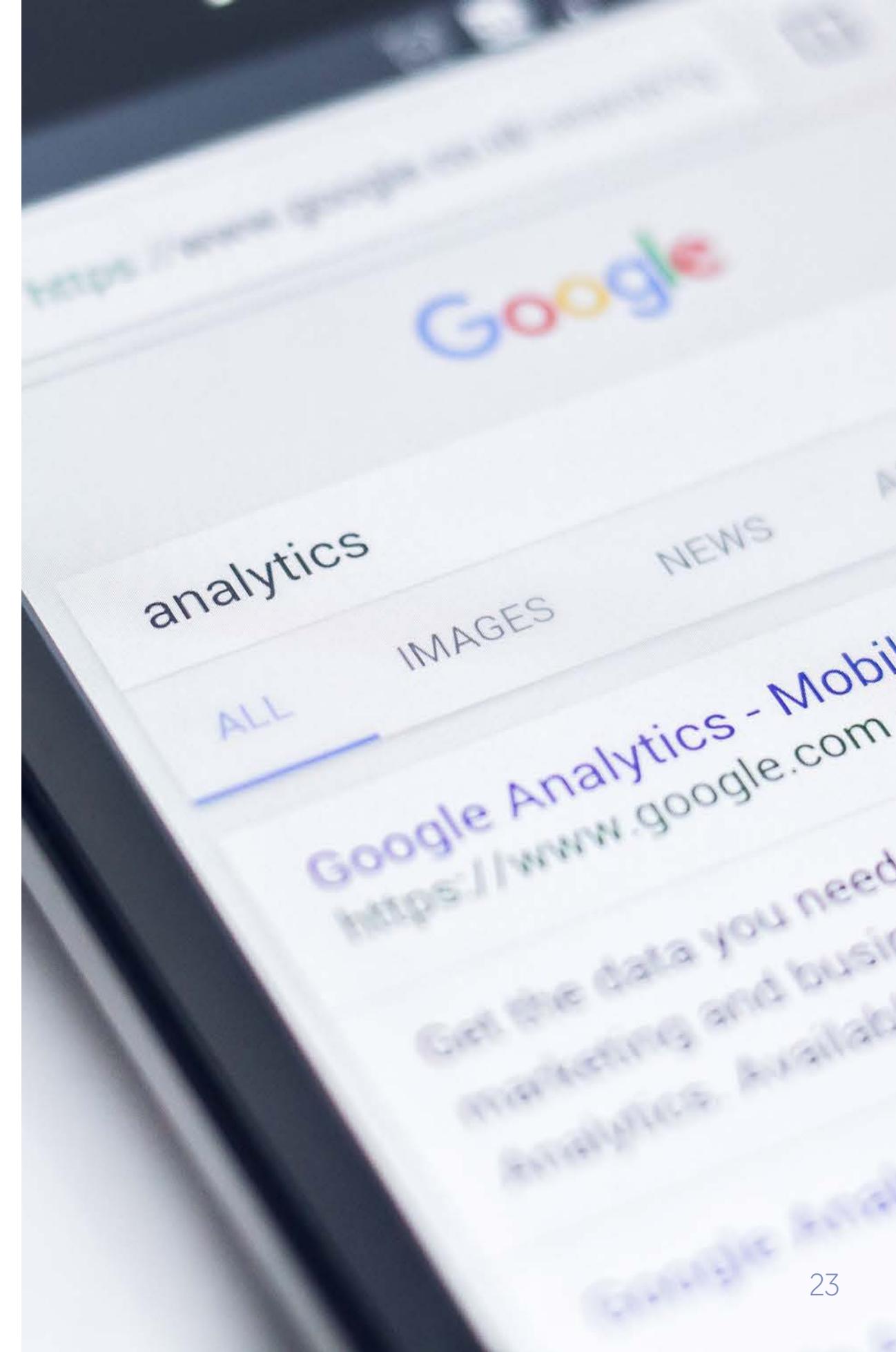
One tool in your marketing toolbox is your hotel website. To figure out how well your site is performing, you can use Google Analytics.

This free tool from our friends at Google empowers you with the analytics you need in order to figure out all the touchpoints your customers receives as they navigate your website. Knowing how customers interact with your site can tell a qualitative story of how customers come and go into your ecosystem. If you're creating content on your hotel website (for example, with a blog), Google Analytics also tells you how much traffic your posts are generating.

Google Analytics is a powerful tool if you're optimizing your site for direct bookings.

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It tells you from which sites your visitors found your site, how long they stayed on your website, and



even where they are located geographically. This is especially useful information to know if you're using paid advertising. By knowing where your biggest audience is, you'll know which geographic location you want to target your ads.

And since we're on the topic of Google, a bonus tool to use (that is also free!) is Google Alerts. Set an alert for the frequency you'd like to be notified and on a keyword that you want (your hotel's name is a great first step) and start getting notifications of when you're mentioned on the web.

3. Survey Tools

Surveys are a great way to get honest and quick customer feedback and conduct market research. The right survey questions can show you what it is about your property that's resonating most with customers. What exactly do they love about staying at your property?

Figuring out these nuggets of knowledge is crucial to confirming that your efforts are in the right place, because your marketing strategy is informed by customer feedback.





4. Task Management Tools

Managing upcoming marketing campaigns and work load is an important aspect of running any business. Being able to organize, track, and prioritize your day to day, for yourself and your team, can be made easier with the right task management tools.

It's especially handy when you're planning out a new marketing campaign (for example, a seasonal hotel email marketing campaign or a user-generated content campaign). You can track each project milestone, add comments, attach important files, and see what other work is still left to be done in the project. Trello, Asana, and Flow are just a few of the options out there to help organize your working day.

There's a whole host of hotel marketing tools out there to help you stay on task and focused when it comes to marketing your property. And with so little time and so many marketing projects to take on, these tools are here to help you be smarter about how you market your hotel and best of all, save time in the process.

Optimizing Your Website

4 Ideas to Increase Direct Bookings

Coming up with new hotel website ideas that drive direct event booking for your property can be challenging. With the growing task of bringing in new leads your hotel's website is an important channel to leverage. But one of the biggest hurdles for hotel marketers is making do with a small (or non-existent) marketing budget.

With that in mind, here are 4 high-impact (and low-cost) hotel website ideas you can try to increase direct bookings.

42% of travelers use a mobile app to book accommodations.

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1. Make Your Site Mobile-Friendly.

Consider this: 42% of travelers use a mobile app to book accommodations. That means a little less than half are leveraging mobile means to book. At that rate, you shouldn't be asking if you should have a mobile friendly website. The answer is, "yes". So what exactly can you do to make sure your site is mobile friendly?

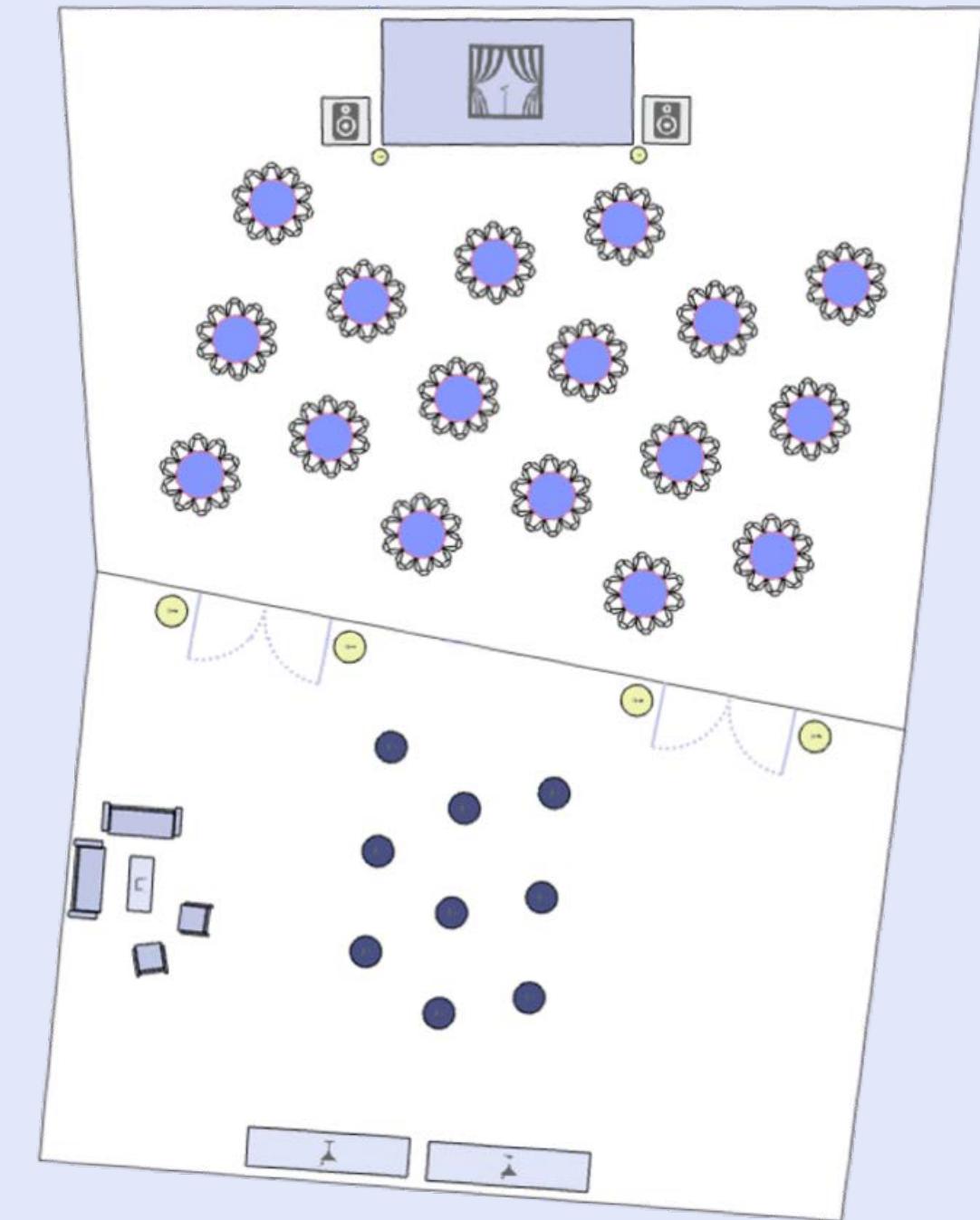
First, make sure your site is designed to be mobile responsive, and the content seamlessly adjusts depending the device it's displayed on. Pull out your phone or iPad right now. Does your site look clean and easy to read?

A simple look at how the site is designed, from fonts to layouts to images, should all be reconsidered in favor of responsiveness.

2. Make Your Floorplans Interactive

For planners looking to book an event at your hotel, one of the first places they'll turn to is your hotel website. If you're looking for a new hotel website idea to try, look to your floor plans. One tip is to take static floor plans and turn them into interactive floor plans. By making it easier for prospective planners to interact with your floor plans, they can quickly assess if their event is a fit for your space.

A PDF can tell a planner the maximum capacity, but an interactive floor plan can show off various room sets based on expected attendees. Take it a step further and help planners envision their event in your space with collaborative diagrams that have 3D functionality. Give planners the ability to virtually walk the space without being there with 3D diagrams. How much easier is it to have a conversation with a prospective planner if they already know with your space and they have a room set in mind?



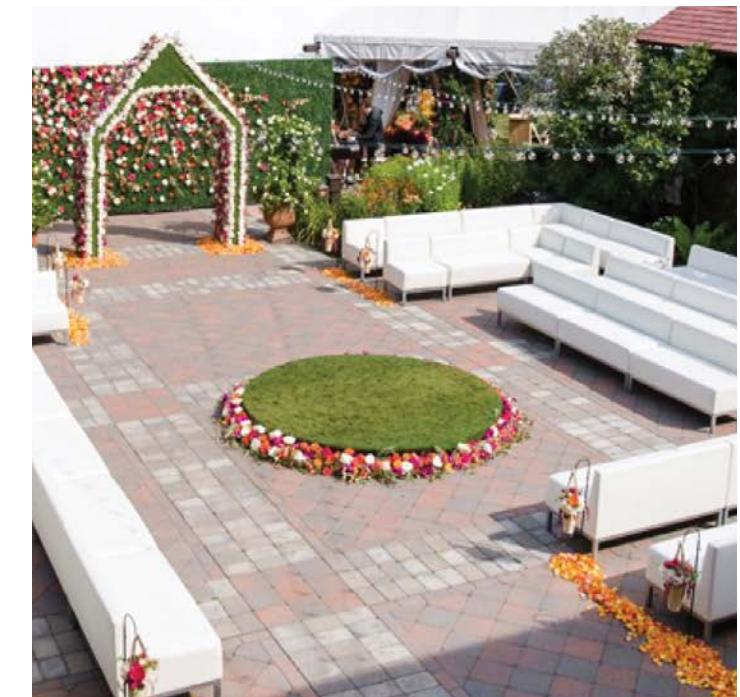
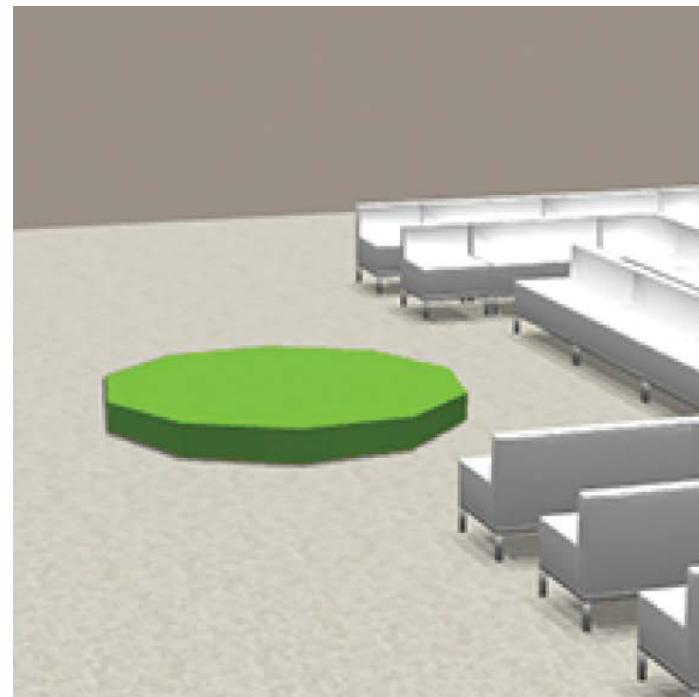
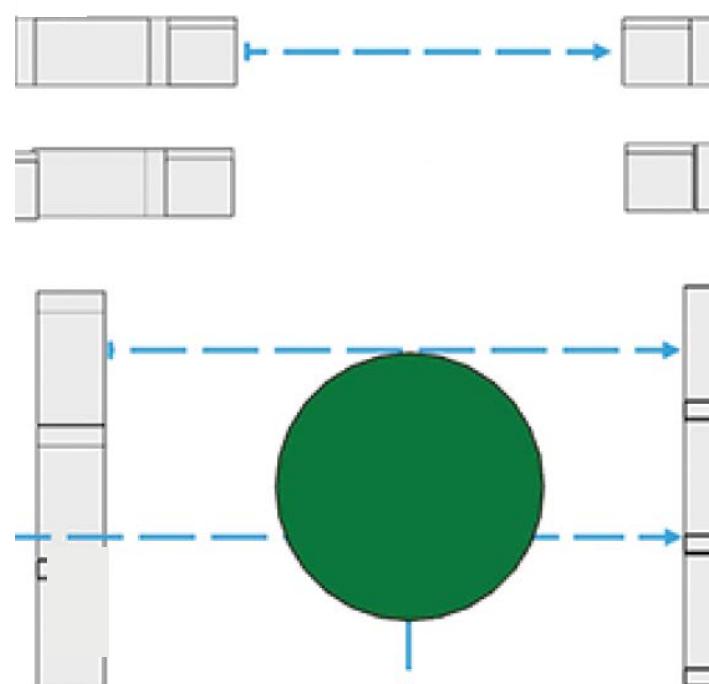
3. Enable Visitors to Tour Your Space Virtually

Today, virtual reality isn't just a buzzword. It enables planners to experience venues in unique new ways.

According to a Pew Research Center study on virtual tours, they found that embedded virtual tours receive 40% more pageviews than those without. Think of the business you could close at your hotel if you had 40% more people looking at it! Giving your hotel website visitors a virtual tour is great first look into the look and feel of your property.

In addition to 3D capabilities of event diagramming software (such as Social Tables), tools like YouVisit and Georama enable planners to go on virtual tours without ever leaving the office.

If you don't have the bandwidth to host live, virtual tour guide of your property, never fear. Hotels can invest in 360 cameras that can take panoramic shots of your space which can easily be embedded onto your website.





4. Collect User-Generated Content

One source of inspiration can come from planners and guests in the form of user-generated content (UGC). UGC is any marketing content that is created by unpaid contributors or fans. It could be a photo posted to Twitter, a blog review written about your hotel, or a 10-second video on Instagram. It's a powerful tool in your hotel marketing toolbox because it gives social proof that someone had an amazing experience at your property.

Social proof creates “fear of missing out”, which in our case leads to direct bookings.

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Give prospective planners a peek at what it's like to work with you and your property by embedding social media posts on your site. Tools like Tint and Juicer make it easy to pull posts from around the web for your site. Already using a social media aggregator on your hotel website? Level up your website social feed by creating a campaign around a hashtag unique to your property.

Optimizing your hotel marketing strategy is a worthwhile investment for any modern hotelier looking to supercharge revenue.

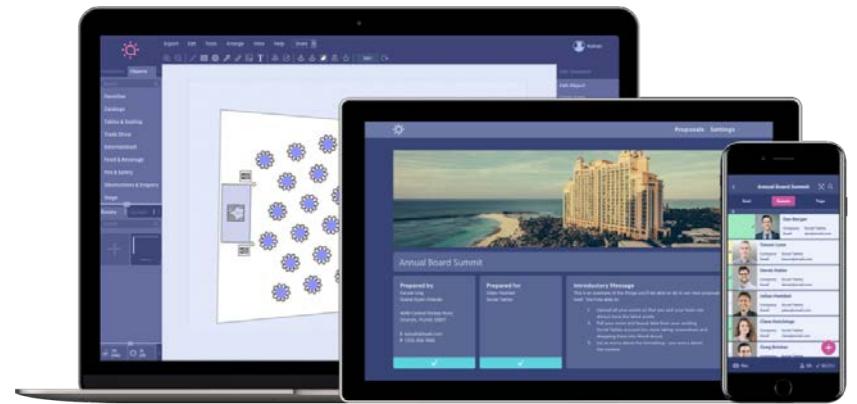
Take the time to manage your hotel's brand online and clients will keep coming back to your property when booking venues for their events.

Stay Connected

For the latest resources and industry news, connect with Social Tables on your favorite social network.



Boost event sales overnight.



Easy-to-use software that automates and personalizes the event sales cycle and drives planner loyalty.

[Get Started](#)