

Meaningful Metrics for Digital Marketing

To make smart marketing decisions, you need solid information. This is true in any economic climate, but with a possible slowdown ahead in the travel industry, the stakes are even higher. All marketing expenditures must be justified by results.

If you've been marketing for a while, you undoubtedly know some metrics that work for traditional marketing and advertising campaigns. However, the rules of the game change once you begin marketing online and encounter a wide variety of new media options.

What metrics should you use to measure the effectiveness of your digital hotel marketing campaign? Let's start off by putting aside a couple web marketing metrics that have been used in the past, but aren't really that helpful anymore.

- *Number of ad views* – in the early days of the web, it was common to purchase advertising based on the number of ad impressions or views. Now, there are other more effective ways (such as pay-per-click).
- *Website visitors* – the number of people that visit your website might have little correlation to the effectiveness of your marketing campaign.

Should you track these? Absolutely. They just don't provide enough insight. So let's move on to some more helpful metrics.

1. **Conversion rate** – what percentage of website visitors are booking a room?
2. **Cost per booking** - actually, you should be tracking a wide variety of "cost-per" actions for any advertising campaign. How much does each click, visitor, and lead cost? Spending must be tied to revenue gains.
3. **Referral source type** – knowing the type of websites that provide the most visitors can help you decide the direction of your marketing campaign
4. **Search engine rank** – How high do you rank in search results for each important keyword phrases? Search is still the #1 way people find websites, so you need to list high for key phrases.
5. **Social media mentions** – How many bloggers and social travel networking websites are talking about your hotel?

Those are the core metrics that are important for anyone doing hospitality marketing. Other metrics that could be useful in your situation include:

- **Percentage of positive mentions** in social media – this statistic is a little harder to generate, but the results are more insightful. What is the overall consensus on your facility?
- **Average time on site** – how long do people stay on your site?
- **Bounce rate** – how many people leave your website without visiting any other pages (the lower this number, the better)
- **Reservation abandonment rates** – you need to know when and where potential guests are giving up in your booking system
- **Top referral keywords** – which phrases do people use to find your website?
- **Number of inbound links** – your goal should be to increase the quantity and quality of inbound links each month
- **Google Pagerank** – Google’s measure of website authority

Whatever combination of indicators you plan to use, the important thing is that you track and save this information. You can only make efficient marketing decisions by looking at historical data, and then focusing your marketing resources on what works.

This was originally posted to the [Hotel Marketing Strategies](#) blog October 20, 2008 by Josiah Mackenzie (josiah@gradigio.com). Make sure to [subscribe](#) for the latest trends and hotel marketing ideas.

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