

# ACTIONS TO GENERATE GREATER RESULTS FROM YOUR WEB SITE

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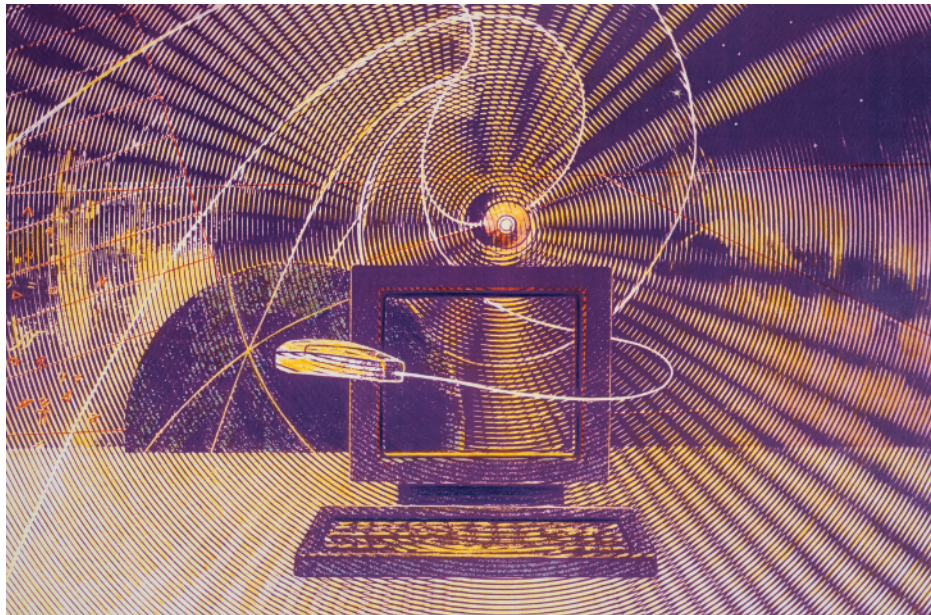
**R**ecently, hotel Internet marketing technology, reporting depth and the ability to proactively manage performance have greatly improved. By taking advantage of these developments, you can gain exposure to specific target audiences and make them future guests via your Web site. The key is making it easy to find your site with search marketing and engaging prospective customers once they visit your site. That combination ensures increased bookings and revenue.

The Internet is a great equalizer. Even in a recession, it provides tremendous opportunities, as hotels are expected to capture 31 percent of total revenues from the Web in 2009 compared to 28 percent in 2008. As online travel approaches saturation and more of your competitors are enhancing their marketing, it requires a disciplined and savvy thinking on the part of hospitality professionals, travel firms and hotel owners to fully leverage this medium. It's understanding how business and leisure travel planners research and gather information that enables marketers to plan campaigns and better optimize their property's Web site.

You should think of your Web site as serving three masters:

- sales team
- shoppers and guests
- search engines

Many properties think their site is simply an online brochure, when in reality; it's a critical selling tool. It should assist your hotel's sales team by highlighting amenities and local demand generators with high-resolu-



tion photos and expert copy. It should be linked to email campaigns and online advertisements. Think of it as your first opportunity to engage shoppers and guests by answering questions about location, room options, rates, meeting space, restaurants, etc. Make it professional and easy to navigate, ensuring a positive impression. Equally as important, your Web site has to serve the search engines. Search engines don't see an eye-catching design. They display Web sites that are architected properly with content, keywords and tags that are relevant to different market segments and searched terms. So when a shopper searches for "downtown Baltimore hotels" or "hotels near Universal Studios," your property has its best chance of ranking high.

As we enter 2010, it is important to make sure you have covered the basics. Ask yourself:

- Is my site designed to serve the three masters—sales team, shoppers and guests, and search engines?
- Does it have relevant, compelling content? Do my keywords support the dif-

ferent market segments I'm trying to attract?

- Is the imagery professional, does it help visitors connect emotionally with the property? Do the images and information coincide? Example: A wedding page should have a bride and groom enjoying your property's amenities, not a generic lobby photo.

It is vital to review your Web site from the travel shopper's perspective. Make sure it's aesthetically pleasing and informative. Make booking simple with a prominent reservations system and special offers button. You can have the most beautiful online brochure in the world and nothing to show for it, or you can have a Web site that's a dynamic tool that serves your sales team, shoppers, and search engines. At that point, you'll have plenty of guests to show for it.

If you haven't already done so sign up for VIZERGY's FREE webinar series. These are 50 minute webinars that offer a unique learning experience, while focusing on innovative strategic actions to improve your revenue management. ■