

TUTORIAL 29 CUSTOMER REVIEWS AND TRIPADVISOR



This tutorial has been produced by The Australian Tourism Data Warehouse as part of the complete online education program, Tourism e-kit

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CUSTOMER REVIEWS AND TRIPADVISOR

Reading time: 15 minutes

Prerequisite: n/a

Managing customer reviews is imperative in order to not only improve but to simply lift your business' reputation. If you turn a blind eye you risk losing business. This tutorial will provide assistance with managing your customer reviews and will help you set up a TripAdvisor strategy

1) WHY ARE CUSTOMER REVIEWS IMPORTANT?

NEW RESEARCH FROM THE OPINION RESEARCH CORPORATION INDICATES THAT 82% OF CONSUMERS RESEARCH ONLINE BEFORE THEY TRAVEL. 80% OF THOSE AGREE THAT ONLINE WORD OF MOUTH POSTS INFLUENCE THEIR DECISION.

The web has evolved into a giant online community where people interact and exchange ideas. Just as they would do with friends in an offline environment, online users ask peers for advice and trust users more than they trust advertisements.

In the travel and tourism industry especially, user reviews have taken new dimensions:

- Online communities such as TripAdvisor.com, Hostelworld.com, Menulog.com.au feature millions of traveller reviews of cities, hotels, hostels, restaurants, and attractions.
- Region-centric tourism and hospitality guides feature reviews of hotel, restaurants and many other products.
- Online forums such as the Thorn tree on LonelyPlanet.com are online spaces where traveller interact 24/7 asking for advice and searching for answers.
- Consumers now leave their opinion everywhere online: on their own blogs, comment on other peoples' blogs, on restaurant review sites, and everywhere they can.



Screen capture copyright: Gold Coast Food Guide

The implication for the tourism operator is that all this user-generated content is being indexed by search engines. Consequently, people searching for you online have a very large chance of finding these reviews as well. **Staying passive is therefore not an option.** The only solution is to embrace this user-generated content and turn it to your advantage.

Furthermore, you will notice that many of your guest reviews are centralised on your business' google map listing. Search for your business name on <http://maps.google.com.au> and click on reviews.

2) WHICH ONES SHALL I MONITOR?

Travel and accommodation reviews	Travel forums
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.tripadvisor.com • www.stayz.com.au • www.hostelworld.com.au • www.eatability.com.au • http://www.truelocal.com.au 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.lonelyplanet.com/thorntree • www.tripadvisor.com/ForumHome • http://forum.virtualtourist.com

Do a search on Google for “accommodation reviews *your city*” or replace “accommodation” with your product/service type to identify other possible review sites or forums.

You can also click the “Show Options” link located at the top left of the Google search results and filter the results by reviews.

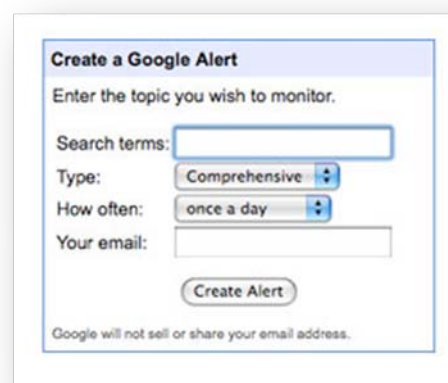
a) How to monitor

Google Alerts is a very easy way to subscribe to what the world is saying about you or about any topic of your choice! Set up as many Google Alerts based on your keywords and any new webpage mentioning them will land in your inbox!

E.g. If you are a bed and breakfast called “Gold Coast Lone Star” on the Gold Coast, create a few Google alerts: “Gold Coast Lone Star”, “bed and breakfast Gold Coast”, “tourism Gold Coast” etc. Set alerts for the name of your competitors, your staff, your State or Territory’s Minister for Tourism...

- 1) Go to www.google.com/alerts.
- 2) Enter the terms you want to subscribe to. Put the terms inside quotes if there is more than one (so write “tourism marketing” if you want to subscribe to tourism marketing)
- 3) Confirm your email address
- 4) Repeat the same process for more alerts
- 5) Set up a Google account if you want to manage your alerts (however, you don’t need one to set up the alerts)
- 6) It is free and you don’t even need a Google account.

Screen capture copyright: Google



This blog post provides further information on how to monitor your company’s online presence: <http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/4203/How-to-Use-Google-Alerts-to-Monitor-Your-Company-s-Online-Presence.aspx>

This blog post provides information on how to further customise Google alerts: <http://labnol.blogspot.com/2006/11/google-alerts-tutorial-to-help-you.html>

3) TRIPADVISOR

TripAdvisor remains the most visited online tourism community. **It receives more than 1 million unique visitors every day.** Accommodation, attractions, restaurants and resources (such as tour companies) can be listed on TripAdvisor at no charge. It is highly probable that a past customer has already written a review about your business without you ever knowing it. If the review was negative and you haven't acknowledged it and responded to it, it could impair your best marketing efforts.



Screen capture copyright: TripAdvisor

What you will first need to do is to claim your TripAdvisor listing:

a) Claiming my TripAdvisor listing

Start by visiting this page www.tripadvisor.com/Owners and follow the prompts to get listed. There are 4 types of businesses which can be listed on TripAdvisor: destinations, accommodation providers, attractions, restaurants and resources.

Ensure you take full advantage of your listing space: photos, descriptions, rates but also video: www.tripadvisor.com/pages/video_upload_instructions.html.

Visit the TripAdvisor owner FAQ page: www.tripadvisor.com/pages/owner_faq.html.

You can now also add your details such as your web address and contact details as part of TripAdvisor's Business listing: http://www.tripadvisor.com/vpages/business_listings_faq.html. Please note that there is a charge for this service.

b) Managing my existing reviews

TripAdvisor allows you to respond to reviews written about your property. Responses will be displayed under the relevant review in your listing. It is recommended you respond to every review, and it is crucial you address the negative ones. Show your side of the story, explain what has been done to recover the incident and reputation will be saved.

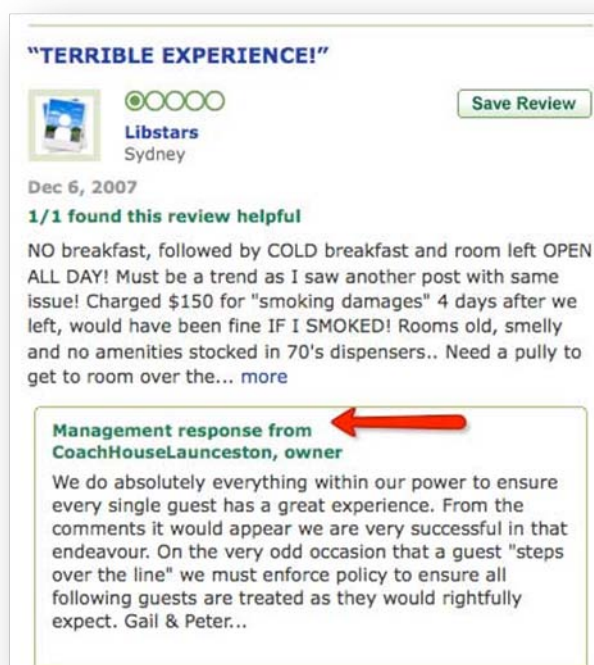
- 1) Go to the listing page by searching for your business.
- 2) Scroll to the bottom of the page and find the "Do you own..." box.
- 3) Click on Start Here - Visit Your Owner's Page
- 4) Log in

Screen capture copyright TripAdvisor


c) Acquiring new reviews

Ask past clients to leave a genuine review on TripAdvisor, provide incentives if needed. Clients even have the possibility to post their own photos!

Getting your clients to comment on TripAdvisor should be integral to your



"TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE!"


Save Review

Dec 6, 2007

1/1 found this review helpful

NO breakfast, followed by COLD breakfast and room left OPEN ALL DAY! Must be a trend as I saw another post with same issue! Charged \$150 for "smoking damages" 4 days after we left, would have been fine IF I SMOKED! Rooms old, smelly and no amenities stocked in 70's dispensers.. Need a pully to get to room over the... [more](#)

Management response from CoachHouseLaunceston, owner

We do absolutely everything within our power to ensure every single guest has a great experience. From the comments it would appear we are very successful in that endeavour. On the very odd occasion that a guest "steps over the line" we must enforce policy to ensure all following guests are treated as they would rightfully expect. Gail & Peter...

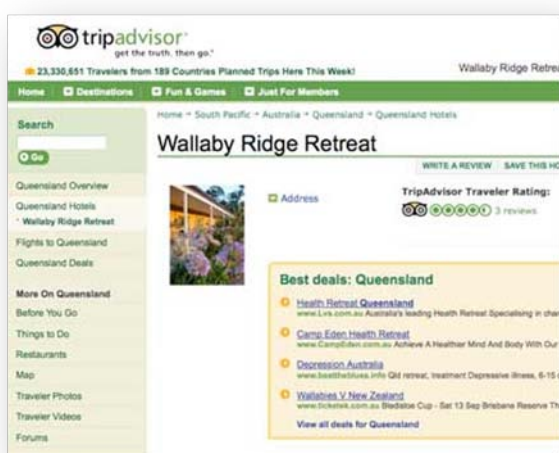
online marketing strategy. Follow up with emails, thank you cards or a voucher towards their next visit for instance. A good option is to empower your reception staff to manage your TripAdvisor reviews.

d) Where will my TripAdvisor reviews appear?

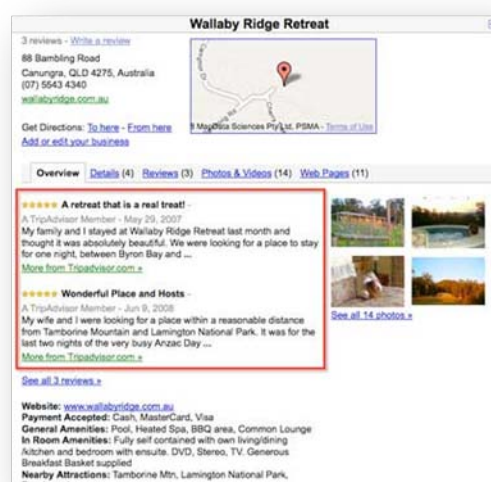
Google Maps

TripAdvisor reviews do not only appear on TripAdvisor. They are integrated to other tools such as Google Maps. When someone searches for a product and service on Google Maps they will see your listing. If you have claimed your TripAdvisor listing and have ensured that your Google business listing and your TripAdvisor listing share the same name and address, your TripAdvisor reviews will be displayed on Google Maps.

TripAdvisor:



Google Maps:



Screen capture copyright: TripAdvisor, Google

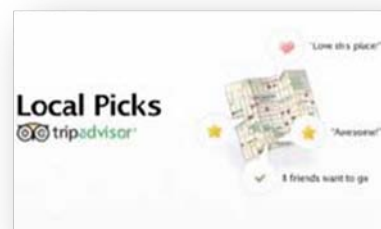
Search engines

Your TripAdvisor reviews may appear in the search engine results when someone searches for your business name or other main keywords. TripAdvisor also conducts Google AdWords campaigns so your review could be accessible from the right column of the search engine results list.

Mobile Internet technology

The Internet is going mobile and so is TripAdvisor. For instance, TripAdvisor has released the iPhone version of its “Local Picks”(restaurant) application. It takes advantage of the location-based iPhone capabilities, locates where the phone is and provides restaurant reviews and user recommendations.

The Local Picks application is also available on Facebook (602 restaurant reviews in Brisbane for example) so if you do not already have a TripAdvisor account for your restaurant now is time to get one!



Screen capture copyright: TripAdvisor

e) TripAdvisor on my website

TripAdvisor provides the possibility to automatically integrate your reviews to your website. You don't even need to validate your listing first to benefit from this service. Go to your TripAdvisor listing page, click on "Do you own..." and log in.

Provided you have got access to your files or a content management system, it should take you less than 15 minutes to enable your site to display your TripAdvisor reviews.

HAVING YOUR TRIPADVISOR REVIEWS ON YOUR SITE WILL DEMONSTRATE TO YOUR VISITOR THAT YOUR PRODUCT IS TRUSTWORTHY AND CREDIBLE. **WHAT YOU CLAIM ABOUT YOUR PRODUCT ON YOUR SITE IS VERIFIED BY THIRD PARTY INSIGHTS.**

4) RELATED MATERIAL

a) Related tutorials

- Bringing people to my site with e-marketing

b) Related websites

- TripAdvisor Owner faq: www.tripadvisor.com/pages/owner_faq.html
- TripAdvisor Getting listed www.tripadvisor.com/pages/getlisted.html
- TripAdvisor 101 for your business: <http://www.untanglemyweb.com/blog/e-tourism/tourism-strategy-promote-your-tourism-business-on-tripadvisor/>
- Online reviews for tourism organisations and associations: <http://www.untanglemyweb.com/tourism-internet-marketing/social-media-and-online-reviews-for-your-tourism-and-destination-management-organisation/>