

**RezNEWS Feature Article:  
TripAdvisor.com: Don't let its strength show your weaknesses!**

TripAdvisor.com is one of the most popular travel review websites in existence. Wikipedia lists TripAdvisor.com as "a free travel guide and research website that offers impartial opinions to help plan a vacation. It is primarily used by people before they book their accommodation when traveling in order to research the thousands of reviews posted on its website each week by other travelers." Its recent popularity coincides with the industry-wide use of over-hyped marketing jargon like "social networking" and "Web 2.0." In simple terms, it is a big website that people use to read and write reviews on the topic of traveling. In this month's feature article, **RezNEWS** will discuss some ways that TripAdvisor.com can affect your business both positively and negatively and what properties can and cannot do about it.

Why should you care about your TripAdvisor.com listing? TripAdvisor.com gets over 22 million monthly visitors to their site, has five million registered members, and contains 10 million reviews and opinions. Without getting too technical, Google considers TripAdvisor to be an "authority" site for the travel industry. Therefore, when prospective guests perform a search using keywords like lodging, hotel, etc., it is probable that TripAdvisor.com will come up in the top search results. TripAdvisor® Media Network has 270,000+ properties listed across eight popular travel brand websites. (TripAdvisor.com)

Properties get listed on TripAdvisor.com several different ways, but the most common is a review written by a previous guest. People that are upset tend to leave more reviews than happy people. TripAdvisor rules state that it is forbidden for property employees to submit reviews themselves or otherwise attempt to acquire reviews that are not the unbiased opinions of real travelers. That's why it is important for your business to have a "system" that makes it easy for happy customers to write a positive review that can be used on TripAdvisor.com. A system to guide your guests to the site will afford you an organized way to spend as little time as possible campaigning for positive reviews on TripAdvisor. This will free up your time allocated to marketing to focus on more productive resources that actually do move inventory, send bookings your way, and increase your property's online revenue.

Here are a couple of ways your business can generate more positive reviews on TripAdvisor, keeping in mind any property found to be offering incentives to their guests for writing a review just to receive an incentive, may be subject to penalty. Use these **RezNEWS** suggestions for successful reviews:

- Offer satisfied guests a Thank You Card at checkout with specific and easy to follow instructions on how to share their experience at your property with others at TripAdvisor.com or alternative review sites.
- Send a follow up email thanking the guest for their stay. Provide a link to your TripAdvisor listing asking the guest to share the highlights of their stay.

Only a small percentage of guests will take the time to write a positive review, but unhappy guests are ten times more likely to damage your reputation by using such a forum. Create a similar system as you use to procure positive reviews as to deal with negative experiences that may happen at your property. A negative review is not the end of the world. Actually, a negative experience can actually turn around into a positive learning situation for your staff and management. TripAdvisor encourages property managers to respond to negative reviews and give travelers the details of how your property is handling improvements. Travelers think very highly of properties that respond to negative comments by making changes. If you are a new owner of a business, TripAdvisor will remove any reviews that are not relevant to your current status. Simply send an email with proof of ownership change and the exact dates that you began your tenure.

In conclusion, don't place too much importance on this one resource. TripAdvisor is a forum to review potential destinations and previous guest stays; however, it will not generate more online revenue and should not be incorporated as an integral and important part of your online marketing strategy. The best way to manage your online reputation is by taking care of your customer first, and the rest as it relates to total business success will take care of itself.

***About the author***

Brad Brewer is the sales manager for RezStream. Brad has over four years of sales and consulting experience in the hospitality industry. He recently joined the RezStream team from RezOvation, with extensive expertise in the property management software arena.