Tips for a Successful Hotel Website Redesign

Tips for a Successful Hotel Website Redesign Part 1

You might ask why it is necessary to do a hotel website redesign. After all, redesigning a hotel website takes time and money. While this is true, you might want to reconsider a few critical reasons for needing to make the changes.

In four installments, we will share some tips to help you through the process of updating your website so that you don't lose traffic or bookings and avoid cost over-runs and lost time.

In life, change is inevitable. In business, change is vital. – Warren G. Bennis

Why Change your Hotel Website Design?

Technology changes quickly as do hotel website design styles.

- There could be a shift in your hotel's business focus
- A need to incorporate re-branding
- New marketing message you wish to advertise.
- Need to add a new website functionality.
- Search engine algorithms or marketing trends.

Any one or all of these things will lead you to need a redesign of your hotel website.

What was the latest and greatest yesterday may become out-of-date today. Your hotel website redesign can incorporate the latest technology and trends to give users the experience they come to expect from websites. It reflects your hotel's quality of service and shows your guests and potential guests that you care about their wants and needs.

Tips for a Successful Hotel Website Redesign Part 1

You will need to keep up with the changes to stay current and not lose any available revenue opportunities. The whole point is to increase conversions and attract new customers through your hotel website. When your hotel is working on a website redesign strategy, you want to make sure you go through the transition process with as little hiccups as possible.

Where to Start Your Hotel Website Redesign ProjectPlan

To move forward, you should start your hotel website redesign project plan by:

- Creating backups of your current website & URLs used
- Forming a baseline of your analytics including current loading speed, conversion rates, bounce rates & high traffic pages
- Tracking current search engine rankings; in-bound links & current backlinks.

These will all be useful to keep track of your improvements. In the event of a major issue with your new site, you can always put your old site back up while you work out kinks.

The back-ups may take some time, but it will prove to be an important first step to getting the redesign going and uploaded quickly all the while protecting traffic, rankings and minimizing costs.

Tips for a Successful Hotel Website Redesign Part 2

In the first part of our hotel website redesign series, we discussed the importance of backing up and recording all the features of your old website. Now comes the all-too-important and often neglected part — planning!

Think of it this way: A hotel website redesign is like the remodeling your home kitchen. You wouldn't want to start ripping up flooring and tearing down cabinets without a clear vision of what you want your new kitchen to be, right? Of course not! You would start with a plan for demolishing your old kitchen with as little inconvenience as possible and have set ideas in mind for your soon-to-be remodeled kitchen.

Like remodeling your kitchen, planning your hotel website redesign will make for a successful transition to your updated website. Preparation is the key. You will need to ensure you have enough resources, clearly define problems and make decisions.

Your plan should consider email accounts or server changes, eliminating duplicate content, URL structure, 301 Redirects, giving a once-over for missing titles, and using multiple browsers to check your site to name a few. Oh – and let's not forget having a good SEO strategy! A good plan will become the blueprint that will help make the most out of your new online presence without losing the value found within your current site.

Of course the best of plans will have one or two kinks to iron out so make sure your plan includes putting your old site back up while you fix the issues. You also wouldn't want search engines to find your site while you're in the middle of development. So protect your site by working on it locally and use a password to keep anyone from catching wind of what you are planning.

Tips for a Successful Hotel Website Redesign
Part 2

Also, you will have to take into account time, budget and functionality in your hotel website redesign but you will first need to consider: Who is your target audience, what you are looking to accomplish and where it would be best to make the changes. After all, you will want to get the most efficient, cost effective results and reap the most benefits in creating online opportunities, improving conversions and increasing rankings in search engine.

Tips for a Successful Hotel Website Redesign Part 3

You took care of your backups, laid out a plan and redesigned your hotel website according to your objectives and what you had mapped out. That's great! But before you launch your hotel website redesign, you will need to do some final checks of your updated site to ensure the transition to launch goes smoothly.

You've taken care of the basics but some final checks before launch should include:

- Making sure all your tracking codes are up-to-date and working.
- Ensuring your AdWords and PPC campaigns are updated.
- Checking that 301 redirects are working.
- Verifying any email addresses connected with your site are working properly.
- Removing any robots.txt tags you might have temporarily used while in the development environment.

Your hotel's pre-launch checking phase will ensure the minimal amount of hiccups when you actually launch your updated site. You want to avoid problems with CMS systems and be certain that you are not sending your guests and future guests to pages with broken links. In other words, avoiding pitfalls that will adversely affect your hotel SEO rankings or AdWords quality score.

5, 4, 3, 2, 1......Launch Time!
Your website is your biggest marketing and sales tool. So it would be well worth your while to spend the time rechecking all aspects of your updated website before it goes live. After all, your objective during a hotel website redesign is to avoid any downtime, cost over-runs and lost rankings – all while protecting traffic.

In our next and final installment of this series we will be discussing some post hotel website redesign checks.

Tips for a Successful Hotel Website Redesign Part 4

You have now launched your revamped hotel website and believe you can sit back to enjoy the proverbial fruits of your labor. Well don't go into your happy place just yet. In this last part of our series, we will be discussing some post launch follow-ups of your hotel website redesign.

In your redesign process, you made sure to:

- Have a plan that could turn your visitors into guests.
- Have landing pages encouraging prospective guests to explore further.
- Have a website that reflects your hotel's voice

You confidently launched your new site and now there are some last checks to ensure all is working, linking and presenting as you had planned.

You can start with giving one more look at your hotel website for any server errors, broken and inbound links, CSS errors, no index tags, PPC ads and tracking codes. Then you will also need to:

- Update your Sitemaps file to see if search engines found new web pages and/or errors on your website
- Check your analytics & webmaster tools for bounce rates and stats on your new site
- Optimize for SEO (internal & external links, keywords etc)
- Periodically check rankings: Re-indexing by search engines takes time
- Review your site's performance in various browsers for desktop, smartphone and tablet
- Re-test web forms and emails sent by scripts. (The last thing you want is a frustrated potential guest who can't make their way to you or where you are directing them!)
- Check search results after search engines have re-indexed your site
- Check re-indexed pages for improvements or a drop from your previous numbers.

Tips for a Successful Hotel Website Redesign
Part 4

Your hotel website is your strongest marketing tool. You want it to have a positive impact with the goals you set as well as the features and functionality your guests will appreciate. These last checks will give you a chance to fix any last minute issues before they start to affect your rankings and cut into your ROI.

About Lodging Interactive

Headquartered in Parsippany, NJ, Lodging Interactive is a full-service digital marketing and social media engagement agency exclusively servicing the hospitality industry. Through its web design and search optimization division as well as its CoMMingle Social Media Division, Lodging Interactive provides effective Internet marketing services to hundreds of branded and independent properties as well as management companies, restaurants and spas. The company also offers fully managed Live Chat agents for hotel websites through its LiveChatForHotels.com division.

Lodging Interactive is an HSMAI Adrian Award winner, and has won awards from the International Academy of Visual Arts, Interactive Media Awards, Horizon Interactive Awards, Web Marketing Association, Academy of Interactive & Visual Arts, and Travel Weekly's Magellan Awards have recognized Lodging Interactive as an industry leader.

Lodging Interactive is a proud supporter of the Hotel Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI) and the company's president, DJ Vallauri, currently serves on the Board of Directors of HSMAI's New York Chapter. For more information, please contact sales@lodginginteractive.com, 877-291-4411 or visit the LodgingInteractive.com.

Two Operational Divisions For All Your Needs

The Interactive Group
by Lodging Interactive

- Website design & development
- Website hosting
- SEO - organic content optimization
- PPC - Pay-Per Click marketing
- Brand e-Commerce scorecards
- Display advertising
- Email marketing
- Strategic online marketing planning

COMMINGLE
by Lodging Interactive

- Reputation monitoring & management
- Guest review management responses
- Social media engagement
- Social media marketing
- Blogging services
- Image sharing & marketing
- Social Voices (24/7/365)
- CoMMingle Live Chat Fully Managed