

## **Building a new website and where to start with keywords**

Your hotel needs a new website and you have made the decision to different make the investment in developing a new, all singing, all dancing website to impress your customers and deliver the business you need.

So, who is the right person to lead and manage the development of the new website? Is it the web developer, a sales & marketing/PR company or perhaps your own management team?

The truth is it could be any of the above but the end result could be very different depending on who you choose.

Before deciding ask yourself these questions:

- 1) Who understands our business, our brand and what we stand for?
- 2) Who are our customers?
- 3) Why do customers come to our hotel?
- 4) Where do our customers come from?
- 5) How do our customers find us?

You and your team have the ability, knowledge and are without doubt in the best position to answer these questions and that is why YOU should manage the development of the new website. Not an outside agent who knows very little about your core business.

I don't mean you need to do the programming or create the design but you need to make sure that the designer and web developer you choose work to your plan that will result in a website that your customers will find informative, easy to navigate, attractive and easy on the eye, encourage sales and be optimised from day one.

The first point is to identify the keywords or keyword phrases that customers would use to find your hotel and the services it provides such as wedding receptions, conferences, restaurants etc.

This is a critical step because these keywords or keyword phrases are what will identify you to potential customers.

When identifying keywords or keyword phrases it's important to be as specific as possible. Analyze every possible service or product you provide to potential customers, and think of all the ways someone could do a search for those services and think about your location.

For instance, someone searching for a hotel in your town who has never been there before or is visiting a local attraction is unlikely to know the name of your hotel so they are more likely to use a search phrase such as "hotels in Town name" or "hotel near attraction name".

The same applies to your business. Think to yourself, who am I marketing to? Ask friends and family how they would look for a hotel in another town on the web. Then take into account variations of those keywords. What if I make them plural, can I abbreviate them, and

are they frequently misspelled? Also, think in two and three word phrases, too few words and you might not be specific enough, too many words and it's overkill.

After you've identified and exhausted all the possible keywords start planning which pages on your website you will target with specific key words, don't target more than two or three per page, and start to write the text including the keywords in the content. When you pass the content onto the web developer make sure you tell them which keyword phrases you have targeted for each page and get them to include this in the page title, meta keywords and headers on the page.

Well done, you have now started the process of optimising your website from the beginning and you will see the benefits.