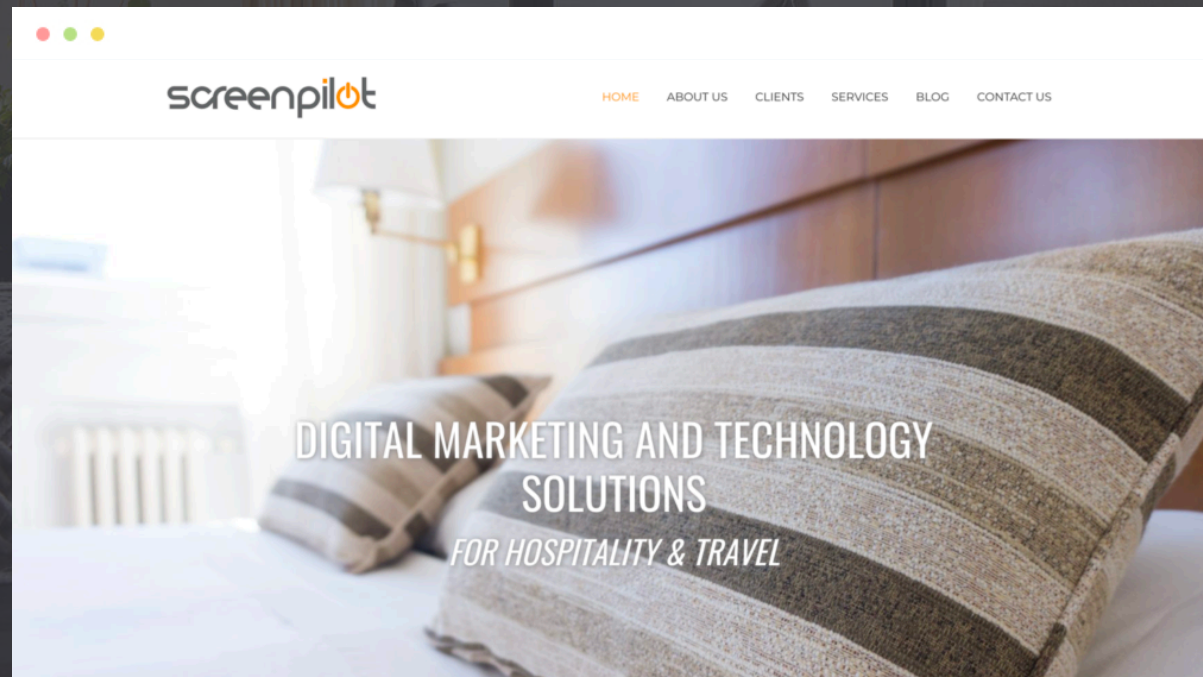


DIGITAL MARKETING AGENCIES BUYER'S GUIDE

2019 Edition

Underwritten, in part by:

screenpilot



Buyers guide created in collaboration with ScreenPilot

**CONCEPTUALIZATION, DESIGN,
DATA AND COPY EDITING:**

Hotel Tech Report

HotelTechReport 

CONTENT & RESEARCH

Tom Dibble

Griffin Sandberg

Rachel Anderson

Justin Larsen

Chris Lau

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**WHY DO HOTELS
NEED A SPECIALIZED
DIGITAL MARKETING
AGENCY?**



Third party intermediaries are taking guests away from you and charging 10% - 20%+ commission on each booking. The job of a digital marketing agency is to make sure that you're interacting with your guests throughout their entire path to purchase and that these prospective guests are ultimately booking directly through your website.

The channels and strategies involved in an agency's approach should be highly customized to each property. Using a blended approach to media distribution and channel distribution in addition to harnessing behavioural and personalization techniques both on and off website.

**WHAT ARE THE
KEY BENEFITS OF
HIRING A DIGITAL
MARKETING AGENCY?**

1

DRIVE INCREASED DIRECT BOOKINGS

Your digital marketing agency should fully grasp the “right mix” necessary with channel distribution; however, their goal should always be direct distribution.

2

STEAL SHARE FROM COMPETITORS

Digital marketing is both an art and a science. Your agency should always be testing out what they can in both manners - setting you apart from competitors with unique storytelling, and outbidding competitors when able through hard data - to steal away market share.

3

CONSTANTLY MOVE ROI

A good digital marketing agency will not focus solely on the low-funnel strategies. While it might make those ownership meetings easier - this strategy completely ignores the long term goals (finding new guests and truly moving ROI) and could find property in a tough position when unexpected changes in the path to purchase arise.

THE INSIDE SCOOP

Cut through the noise and find out what real hoteliers are saying by reading in-depth reviews.



VERIFIED USER REVIEWS

Read reviews →



screenpilot

Director of Revenue Optimization from San Jose

“The team is collaborative, innovative and accountable all while teaching and exploring together. This relationship has given us the opportunity to focus on the areas that we really need to and not the areas that we aren't experts in. My advice is to reach out to Screen Pilot and let the experts be experts!”

Read the full review on [HotelTechReport](#)



Senior Marketing Manager from Boston

“I absolutely love working with Travel Tripper and their Digital team and trust their support and tech teams with all of our accounts. They are extremely hands on with setting up anything from our websites to pay per click campaigns and dont leave any details...”

Read the full review on [HotelTechReport](#)



GUESTCENTRIC

Hotel Owner from San Jose

“GuestCentric does outstanding website design work, highly recommended. Going with GuestCentric proved to be a great investment to compete with the OTA's.”

Read the full review on [HotelTechReport](#)



screenpilot

VP of Global Online Marketing from Houston

“The ScreenPilot team is our preferred digital agency of record due to their personal custom account management philosophy and consistent stellar results with all properties within our portfolio they are engaged with. Each team member is highly skilled and well trained to address any technology need or strategy.”

Read the full review on [HotelTechReport](#)



A stylized illustration of a blue hill with a small green plant growing on top. The hill is composed of two shades of blue, with a darker blue outline and a lighter blue fill. The plant has three green leaves and is growing out of a small dark blue hole in the top of the hill.

TREND WATCH

Read predictions from domain experts and learn about the state of the category.

WHAT'S NEW AND INTERESTING IN THE SPACE?

WIDER AUDIENCE TARGETING

Various social media channels have been playing around with options to push more hotel bookings directly from their app or site. For now, we're still at a point where they haven't integrated well into the hotel booking engine ecosystem, but they've definitely realized the opportunity for profit and we can expect this movement to continue.

Screen Pilot Prediction: While it will be a nice opportunity to drive more bookings from Social Media; expect commission models to change once these channels improve their booking experiences.

NEW GOOGLE ALGORITHMS

Google changes their algorithm 500+ times a year. Most of these changes don't affect digital marketing strategy. However, some of changes made to the SERPs (search engine result pages) in 2018 will be quite large.

Screen Pilot Prediction: Keep an eye on Google's Metasearch and the real estate it continues to take up.

DEATH OF THE CUSTOM CMS

Marketing agencies in the past have created proprietary content management systems for hotels, which is something unheard of in other industries. The problem with a custom CMS is that it makes you beholden to a vendor and limits accountability. Hoteliers are wising up to this scheme and are saying "no" to the custom CMS. The space has been commoditized and is a "buyers" market, so take advantage and be in control of you IP.

Screen Pilot Prediction: The custom CMS will no longer be acceptable to hoteliers due to cost and limited flexibility

BUYING ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Critical
Features



Top rated providers
& comparisons



Key
integrations



Questions to
ask vendors

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT SERVICES TO CONSIDER?

SEO/PPC

SEO will reach audiences at every stage of their path to purchase. Today this requires more work and signals than it did in past years. PPC will lock the booking down once the guests reach the lower end of the funnel.

Email Marketing

Prospect for new guests and retarget people who have already interacted with your brand to steer them towards conversion.

Content Marketing

Guests interact with hundreds of digital touchpoints and dozens of content pieces in their path to purchase. Make sure you can deliver the right message to them at the right time on the right device, and in the right manner.

Website & Graphic Design

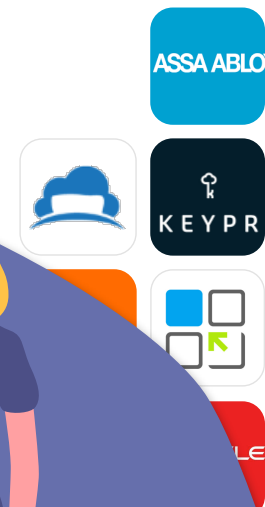
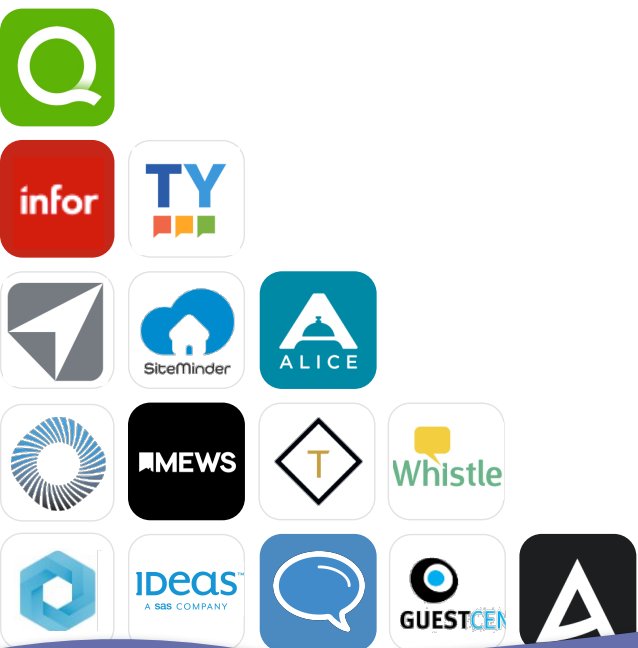
If you don't spend time on your website and proper design for advertisements then you're essentially throwing money at the wall with an online presence. Since guests will be led to believe you don't spend any time on your property either.

Personalized Taxes Fees & Policies

Increase the lifetime value of past guests, and upsell amenities/experiences to upcoming guests .

Social Media Management

Prospect new guests and drive engagement through dedicated reputation and community management. Remember, social is "pay to play" at this point as well, so don't leave the advertising aspect out of the equation.



WHO'S WHO...

See which players are trending in the market and launch Hotel Tech Report compare to compare them side-by-side.

★ Most recommended by hoteliers



ScreenPilot

[View profile >](#)

We believe in an integrated approach, bringing sound marketing strategy to life in the digital world, connecting hotels with the modern traveler.



TravelTripper

[View profile >](#)

Travel Tripper's award-winning agency builds hotel websites that combine high-end design with high-performance tools to help you quickly convert guests.



Cendyn

[View profile >](#)

Cendyn's 20-year head start in hospitality technology means we know how to power your marketing, group sales and event profitability. We understand your needs because we've sat on your side of the table.



GuestCentric

[View profile >](#)

GuestCentric has operations in New York, San Diego, London, Barcelona and Lisbon and is a proud partner of hotels that are part of collections like Design Hotels, Small Luxury Hotels, Leading Hotels of the World and Relais & Chateaux.



BeCurious?

[View profile >](#)

BeCurious helps hotels to get more direct reservations. We offer a broad range of solutions in the area of e-commerce and hospitality.




HEBS Digital

[View profile >](#)

Part of Hotel360 Technologies, HEBS Digital and Serenata CRM, the most comprehensive Hotel CRM Suite today, are the creators of the hospitality industry's first Fully-Integrated 360-Degree Guest Engagement & Acquisition Platform.





Want to compare products side-by-side with screenshots, reviews, features and more?

[Launch comparison tool](#)

“



ScreenPilot review verified by Hotel Tech Report

“The ScreenPilot team is our preferred digital agency of record due to their personal custom account management philosophy and consistent stellar results with all properties within our portfolio they are engaged with. Each team member is highly skilled and well trained to address any technology need or strategy.”

VP of Global Online Marketing

Houston

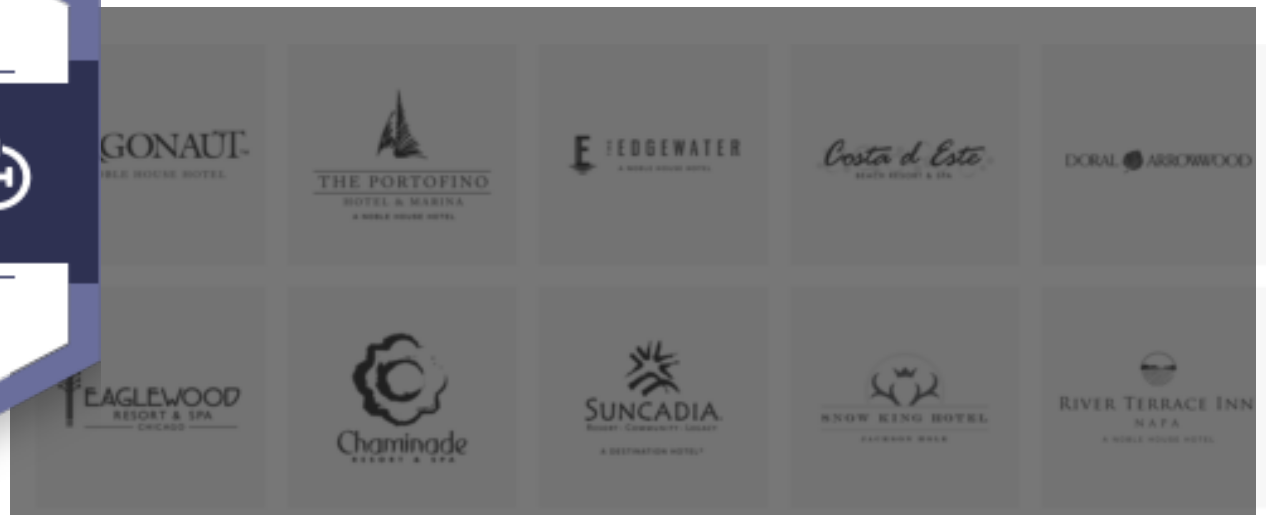
Luxury hotel group

READY TO
CONNECT WITH
A TOP RATED
PROVIDER?

Learn more about ScreenPilot >



For more than a decade, Screen Pilot has delivered digital marketing and technology solutions for hoteliers, hotel management teams and asset management firms. We believe in an integrated approach, bringing sound marketing strategy to life in the digital world, connecting hotels with the modern traveler



STAY CONNECTED

- **Booking Engine:** Tracking issues are a real pain. Make sure your agency has previous experience with your Booking Engine. Ask them what issues have come up in the past, and how they've found a solution.
- **Website/CMS:** Try and avoid proprietary CMS' that own your site. This will make implementation easier for your digital marketing agency and the site will actually be your IP once you move on from the existing dev agency.
- **Email/CRM:** The more your agency can help you segment lists/put people into mosaics; the more opportunity they'll have for personalization efforts in messaging (and this is huge).



MOST INTEGRATED
VENDOR



GUESTCENTRIC

3 verified integrations

[Browse integrations](#) →

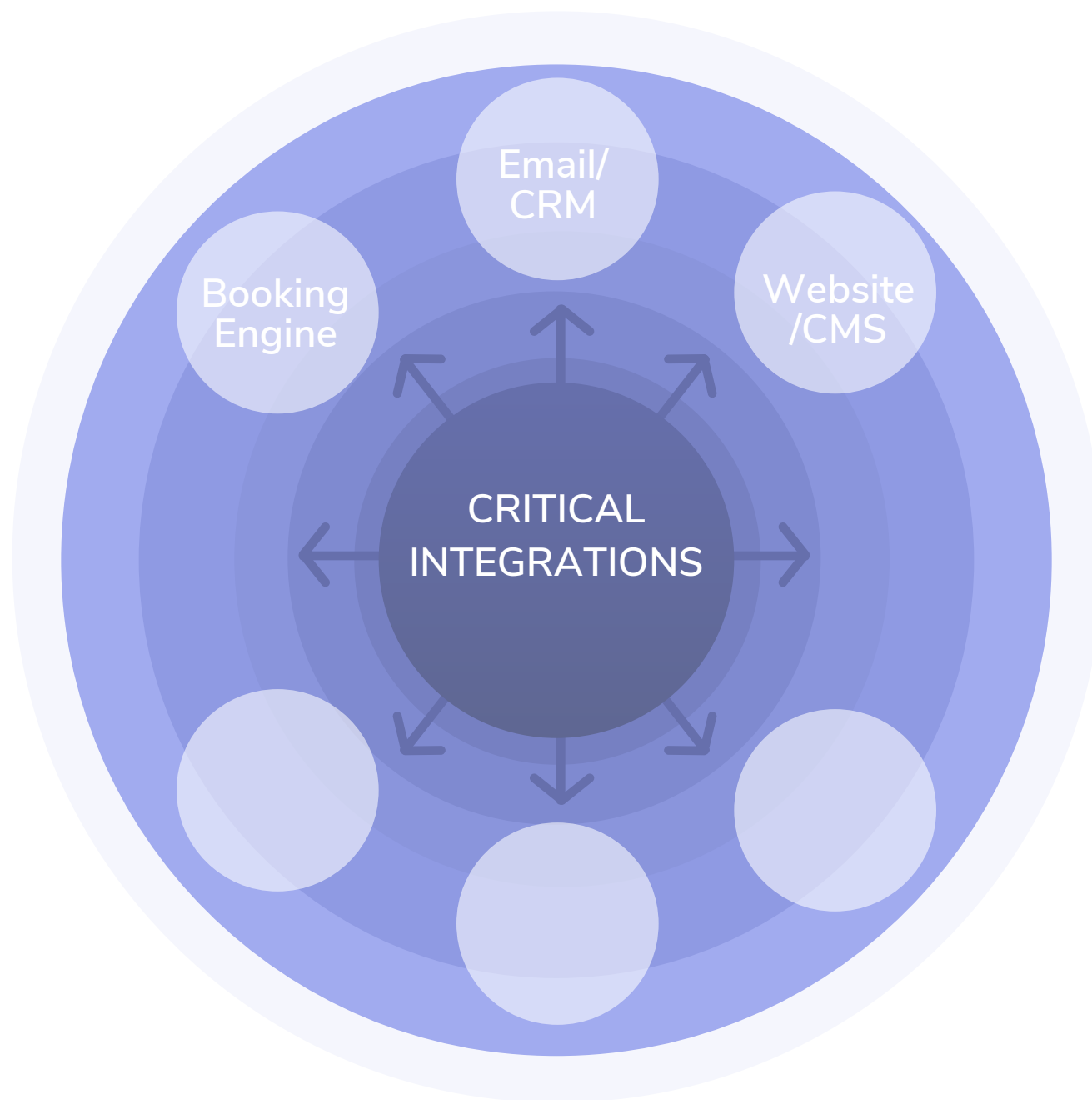
Without the right integrations even the best product can add complexity and cost. Make sure any vendor you consider has the integrations you need to set your team up for success.

[View integrations >](#)



Need an integration built for your hotel?

[Connect with Hapi](#)



WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD A SMART BUYER ASK VENDORS



WHAT DOES YOUR AGENCY DO TO STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE?

Property should ask for specific examples from the prospective agency and make sure these opportunities for expansion of knowledge fall upon everyone at the agency. It's nice to have a smart C Suite; but they won't be the ones interacting with your campaigns each month.

WILL THE PERSON HANDLING OUR MONTHLY CALLS BE KNOWLEDGEABLE ENOUGH TO STRATEGIZE WITH OUR TEAM ON THE SPOT?

There's no point in paying agency fees if you're just going to be sending someone out on errands or explaining RevPar to your point of contact. To make the fees worthwhile you'll need someone who can push things to the next level on strategy calls.

WHAT DOES YOUR TEAM DO TO SET EACH PROPERTY APART FROM EACH OTHER IN STRATEGY/MESSAGING?

Your agency should visit your property to get a good working knowledge of the true value props. They can also gain a working knowledge of your competition and market to see what truly sets you apart from the rest. Beyond this, it's to know your agency team on a more personal level as you move forward with the partnership.

WHAT WOULD YOU RECOMMEND FOR NEXT YEAR'S MEDIA BUDGET?

This will give you the opportunity to see if the agency has a decent grasp on your market/property type. If they come in recommending \$20k/mo in PPC for a 20 key property in a seasonal town; they're probably not a fit.

WHAT'S YOUR ACCOUNT MANAGER : PROPERTY RATIO?

Will your property be getting the attention it needs and deserves, or will you just be another ticket waiting in a long line?

WHAT TO EXPECT



Pricing &
budgeting



Implementation
timeline



Success
metrics



Success stories and
additional resources

PRICING GUIDANCE

What are the typical pricing models and ranges that I should budget for?

IMPLEMENTATION EXPENSE

Your agency will need time to explore your market, analyze existing data, and set up their new campaigns. Don't be surprised if there are hard costs for tech that your agency plugs in here as well (it's pretty standard practice).

Price range
\$2,000-\$5,000

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT

The pricing here is eluding to a more standard/templated website. If you want to enter the more customized zone then expect to pay anywhere from \$50 - \$80k.

Price range
\$10,000-\$20,000

MONTHLY RETAINER

This is for a full-service digital marketing agency. There are options to pay less in management, but you get what you pay for. This is the range that more hands-on agencies tend to charge.

Price range
\$2,000-\$5,000/mo

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

What does the typical implementation timeline and process look like to go live? Approximate implementation timeline: 2-8 weeks

The implementation time varies from two weeks to a few months, depending on the portfolio size and competitors that need to be added and checked. The best thing about reputation management is that it does not require an integration with your PMS, CRM, or CRS to get it up and running. However, it can be provided to guarantee seamless connections with your guest data. This will be the longest phase of your setup, so if an integration is not required, implementation can be done in the minimum time frame of 2 weeks.

KEY COMPARISON FACTORS



WHAT VARIABLES ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO COMPARE

1 PRACTICING KNOWLEDGE

A team that won't just take orders. Properties need an agency team that can play devil's advocate, provide alternative solutions, and act as a sounding board all at the same time. They must be knowledgeable not only in the digital space, but in the hospitality and travel spaces as well. The learning curve for non-hotel agencies is a long one, and usually not worth it when you need to hit the ground running.

2 STATUS WITHIN THE AGENCY'S PORTFOLIO

Will you be a top priority for your agency, or will you be just another number? Not all properties need the full-service treatment, but if you do - make sure they have the account management resources to truly deliver on their promises..

3 PROPRIETARY TECHNOLOGY

Has the agency created their own proprietary technology? If so, could it be a solution to a current issue or problem you are experiencing? Does it add value to the user experience for your audience? Will it assist in driving direct bookings? Make sure your tech investments match your long-term needs and that your agency truly created their tech based off industry or client specific needs.

4 FORWARD THINKING

If your goal is to continue seeing ROI move and your agency hasn't brought any new ideas to the table in the last quarter, then you need to be looking elsewhere.

5 RELATIONSHIPS

A digital marketing agency that can act as an extension to your in-house team (both in level of knowledge and responsiveness) is critical.

SUCCESS STORIES AND FURTHER READING

CASE STUDY: HOTEL DE ANZA

HISTORIC

CALIFORNIA

PPC Revenue

CASE STUDY: THE TENNESSEAN

Urban

Mobile Strategy

Paid Social CPC

CASE STUDY: THE GROVE RESORT & SPA

Resort

Search+Social

Increased ROA

CASE STUDY: GARDEN OF THE GODS COLLECTION

Resort

Influencer Campaign

Direct Bookings

5 DIGITAL MARKETING TRENDS FOR HOTELS IN 2018

We're already deep into 2018, so how is your property stacking up so far? Digital Marketing moves fast, so if you aren't keeping up - you're already falling behind.

HOW TO GET YOUR HOTEL'S MARKETING & REVENUE TEAMS TO WORK TOGETHER

The title of this article no longer applies to a "should" statement; these two departments working hand-in-hand is a "must" by now.

MODERN TRAVEL MARKETING (SERIES)

Great series of articles that will help you hit the ground running (or at least jogging along).

HOTELMARKETING.COM

Great list to subscribe to as it matches a great knowledge of the hotel space as well as the digital marketing world.

Find the best tech for your hotel

No buzzwords. No sales pitches. Just in-depth reviews from real users to help you make better decisions, faster.

Go to [HotelTechReport.com](https://www.hoteltechreport.com)

