



# Travel, TripAdvisor & Trust

*How TripAdvisor Influences  
Traveler Booking Decisions*

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## *How TripAdvisor Influences Traveler Booking Decisions*

As travel websites have consolidated and Google Hotels has improved, the number of websites a traveler visits while booking their vacation has dropped drastically in the last five years. In 2015, Expedia research<sup>1</sup> showed that consumers visited up to 38 websites while booking; in 2017, Flip.to found<sup>2</sup> that 86% of leisure travelers visit 9 websites or fewer. For some travelers, like a majority of millennials, the average number of websites visited dramatically dropped to less than five.

Because of the wide range of traveler demographics, computer skills, travel frequency, and loyalty status, the actual number of websites visited for people planning trips can be anywhere from a few to a few dozen.

Whether travelers are comparing hotel website specials to their loyalty points or OTA deals to their work travel perks program, one thing remains the same. **Almost all travelers reference TripAdvisor before, during, and after they book.**

What does this mean for hotels? That even if you're doing everything right – maintaining OTA listings, adding strong SEO content to your website, creating engaging social media posts – you still won't be able to keep up with your competition if you aren't putting the time into TripAdvisor.

Continue reading to learn more about:

- How travelers use TripAdvisor when researching their next trip
- How TripAdvisor influences buyers towards their purchasing decision
- Ways that your hotel can take advantage of TripAdvisor to increase bookings

# TripAdvisor and the Traveler's Journey

When travelers are beginning to book a trip, there are a number of factors that go into their planning. They could be centering their trip around a venue like a conference center or an amusement park and want to find convenient accommodations. In addition to finding a hotel, guests need to also find restaurants, bars, and activities for their time in the city. There's one website that helps these travelers find everything they need: TripAdvisor. TripAdvisor is often the most important resource that travelers use when planning every aspect of their trip.

Google<sup>3</sup> defines the traveler's path to purchase in four steps:

- **The Dreaming Stage:** No plans to travel, but looking for inspiration
- **The Planning Stage:** A destination has been chosen and they are researching dates, flights, hotels, and what to do while at their destination
- **The Booking Stage:** Research is done and it's time to complete the booking
- **The Experiencing Stage:** Travelers enjoy their trip — and share it with their friends

*Let's break down where TripAdvisor fits into each.*



**49%** of travelers  
have been inspired  
by TripAdvisor to visit  
a new destination.

## THE DREAMING STAGE

TripAdvisor classically has been used by people who know where they're going — the home page prompts site visitors to start by searching by city. However, in late 2018 TripAdvisor announced<sup>4</sup> their new social platform to reach travelers at the first step. The new social abilities will allow travelers to follow friends, brands, and influencers to get inspiration for their next trip.

With its annual Traveler's Choice lists, TripAdvisor has always spotlighted some of the world's most incredible destinations. Now, website visitors can get inspiration from sources that may be more realistic for their next trip. But will people read it?

According to TripAdvisor, almost half of travelers<sup>5</sup> said that TripAdvisor inspired them to visit a new destination. And on average, **travelers spend almost a full hour<sup>6</sup> on TripAdvisor while in the pre-planning stage.** That's a huge amount of information to read early in a purchasing journey. This trust in TripAdvisor for information carries throughout the whole path to purchase and continues into the planning stage.

*Travelers spend  
nearly an hour on  
TripAdvisor when planning.*



**60% of travelers who book online visit TripAdvisor while planning their trip.**

## THE PLANNING STAGE

As the world's top website for hotel reviews, TripAdvisor is a huge presence at the planning stage. Trips cost a lot of money, and travelers want to ensure that they're going to have the best time possible. When it comes to hotels, guests want a good price for clean rooms and friendly service, plus whatever amenities they've decided are important to them. That's why travelers turn to reviews.

The impact of hotel reviews on booking decisions is unquestionable. TripAdvisor averages almost 400 million unique monthly visitors<sup>7</sup>, and of TripAdvisor users, 96% say<sup>8</sup> that reviews are important to their hotel booking decision. Most importantly to hotels, 88% of TripAdvisor users will filter out results with less than a 3/5 rating<sup>9</sup>. That means that if your rating is less than a 3, only **12% of users will never even see or consider your hotel**. If you want to even have a chance at competing with other hotels, you have to be proactively managing your TripAdvisor ratings and reviews.



**88% of TripAdvisor users will filter out results with less than a 3/5 rating.**



**57%** of travelers  
who purchase  
through an OTA visit  
**TripAdvisor first.**

## THE BOOKING STAGE

When shoppers are ready to buy, they ramp up the time they spend researching to ensure they're making the right decision. On average, TripAdvisor users spend about 75 minutes on the site just before they book — and total 191 minutes on the website throughout the whole time they plan their trip.

Just because your guests book directly doesn't mean they aren't influenced by online reviews. According to their study, **three quarters of people who book directly on a hotel website visit TripAdvisor first<sup>6</sup>**, and over half of OTA purchasers (54%) use TripAdvisor directly before booking. Even though OTA websites also feature guest reviews to be managed, it is vital to focus first on TripAdvisor for the widest reach of influence.

Guests want to be certain of their decision. Even after hours of research, 16% of travelers will visit TripAdvisor again on the day that they finally make their purchase. With their well-researched trip booked, it's time to enjoy the experience.



**3/4** of people  
visit TripAdvisor first  
before booking directly.



**76% of TripAdvisor users agree that traveler-submitted photos influenced their booking decision.**

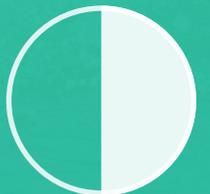
## THE EXPERIENCING STAGE

When guests spend over 3 hours researching their plans on TripAdvisor before booking, you can imagine that their expectations will be high. After weighing all the reviews, property details, and photos, guests have honed in on their destination, dates, and finally, accommodations. That's why post-stay reviews sometimes seem so emotionally charged. Your guests don't just make reservations; they chose you.

Reviews are truly a service that guests do for hotels and other travelers. **Half of TripAdvisor users won't even consider a hotel that doesn't have any reviews.** And three-quarters of users say that traveler-submitted photos have helped them make a decision<sup>8</sup>. The best thing you can do to get both direct bookings and OTA reservations is improve your hotel's standing on TripAdvisor.



**Half of TripAdvisor users won't consider a hotel without reviews.**



# How to Increase Bookings with TripAdvisor

It's undeniable that TripAdvisor impacts a huge amount of market share of hotel bookers. Whether for business, leisure, or a mixture of both, travelers are spending hours researching their destinations before they buy. Here's what you can do to increase bookings at your hotel.

## 1. Claim your business profile

Visit <https://www.tripadvisor.com/> Owners to find and claim your hotel's listing. Once claimed, you can update your profile with accurate contact information, your hotel website, and photos of your property. Plus, you'll be able to respond to traveler reviews, giving other travelers a more nuanced view of your hotel.

## 2. Ask travelers to leave reviews

Asking guests to leave reviews for your hotel remains one of the most impactful actions a hotel can take to positively influence their chances of getting chosen by travelers. The more reviews you have, the more trustworthy these reviews are to future travelers.

## 3. Respond to online reviews

Thoughtfully responding to the reviews you do get shows travelers that you care about your guests' experience. Whether guests are booking directly or on OTA websites, they're reading how you respond to other travelers. Responses are your chance to give a personal touch to your listing to help you compete with other hotels.

# Elevate Your Hotel's Reputation to Increase Revenue

By actively managing your TripAdvisor profile, you can reach more travelers and increase bookings.

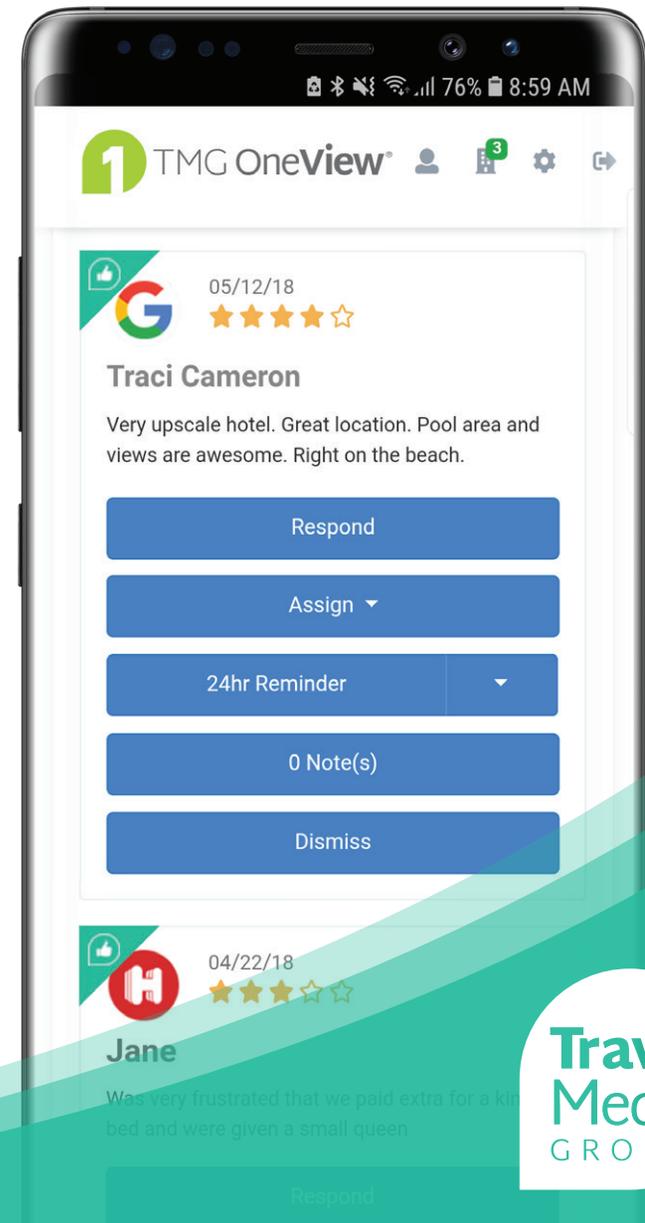
Travel Media Group can help:

- ✓ Claim & Update Your TripAdvisor Business Listing
- ✓ Earn More Positive Reviews from Guests
- ✓ Respond to Every Online Review Professionally

Get started today at  
<http://trvl.media/reputation!>

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