

Top Tips for Using TripAdvisor

Why?

TripAdvisor (TA) has 70 million+ members and 315 million monthly unique visitors. 500 million people view TripAdvisor content on sites other than TripAdvisor each month – this includes visitnorthumberland.com which can pull through your TripAdvisor rating, latest reviews and awards.

81% say user reviews are important to their booking decision, 49% won't book unless it has reviews. Customers need to have a collective frame of mind – your website needs to lead them to an opinion that is external to help them make the decision to buy (they can stay on your website to do this).

Studies suggest if you get a 1* increase in rating you can increase your room rate without a drop in occupancy. Activity on TripAdvisor can also help with your Google ranking, and gaining good reviews and TripAdvisor awards is great for your reputation and can be used to generate PR.

You can view and reply to your reviews, update your listing, as well as get access to some analytics for free!

Your TripAdvisor Listing

- Claim your listing (if you haven't already) – you might not currently engage with TA but your business may well be on there. You need to claim the listing so you can manage it.
- Regularly check and update the information on your listing. Use keyword rich text as it will help your rankings on search engines. There are online tools out there to help you identify keywords and phrases.
- Photos - Listings with 20 or more photos hold attention for longer. Photos should be varied and show different angles, times of year etc. Update your main photo regularly to ensure it is fresh and relevant. Edit the Alt tags on your photos to include your company name and web address. Use photo stats in the property snapshot to analyse the success of your photos. If people aren't viewing your photos draw them in with a new primary photo that is changed regularly. Add captions.
- Videos can be added – 10 mins or shorter, 2 mins is enough if a good video.
- The overall average review score on TA is 4.12, which gives you something to benchmark against.
- You can set it up so you receive an email notification every time you receive a review.
- What's nearby section – add this to enhance the visitor's potential experience and cross promote.
- Use TA's analytics – you can create competitor sets to compare against others.

Responding to Reviews

- You should respond to every review – doing this makes potential customers believe you care about every customer.
- Do not have a standard response that you cut and paste – make it individual and acknowledge what the reviewer has said.
- Respond quickly, you can get notifications every time someone leaves a review.

- Connect with the wider tourism offer in your response, it may encourage visitors to come back again if they understand what else your area has to offer.
- Bad Reviews – an aggressive management response makes you look worse. Complaints are less about the issue itself than the way staff responded. TA gives you the opportunity to turn a negative into a positive, which you wouldn't normally get once the person has left. Thank the reviewer, respond to and acknowledge the criticism in a positive and professional tone, then close well.
- If you take feedback and make changes which improve your service, tell the reviewer in your response if possible, others will see this and know improvements have been made.
- Respond quickly, be polite and professional, be positive in tone, know online boundaries, be original, show appreciation.
- Customer questions feature – customers can ask questions and post responses onto your page. Other customers can answer, so answer quickly.
- If a bad review has been responded to well, it lessens the negative impact.
- Have a system in place in your daily workflow for responding to reviews. Bring it into your meeting agenda. Encourage staff to read reviews to help increase their involvement and give them good feedback and constructive criticism.

How to increase your ranking

- Recent reviews count more in your popularity ranking
- The more reviews you have, the lower the percentage of bad reviews. If you only have 5 reviews and 1 is bad, it looks much worse.
- Out of sight, out of mind, a lack of reviews is not positive.
- 80% of users read at least 6-12 reviews before making a decision and focus on recent reviews – regularity and volume are important
- '2Q 3R' – Quantity, Quality, Response, Recent, Relevance

How to get more reviews

- Add the TA apps/widgets to your website and social media, putting one 'above the fold' on your homepage if possible to catch people's attention straight away.
- Show customers how to leave a review – pop a little instruction page into your welcome book/folder or put signs up.
- Switch your guest book for a laptop/tablet that is permanently on TA ready for them to leave a review.
- Order a free set of business cards from TA (P&P to pay) to tell visitors to leave a review
- Put a link in your email signature and ask them to review with a link within the email you send after their visit.
- QR code which links to TA for them to leave a review.

Remember, everything above is free to do, you simply need to dedicate some staff time to managing TripAdvisor and you can start to reap the rewards.