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# Hospitality eCommerce Strategies



## Why TA Fastrack?

TA Fastrack is a leading Internet strategy-consulting firm for the hospitality and travel verticals. At TA Fastrack, we advise lodging and travel companies on Internet, Online Distribution and eMarketing strategies in [key eBusiness areas](#). We specialize in *direct-to-consumer online distribution* and eMarketing strategies. We help hoteliers regain control of their online brand and price integrity from the online discounters and lessen their dependence on the online intermediaries. Our clients stay ahead of the competition, control their own Cyber-destiny and capture new market share with an effective Internet strategy.

## Hoteliers Take Notice

At least 13% of hotel bookings will come from the Web this year. Three years from now the Internet will contribute over 20% of all hotel bookings (PhoCusWright, eMarketer). 53% of all Internet bookings in hospitality will be direct to consumer (i.e. via hotel-owned websites) (PhoCusWright). From these national averages, how do you compare and where are your competitors? If you do not fare better than the national averages, you are already behind your proactive competitors.

## Highly Effective Consulting Services

TA Fastrack provides hoteliers and travel managers with expert advice, concrete recommendations, and sensible solutions that are clearly defined and priced. If you are a Director of Sales and Marketing or Revenue Manager you must consider important questions crucial for the very existence of your hotel company. After you asked these questions, we provide the answers with low-cost, fixed-priced and highly effective [Internet consulting packages](#).

Finding the right answers can help you dramatically increase occupancy rates, boost revenues, open new markets, attract more affluent customers and improve the bottom line by utilizing the Internet to its fullest potential.

Hoteliers and travel managers need expert advice, concrete recommendations, and fast and inexpensive services with no hidden costs. That is why we use the "finished product model", rather than the typical "rate-per-hour" consulting model. Our eBusiness consulting packages are clearly defined and competitively priced.

## eBusiness Consulting Packages

Our suite of comprehensive Internet Strategy Consulting Packages are designed to meet the needs and requirements of any lodging and travel company: from the independent hotel to the branded hotel, hotel representation company, hotel management company and major brand.

For illustrative purposes our approach can best be described in the schematic below. Each phase represents a set of services that may or may not be appropriate for your particular hotel Internet strategy. After a free Internet strategy review, which includes a 30-minute phone evaluation and audit, we can help you define where you are and where you need to be to meet your immediate and long-term Internet revenue goals:

### Phase I

Website Optimization  
Search Engine Strategy  
Total Online Distribution Strategy

### Phase II

Destination Web Strategy  
Internet Intelligence Reports  
Total Email Marketing Strategy

### Phase III

Online Booking Technology  
Analysis  
eMarketing Services  
Ongoing eBusiness Consultation

## Consulting Packages:

### **Hotel Website Optimization Strategy**

A *direct-to-consumer model* should become the foundation, the centerpiece of your hotel's online distribution strategy. Why? The Internet conforms to the lowest cost and most inexpensive method to distribute your inventory: the cost of a booking directly from your hotel website could be as low as \$3 while a reservation via your call center would cost a minimum of \$9. A direct-to-consumer model provides long-term competitive advantages. It lessens your dependence on intermediaries, discounters, and traditional channels that are slowly becoming obsolete.

Hotel website optimization involves turning your existing or new hotel website into a 24/7 sales force, enhancing the user experience by improving website navigation and functionality and eCRM features, boosting features that contribute to higher conversion rates (look-to-book ratios) and making your website search engine friendly.

### **Features:**

- Domain Name Audit
- Website Functionality Audit
- Website Navigation Map Audit
- E-Mail Capture Functionality
- Virtual Tours and Rich Media
- eCRM and Online customer support
- Online booking engine audit
- Home Page Audit and Optimization
- Main Pages Audit and Optimization
- Size and Download Speeds
- Page Titles, Meta Tags, Description Tags
- New Copy Creation
- Target Keywords
- Teleconference
- Written Report and Recommendations
- Action and Implementation Plan

### **Hotel Search Engine Strategy**

Do not become part of the "Invisible Web". Improve your website positioning on search engines and boost direct consumer bookings.

Did you know? 85% of Internet users rely on search engines to locate information on the Web (e.g. Yahoo, Google, MSN, AltaVista, etc). Independent hotels, branded hotels, hotel management companies and lodging companies not part of a major brand must rely even more on search engine referrals. Make sure search engines find your hotel as a top 30 hotel listed in your market otherwise you've become part of the Invisible Web.

#### **Features:**

- Destination and hotel market research
- Website description for the search engines
- Global Search Engine Strategy
- Destination-focused Search Engine Strategy
- Registration with 1,550 search engines
- Priority Registration with top 10 search engines
- Automated monthly re-submission service to 1550 search engines
- Teleconference
- Written Report and Recommendations
- Action and Implementation Plan

### **Total Online Distribution Strategy**

Have you considered direct and indirect distribution channels beyond your website? TA Fastrack has identified 80 major online distribution services that any proactive travel company can utilize to position its products. At least 50 of these are direct-to-consumer services, which will boost the "link popularity" of the hotel website, a crucial criteria used by the search engines to determine how to rank the website. Leverage these services' promotional efforts and robust Internet traffic as a means to promote and distribute your inventory.

Ideally a hotel company should aim to position itself at all "points of contact" with potential Internet travel bookers. Utilized expertly, these important online channels can produce immediate results, while keeping the hotel company or its properties in full control of their brand, pricing strategy and revenue management techniques.

#### **Features:**

- *Direct and Indirect* Internet distribution beyond the hotel website
- Review of existing Direct vs. Indirect online distribution strategy
- Online Event and Meeting Planner Services
- Online group travel services
- Last minute and impulse purchase services
- Online Hotel and Travel Directories
- Local travel and hospitality services
- Destination and city directories
- Wedding and golf channels
- Dynamic pricing services
- Foreign direct services
- Pay-per-click services
- Agency (Commission-based) Model Services
- Opaque Rate Model Services
- Merchant Model Services
- Foreign Indirect Services
- Proprietary 3-point ranking system for each service

- Terms, pricing and sign-up information for each service
- Recommendation for online distribution channel strategy
- Action and Implementation Plan
- One hour phone consultation.

## **Destination Web Strategy**

Leverage the popularity of the destination for your hotel's benefit. Recommended for major brands, hotel management companies, hotel representation companies, and multi-property lodging companies--ideal for multiple properties in a single destination.

### **The benefits of such a strategy are:**

- Allows the hotel to leverage the popularity of the destination for its benefit or for the benefit of its cluster of properties within the destination
- Allows the hotel management company or hotel brand to cross-sell its properties within the destination and leverage differences in location and price to appeal to a range of travel planning budgets, tastes, and desires
- Reduces the overall marketing cost (creation, development, maintenance, and search engine submissions) as the strategy bundles more than one property
- Allows users to locate a group of properties unique to a particular destination

### **Features:**

- Written blueprint for the new Destination Web Strategy with analysis and recommendations
- Domain and Sub-Domain Name Strategy
- Website Navigation Map
- Website Functionality
- Destination Pages Copy
- Target Keywords
- Website Page Titles
- Meta Tags
- Description Tags
- Web Page Size and Download Speeds Requirements
- Develop and launch a comprehensive destination-focused Search Engine Strategy to dramatically enhance the positioning of the new Destination initiative
- Recommendations and Action Plan
- Website development and optimization implemented

## **Internet Distribution Monitor Reports (IDM)**

The IDM Report is the ideal tool to benchmark your and your comp set's Internet presence and evaluate your progress in 2006. Are your competitors selling online? What online channels are they utilizing to move inventory? How effective is their Direct Web Distribution Strategy? How well are they utilizing third-party channels and marketing initiatives? How do you compare to them? For a snapshot of how well your hotel compares in online channel utilization, positioning, pricing and presentation, get fast and competitive intelligence at your fingertips. This multi-page intelligence report offers concrete recommendations and easy to understand comparison charts that will help you understand not only how you fare with the comp set, but what you can do to remedy and improve the situation.

- Evaluate Direct Web Distribution Strategy of Hotel and its defined comp set
- Evaluate Indirect Web Distribution Strategy of Hotel and its defined comp set
- 15-point Website functionality comparison and analysis
- Utilization of pay-per-click marketing
- Positioning on major search engines and directories
- Utilization of online discounters/merchant services
- Utilization of opaque model services
- Utilization of agency model (commission-based) services
- Destination and hotel market focused analysis
- Compare crucial Internet-related benchmarks
- Pricing, positioning and availability on major online channels
- Written Report and Recommendations.
- Proprietary Cyberscore system to evaluate hotel's utilization of the direct and indirect channel
- Property-focused reports (branded, independent, resorts)
- Brand-focused reports
- Quarterly, semi-annual and annual reports

## **Total Email Marketing Strategy**

Customized toolkit to employ a total, highly targeted, and full service email strategy. Market to existing customers and reach new customers through a coordinated and ongoing email marketing strategy. This week target leisure travelers, next week meeting planners, the week after travel agents, and so on. If executed properly, email marketing can build your strongest customer base.

### A. Customer e-mail capture:

- Written Report with analysis and recommendations
- Developing an Action Plan for customer email capture: Online/Offline
- Identify Online Email Vendors
- Vendor Comparison Analysis
- Develop the online email capture strategy
- Planning the e-Newsletter campaign

### B. Consumer e-mail marketing:

- Written Report with analysis and recommendations
- Identify consumer email list vendors
- Comparison Analysis
- Prices for quality email lists vary, starting from \$.075 per email address
- Develop the consumer email broadcast strategy
- What works, what works better and what does not work
- Recommendations and action plan

## C. Travel agent e-mail marketing:

- Written Report with analysis and recommendations
- Identify travel agent email list vendors
- Comparison Analysis
- Prices for quality email lists vary, starting form \$595 per broadcast to 4,000 travel agents plus one-time fee for HTML template
- Develop the travel agent email broadcast strategy
- What works, what works better and what does not work
- Recommendations and action plan
- Value package (Includes Parts A, B and C)
- Parts A, B and C can be purchased separately

## **Online Booking Technology Analysis and Vendor Comparison**

TA Fastrack provides critical expertise in the Web-based inventory management and reservations systems. TA Fastrack is often asked to consult on online booking technology analysis and vendor selection. TA Fastrack produces unbiased industry reports detailing major vendors in the industry. TA Fastrack experts have won many awards for Web-based technology applications for online reservations systems in hospitality and are highly respected for their unbiased decision-making and extensive knowledge in hospitality technology.

### **Features:**

- Compares leading vendors on functionality and pricing
- GDS Connectivity
- One-way and two-way PMS interface
- Online CRS technology
- Online Booking engines
- Web-based distribution
- Functionality and Features Analysis
- ROI Analysis: Licensing vs. transaction fees
- Installed base
- Performance and quality review
- Types of bookings
- Inventory management
- Booking process
- Database management and reports

## **eMarketing Services**

Media plans, pay per click marketing (PPC), online advertising and hotel marketing, and email marketing all require knowledge and expertise. TA Fastrack has managed these activities for more than 80 hospitality companies from large brand hotels to small boutique properties. TA Fastrack has extensive experience managing such operations and knows the tricks of the trade that translates into saving precious marketing dollars for its clients.

TA Fastrack provides effective e-mail marketing initiatives that provide hoteliers with trackable and measurable media to get their sales message nationwide. Some of our eMarketing initiatives include the highly successful 'Australia Loves Sydney' joint e-mail marketing campaign and "This Week's Top Hotel Deals" weekly permission-based e-mail campaign, aimed to help Sydney hoteliers get their latest deals and promotions in front of consumers and travel agents nationwide.

### **Features:**

- Hotel eMarketing Strategy
- Online Media Plans
- Pay-per-click marketing
- Customer e-mail capture



- Consumer e-mail marketing
- Travel agent e-mail marketing
- e-Newsletters and Promotions

#### Customer Email Capture and e-Newsletter Functionality

TA Fastrack delivers a simple, inexpensive and very attractive functionality that allows:

- Real-time customer email capture
- Virtual Hotel Brochure "On Demand"
- eNewsletter creation
- Email marketing campaign management
- Single customer email database

The single email database "pocket" makes all sources of emails manageable and enables interactive marketing and creation of monthly email and eNewsletter campaigns to the customer email list.

#### Pay-Per-Click Marketing

Pay-per-click (PPC) or Pay-for-performance services as they are sometimes known have become extremely popular and smart way to position your hotel website as "Sponsored Links" or enhanced listings on top of the search engine results. In the recent DoubleClick survey (June 2002), 57% of respondents identify keyword search/PPC programs among the online advertising vehicles used by US marketers.

TA Fastrack is one of the early adopters of PPC Marketing. Our consultants have been actively using and devising PPC campaigns since 1998. Currently we manage the PPC marketing campaigns of over 30 hotel companies.

Here is what's included in our services:

- Keyword analysis
- Destination focused research
- Promotional copy creation
- PPC services set up
- PPC campaign management
- PPC bid management
- PPC Weekly Services Reporting

#### **Ongoing eBusiness Strategy Services**

Are you seeking a partner that can bring clarity and expertise to your Internet strategy? If you are seeking a partner you can trust to educate and empower your team, contact us today. Have TA Fastrack help you sustain your short and long-term survival as the industry shifts away from GDS to online travel planning and transactions.

#### Features:

- Ongoing pro-active consultation & monitoring services
- Weekly teleconferences and recommendations
- Ongoing online distribution channel performance and analysis
- Ongoing website marketing
- Pay-per-click marketing and campaigns
- Email marketing
- Ongoing eMarketing strategy
- Ongoing website performance and analysis
- New online distribution channels and trends
- New Web technologies and applications

- New eMarketing tools
- eMarketing ROI
- New eBusiness key areas: eProcurement, eCRM and eKnowledge Management
- Included are agreed-upon consultation hours (10, 15, 20, 25, etc) per month of ongoing phone, e-mail consultations, customized research, analysis, recommendations, and staff seminars.
- Minimum 3-month commitment

## Who needs our Consulting and eMarketing Services?

- Independent Hotels
- Branded Hotels and Franchisees
- Major Hotel Brands
- Hotel Management Companies
- Casinos and Resorts
- Condos and Times Shares
- Boutique Hotels
- Extended Stays and Corporate Stays
- Other Lodging Companies
- Hotel Representation Companies

## Customer Commitment

TA Fastrack represents commitment, experience, and expertise in the hospitality industry. TA Fastrack stands by its mission to build mutually beneficial business relationships as it brings clarity to your hotel Internet strategy.

## About Our Experienced Consultants

Our consultants combine the best practices in three critical areas: solid hospitality and travel background (10+ years), experience as founders, CEOs and executives in two consecutive Internet technology start-ups in hospitality and travel (6+ years).

Did we mention the impeccable academic credentials (in average, our consultants have two Master's degrees each) and the fact that our consultants have won several prestigious awards for Web-based technology applications, inventory management and reservation systems for hospitality? Or the fact that our consultants are recognized "thought leaders" in Internet strategies for the hospitality and travel verticals?

**Malcolm Burrows** is an eCommerce guru, bringing with him over 17 years experience from related industries.

Commencing his early career in 1989 as the CEO of Yes Resources, Malcolm then moved on to work as the Start up Managing Director for [www.quickbeds.com](http://www.quickbeds.com), a Partner/Consultant for Burrows Allen & Partners, the Global eCommerce Director for Backpackers Xpress and most recently the General Manager of eCommerce for Tourism Queensland/Sunlover Holidays.

Malcolm has also earned a Bachelor of Business majoring in Economics at the Queensland University of Technology, along with his Masters in Business Administration. He is currently studying a Bachelor of Laws.