



VisitEngland™

## Online Marketing Toolkit

**Managing your  
Online Reputation**

## Managing your online reputation

In this internet age where every thought, feeling and opinion is tweeted, posted or blogged about for the world to see, reputation management has never been so important for tourism businesses.

In this module we will discuss the importance of engaging with reviews and comments and then look at Facebook and TripAdvisor in more detail.

Reviews, comments and opinions from past customers determine a business' online reputation. There are many different platforms available for both happy and unhappy customers to voice their opinions.

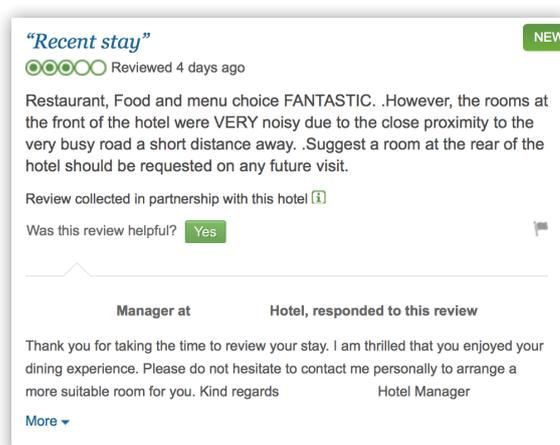
These include Online Travel Agents websites (such as Booking.com and Expedia), meta search sites (such as TripAdvisor), Google+ pages, Twitter, YouTube, testimonials on websites, comments on blogs and Facebook Business Pages.

It is no longer completely possible to control a business' message online as it would have been in the past. Historically, a business would place an advertisement in a newspaper or magazine and this would determine how that business was perceived in the marketplace, whereas nowadays potential customers seek out and place significant weight on reviews from past customers before making purchasing decisions.

As the two most dominant platforms for online reviews are Facebook and TripAdvisor, we have focused on these.

It is advisable for businesses to encourage and embrace reviews, even the less positive ones.

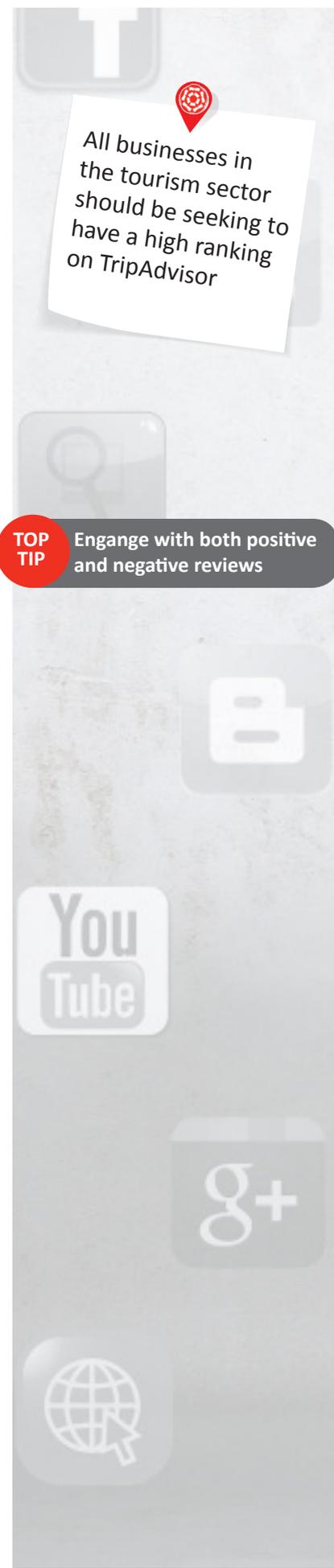
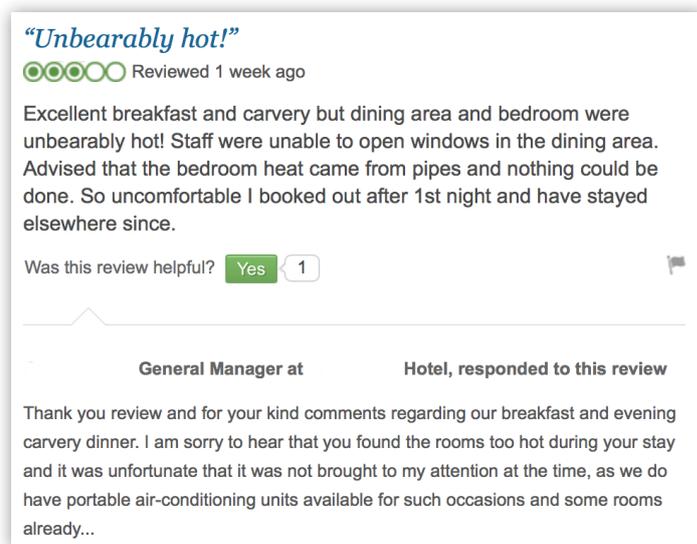
A TripAdvisor study in 2013 suggested that 84% of TripAdvisor users were likely to look more favourably on a property if the management had engaged with negative reviewers. If your business receives a positive review, thank the reviewer. If a review is less than positive, reply to the reviewer and try to turn the negative into a positive.



TOP TIP

Focus on Facebook and TripAdvisor first

As well having an effect on your business’ reputation, reviews also provide a snapshot of how customers are seeing the business and can provide valuable feedback on areas that might need improvement.



The dominant platform for online reviews is TripAdvisor. In the first quarter of 2014, there were 260 million unique users and a further 500 million viewed TripAdvisor reviews through other websites such as Expedia and Hotwire.com. TripAdvisor’s own surveys suggest that 93% of global travellers say that their booking decisions are influenced by online reviews and 96% of hotels say that reviews are important for bookings.

All accommodation providers and visitor attractions should ensure that they are managing their own listing on TripAdvisor, as it is possible that a past customer may have set up a listing for a business they have visited and left a review.

TripAdvisor also has a tool called “Review Express”, which is free for all businesses who manage their listing on TripAdvisor. This system sends an email to customers who have made a booking through TripAdvisor three days after their stay requesting a review. If the business is using a TripAdvisor certified internet booking engine, this facility can be further enhanced to generate more reviews.

**TripAdvisor and Facebook**

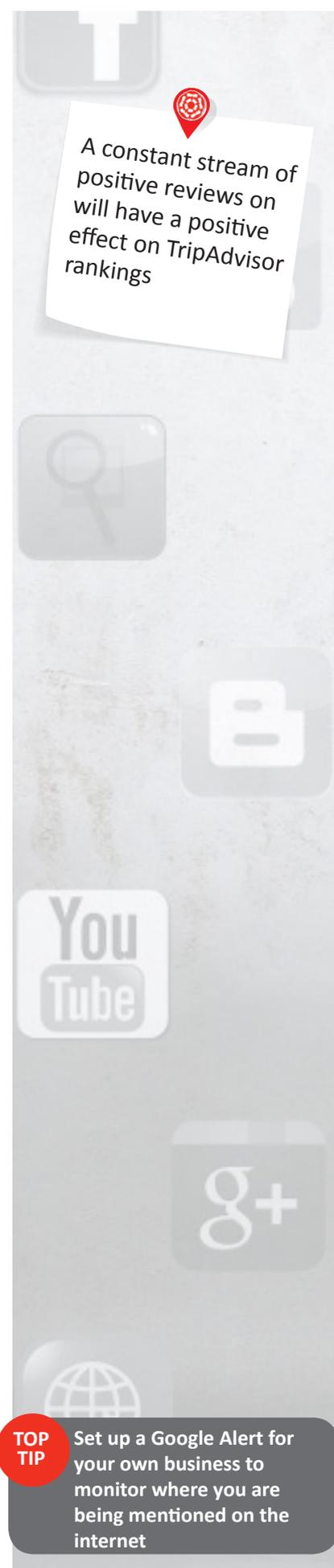
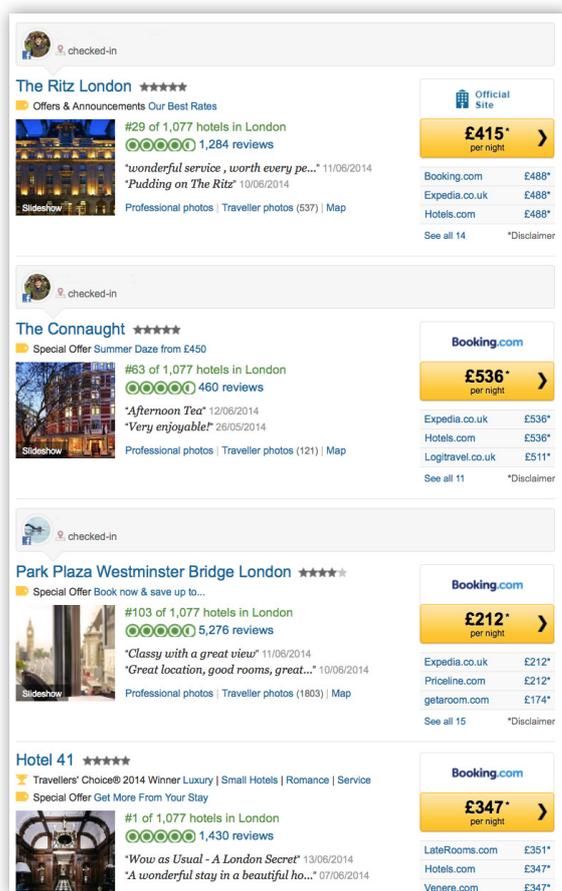
There is now a link between Facebook and TripAdvisor which can have a positive effect for a business. If a user of the TripAdvisor website links their TripAdvisor account to their Facebook account, TripAdvisor will show properties their friends on Facebook have reviewed on TripAdvisor first when they conduct a search.

TripAdvisor will also show properties first if Facebook friends of the person conducting the search have ‘checked in’ to a property on Facebook.

For example; searching on TripAdvisor for a hotel in London in August 2014 returns a total of 1077 hotels.

Because of the link with Facebook, this particular search returns the 29th ranked hotel first, the 63rd ranked second and the 103rd ranked third and only then shows the 1st ranked hotel.

Therefore, if you have a Facebook Business Page you may have a stronger presence on TripAdvisor searches, as people are able to 'check in' to your business on Facebook.



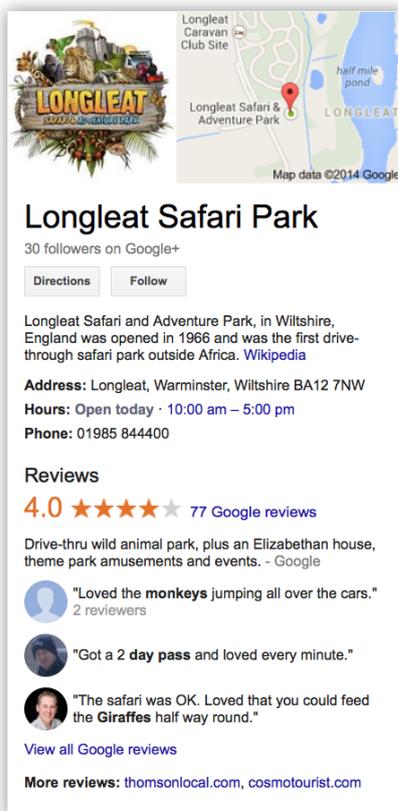
### Google+

Increasingly people are turning to Google+ to leave reviews of hotels, restaurants and attractions. These reviews are visible when a potential customer conducts a search through Google. There have been concerns in the past about people leaving spurious reviews for a business and Google have combatted this by ensuring that a reviewer must have a Google account before being able to leave a review. This means that they can be traced should any problems occur.

With the increased use of Google+ as a social networking platform this is an area which could be utilised.

It is important to monitor where and when your business is being mentioned on the internet and to engage with reviewers. One way to do this is to set up a Google Alert for your business. Google Alerts are discussed in the Google Product Overview module.

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**TOP TIP** Set up a Google Alert for your own business to monitor where you are being mentioned on the internet



VisitEngland is the country's national tourist board responsible for driving forward England's Strategic Framework for Tourism with industry partners. We work in partnership to lead the development of a thriving tourism industry, supporting our national and local partners to achieve economic growth and increase investment and employment by encouraging the development of excellent visitor experiences and effective business practices. For information on the wide range of support and opportunities we offer to the different sectors involved in England's visitor economy and to discover England visit [visitengland.com](http://visitengland.com)

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Published by VisitEngland in June 2014

Produced in association with Social Media Synergy

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