

Online Strategy Diagnostic Checklist for Tasmanian Accommodation Operators and Service Providers

Product Offering & Pricing

1. Describe your product offering and the prices for those products
2. Do you have “package” offers?

Website basics

3. Do you have a website?
4. Includes obvious required keyword phrase relevant to the operator offering, eg Bed and breakfast, or “motel”
5. Includes obvious location keyword phrases, eg “Tasmania”, “Near Hobart?”
6. Includes specific location keywords, eg St Helens?
7. Includes regional or area location keywords, eg “East Coast”
8. Is the “contact us” obvious, intuitive and simple to use?
9. Is the web server host reliable with little downtime?

Channels

10. What channels do you take bookings from:
 - Walk-up
 - Phone
 - Email
 - Direct online
 - TVIC
 - OBX
 - Third party sites, eg Wotif, Lastminute etc
 - Other
11. Describe the costs, charges and fees for each channel

Third Party Channel Manager

12. Are you using a third party channel manager like SiteMinder?

Online Merchant Account

13. Describe your online merchant account / system

Front of House

14. What front of house software are you running?
15. List issues problem with this system, if any.

Online Booking System

16. What online booking system are you running?
17. Do you offer direct online booking from your own website?
18. Does your online booking system display inventory availability in real time on your website and your distributed websites?
19. Does the online booking system integrate with your Front-of-House system?
20. Does the online booking system integrate with your third party channel manager?
21. Does it support package offers (if relevant)?

NB: Coaches refer to Tutorial 34, pages 6-13 of E-Kit for feature comparison of online booking systems

Online Booking Exchange (OBX)

22. Have you read the information about the OBX on the Tourism Tasmania site?
http://www.tourism.tas.gov.au/taseconnect/frequently_asked_questions
23. Have you made an appointment to talk with a Tourism Tasmania consultant about the OBX?

Inventory

24. Describe how the inventory is updated for each of your channels.
25. Describe any manual inventory / over-booking systems you may have.

Financial System

26. What financial system are you using?
27. Does your front-of-house / online booking system integrate with the financial system?

Website Visual Design

28. Is the visual design and “look and feel” of a quality that is crisp and clean that will instil confidence about the quality and professionalism of the property to potential stay?
29. Does it include a striking image(s) early on that will appeal to your target market?
30. Is it fast to download?
31. Is the font readable?
32. Does it include white-space and not pack too much in?
33. Does it avoid distracting animations?
34. Does it avoid distracting automatic streaming of audio or video?

35. Are the font / backgrounds colour combinations readable
36. Is the page re-sizable
37. Is the page automatic resizing to screen width restricted so the paragraphs are not too wide and unreadable?
38. Page width setting not too wide that it requires horizontal scrolling?
39. Renders on a variety of resolutions?
40. Does it avoid requiring non-standard plug-ins?
41. Consistent page formatting?
42. Site background not obtrusive?
43. Proper padding between images and text?

Website Usability

44. Is the navigation logical and intuitive to your target market
 - a. Consistent throughout the site
 - b. Logo links back to home page
 - c. Logical description text
 - d. Description text relevant to target market “things to do” and or “Nearby Attractions” , not descriptions like “Interesting Links”
45. Does the “Book Now” and “Contact Us” jump out at you
46. Is there an easy to find phone number?
47. Does the site use bread crumbs to assist with site navigation?
48. Does the site display information in short “digestible chunks”, eg short succinct paragraphs, use of bullet points and good on-page organisation

49. Is there in site search?
50. No pup-up windows
51. Avoid opening windeos in a new tab
52. Open external links in a new window tab
53. Dont rely on mouse rollovers to indicate a link is a link. It should be obviously delinated with a colour change and or underlined
54. Does it avoid cascading menus or fly out menus, they are annoying

Target Market

55. Who is you main target market (target markets) and do you understand their web habits.

Website Content

56. Do you have a Content Management System?
57. Does it immediately grab visitors attention?
58. Does it include copy that “talks” to your target customers, just as a receptionist would to a potential walk-up customer?
59. Does the copy include vocabulary in use by your target market(s). Eg “Business men”, young adventure seekers, mothers would use different vocabulary
60. Does it include sales copy leading to a calls to action?
61. Does it include specific offers?
62. Does it set out details room description and features?
63. Does it clearly set out (and not appear to shy away from) room prices, add on prices like fold out beds, package prices?
64. Does it set-out nearby attractions, events, restaurants adn things to do?
65. Does it set out “whole of property” details and features like arrival instructions, parking, dining, recreation (eg pool, gym, playground) opening and closing times?

66. Does it include trust symbols such as “Accredited Tourism Business”, or chain logos if relevant such as “Inkeepers”
67. Does it include personalised Google maps, distances and drive times from airports, other major cities or towns, major attractions etc.
68. Does it include extensive use of images, images that evoke emotion and your target market seeing themselves at your property, or at attractions nearby your property.
69. Does it include images that clearly display the quality of your rooms and other property facilities?
70. Does it include video of your property and surrounding attractions, events and things to do?
71. Does the video include people to evoke emotion and allow target customers to see themselves at the facility?
72. Spelled checked and broken link checked?
73. Does the copy tie need to benefit?
74. Answers WIFM?
75. Consistent voice throughout the site?
76. Short sentences?
77. Eliminates superfluous text and industry jargon (unless the jargon is relevant to you key target market)?
78. Avoid over use of parenthesis, brackets, asterisks.
79. Contains internal page links (for more information)
80. Do you have an “About Us” page – ideal to build credibility, stability, trust
81. Links out to social media profiles

Google Account

82. Have you signed up for a Google Account?

Search Engine Optimisation - SEO

83. Do you understand the basic drivers of “organic” unpaid search engine position placement works?
84. Is your businesses book-marked in Google Marks

85. Are you in the Google Local Business Centre results?
86. Have you claimed ownership of the Google Local Business Centre listing and optimised it?
87. Is the domain name secured for the long term?
88. If you don't have a domain name, then choose a domain name with keywords in the domain?
89. Are you using flash?
90. Is the site code 3W XHTML compliant?
- Correct robots.txt files
 - Proper doctype in HTML across all pages
 - Validate XHTML
 - Don't use frames
 - Alt tags on images
 - Includes a custom 404 error page
 - Printer friendly pages or CSS
 - Unlined links or coloured links
 - Uses breadcrumbs
 - Flat directory structure while still human logic organised
91. Do you have a keyword key word phrases (3 words) research strategy
- Empathy with the lazy, the un-informed, the informed
 - For Tourism Businesses – “location location location keywords” – both targeted and broad
 - Brainstorm with target market
 - What are competitors doing
 - Use Google AdWords Keyword Tool to help develop keyword phrases
92. Have you measured and documented your organic google search result position with googleposition.com for the keyword phrase sets you have developed
93. Is Google Analytics installed on each page of your website?
94. Is the URL Keyword rich URL (eg www.launcestonhotel.com.au) or Suffix rich (www.oldwoolstore.com.au/accommodation/studio_apartments)
95. Are you trailing keyword rich special offer URLs and landing pages
96. Does your Browser Page Titles (90 characters) contain your keywords
- Unique titles on each page
 - Page titles closely match immediate proximity headings and copy
97. Does your global and local navigation contain your keywords?
98. Do your H1 and H2 Headings contain your keywords?

99. Does your Footer contain your keywords?
100. Are your keywords within your body content and as close to the H1 and H2 keywords
101. Do you Alt Tags contain your keywords?
102. Do you image, video and other File Names contain your keywords?
103. Do you have a Site-Map?
104. Are your keywords included in the Natural language of the site and you avoiding "stuffing"?
105. Is their keyword density/ frequency within body?
106. Is your keywords close in page proximity to each other?
107. Has your copy been written for ("") Phrase Search variables?
108. Are you accenting your keywords in bold, italic and larger font size
109. Are your internal page anchor links keyword rich?
110. Are you using invisible text?
111. Are you cloaking / doorway pages (2 versions of same page)?
112. Is your copy unique and novel whilst still including the keywords and reinforcing the theme?
Google knows!
113. Are you including copy for long tail niches?
114. Are you using words to attract search results like Layout (eg "Top 10 places to stay in Hobart", Top 10 things to do in Launceston"?)
115. Do you include outward links (few high credibility and consistent with theme, eg to an awards site, academic research paper, government site, newspaper article which it has Google news database) . In the case of accommodation providers an outward link to your own listing on Discover Tasmania is the obvious one.?
116. Does your content change frequently?
117. Make sure the pages are not too large?
118. Are you duplicating content within the site?
119. Are you Including images and videos with keyword descriptive file names with spaces or hyphens
120. Are you incorporating Keyword descriptive Alt tags to images

121. Are you using anchor text keywords to point to images and video
122. Have you enabled your sites images with Google Image Search
123. Are you uploading keyword file name rich images and keyword tagging on image sharing sites such as:
www.Flickr.com
www.photobucket.com
www.Picassweb.google.com
124. Are you uploading keyword file name rich vodepo and keyword tagging on video sharing sites such as:
www.youtube.com
www.video.google.com
MySpace video
125. Are you including keyword rich metatags and meta descriptions in the mark-up of your website?
126. Do you understand the critical importance of inbound links for SEO?
127. Do you have inbound link development strategy and action planned and underpinned by?
- From similar themed based sites and relevant text around the inbound link
 - From government and other high ranking sites
 - Ideally embedding keywords into the inbound link
 - Targets are directories, councils, blogs, social networking sites (Facebook and MYSpace), online PR sites, social reference sites (Wikipedia)

Email Campaigns

128. Do you collect email addresses as part of registration?
129. Do you ask guests or target market guests to opt-in?
130. Do you have email campaign offer strategy?
131. Do you have email campaign management software subscription, eg ConstantContact.com

Online Public Relations

132. Do you have a public relations strategy?
133. Have you opened an account with the free and or paid online PR sites?

Pay Per Click Advertising

134. Have you signed up for a Google AdWords account?
135. Have you developed a Google Adwords advertising and offer campaign(s)?

Online Reputation

136. Have you undertaken a search of your property for all the key travel customer review sites to determine what customer reviews have been published.
- www.tripadvisor.com
www.stayz.com
www.hotelworld.com.au
www.eatability.com.au
www.truelocal.com.au
www.igougo.com
www.lonelyplanet.com
www.virtualtourist.com
www.lonelyplanet.com/throntree
<http://forum.virtualtourist.com>
137. Have you developed specific actions or offers to overcome published negative comments?
138. Have you undertaken an extensive and defined , eg “search terms” Google search of your property name or possible derivations of the name to determine what has already been published outside of the sites mentioned above?
139. Have you signed up for a Google Alert for your property name (or derivations) so that you become immediately aware of what is published about your property / business.?
140. Have you claimed ownership of your listing on TripAdvisor?

Blog

141. Have you started a blog on a tourism related topic?
142. Have you subscribed to a range of theme related blogs and regular read and post on these blogs?

Email Management

143. Have you got an email management strategy that incorporates the following?
- Don't use ISP email suffixes, eg hobarthotel@bigpond.com, set up email accounts with your domain name as the suffix
 - Don't use gmail or hotmail addresses
 - Make sure that all your marketing includes the email address with your domain name suffix
 - Make sure that the “From” email tag in Outlook or other email software displays the proper email address not the ISP or gmail address.
 - Make sure you new emails and email replies include a “signature” clearly setting out your name , web contact details, phone contact details and address details where relevant
 - Make sure that the User Identification clearly identifies you, eg John Smith (john.smith@yourbusinessdomain .com), not “smithy”, or j.s@your businessnamedomain .com)
 - Check your emails at least three times per day
 - Respond promptly

- i. Respond on top of the message thread
- j. Don't leave out the message thread
- k. Be concise and to the point
- l. Answer all questions, and pre-empt further questions
- m. Use proper spelling, grammar & punctuation
- n. Make it personal
- o. Use templates for frequently used responses
- p. Do not attach unnecessary files
- q. Avoid spam systems that attach "certification files"
- r. Use letter based structure & layout with correct spacing and paragraph returns
- s. Do not overuse the high priority option
- t. Never write in CAPITALS as people infer yelling or aggression from this
- u. Don't d disclaimers to your emails, they are annoying. If you must, include a web address of an "Email Disclaimer" page on your website
- v. Slow down, read and check the email before you send it
- w. When undertaking bulk mailings use the bcc: field or do a mail merge.
- x. When undertaking bulk mailings never include the email addresses of the entire recipient list
- y. Use abbreviations and emoticons sparingly and only if relevant and appropriate for your audience
- z. Be careful with formatting
 - aa. Take care with rich text and HTML messages
 - bb. Do not request delivery and read receipts
 - cc. Never ask to recall a message.
 - dd. Do not copy a message or attachment without permission of its author
 - ee. 24. Use a meaningful subject
 - ff. Use active instead of passive
 - gg. Avoid using URGENT and IMPORTANT
 - hh. Avoid long sentences
 - ii. Avoid long paragraphs
 - jj. Don't send or forward emails containing libelous, defamatory, offensive, racist or obscene remarks
 - kk. Don't forward virus hoaxes and chain letters
 - ll. Keep your language gender neutral
 - mm. Never reply to spam

Digital Back-Ups

- 144. Do you have a file back-up system in place/ Please describe?
- 145. Are back-ups kept remote from the property?