

# ACTIONS CHECKLIST

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## Introduction

### 0.1 Set your objectives

My criteria for success

What I want to learn or achieve as a result of this book

### 0.2 Plan template

Now draw up your Plan template – it's up to you whether you do this on your computer, or on paper. Whichever it is, have it in a format that you can add to and update every time you have another idea. Don't worry about having too much on it at this stage – we will help you to prioritise it all at the end of the book.

You can download an Excel template from our website [www.HotelSuccessHandbook.com](http://www.HotelSuccessHandbook.com)

## Chapter 1

### Who are your guests and what are you selling?

#### 1.1 Describe your perfect guest

Don't worry if these are not the type of guests you have now. Give as much detail as possible.

Their likes and dislikes

Their budget

Their perceptions of value for money (not the same as their budget)

What they define as good service

How often they visit your area

How often they take a holiday

Who they travel with

Their interests and hobbies

Where else they travel to

How they spend their time away from the hotel

How they like to travel

How old they are

What they do with their time whilst in the hotel

Where they like to eat

Their favourite foods

What they like to eat (not necessarily their favourite food all of the time)

Their values

What 'demographic' they are (e.g. young urban couples, middle income families with children)

What influences their decisions: e.g. logic, cost and practicalities, or emotion, look, image and gut feel

Their birthday and other special occasion dates

## 1.2 What are your guests' needs and expectations?

What are their highest priorities?

What are the things they are likely to pay a premium for?

What criteria do they use to assess these?

## 1.3 Who are your buyers?

For one week make a note of all the people making your bookings (or if you already know this information, look back over your recent bookings).

Keep a tally of all your bookings, whether or not the 'buyer' is one of the party, and, if not, what their role is e.g. travel agent, PA, relative, club secretary

Now for each group track back over Exercises 1.1 and 1.2 and complete the same exercises for your 'buyers' – you need to know how they think too.

## 1.4 Identify the needs you satisfy for your ideal guests

What needs do you satisfy for your ideal guest?

What are you selling?

Put the physical, emotional and results descriptions together

What does this do or how does this help your guests?

## Chapter 2

### What's different about you?

#### 2.1 How are you different?

Write up a list of your attributes and all the things you do or offer – anything that relates to the hotel itself, your guests' stay, or their overall experience:

Features

The accommodation

Your location

Activities

You

Your team

Your menu

Your bar and wine selection

What you provide in your rooms

Your function packages

Now go back over this list and identify:

The things that are generic and can be applied to any hotels in your area or sector

The things that are already different, or that with a little effort could be made into something different

What attributes or offerings can you combine to make you appear unique?

Now summarise the things you could confidently promote as being different and 'unique' to your hotel.

## 2.2 What are your passions and values?

Write a list of things you enjoy doing or are interested in or passionate about (list anything you do and believe in both in 'work' and 'play').

What are the things you value most?

Which of these can be reflected in your business, and how?

## 2.3 List your interests

List your interests, hobbies or any topics which you have enough first hand knowledge to be an expert in

How could you develop this expertise to incorporate it into your hotel?

What could you write about or do to get initial attention as an expert?

What other opportunities are there for activities and events based around your expert topic?

Who else might you work with to develop or deliver this special expert topic?

## 2.4 What is your identity?

What are the key factors you want to reflect in the identity of your hotel?

What are the things you value most?

How would you sum up the personality of you, your team, and the hotel as a whole?

What is the look and image you most reflect?

What feelings and emotions do you conjure up? (e.g. relaxation, excitement, security, peace of mind, entertainment)

## 2.5 Sum up your identity

How would you now sum up your identity? Pick out your key words from Action 2.4

What is the overall theme?

Now sum up your image in one sentence

What look, colours, words and images will convey this image?

## 2.6 What's your story?

Now bring everything together from all the Actions in this chapter remembering your ideal guests. Write up your story to include: what you are selling which is unique, what makes you different, and your passions and values to reflect your identity.

## Chapter 3

### Review your website

#### 3.1 Write the business objectives for your website

Write down everything that's important to your business, especially those things that make you different and unique.

Have the list ready to reference when we work through all the actions to improve your website.

#### 3.2 Make use of analytics

If you haven't done so already, set up Analytics on your website.

If you already have Analytics – take a fresh look and make note of your findings (look at keywords, referring sites, pages visited, enquiries made). Get familiar with what Analytics can show you about your website.

Set up goals on your Analytics that fit with your website objectives (e.g. enquiries, bookings, downloading a brochure).

#### 3.3 Check your content

Go back to your website and see if, for each of the key objectives and benefits of your hotel that you want to communicate, you have:

Headline information

Summary information

More detail

Further reading

You'll probably find you've got some writing to do!

#### 3.4 Add detail to your objectives

Go back to the list you created in Action 3.1 and one by one 'talk' about the detail.

Then think about what in your 'detail' is unique to you. It's all in your head – you just need to get it out.

Write it down.

### 3.5 Review your key information

Look at the list of key information in this section. Even if you think it's already on your website, have another read through to check that it's:

Up to date

Includes as much detail as you can

Is clear and easy to find and read

### 3.6 Review your photos

Look at your website and make sure there are photos of **everything**

Write detailed descriptions to go with your photos to entice the reader

Add keyword-rich titles, tags and descriptions to all your photos for the search engines

### 3.7 Make a video

Give it a go! Produce a video for your website – pick a feature or one holiday you offer and make a video to 'showcase' it.

If you already have a video/videos, add another.

(And don't forget to upload your videos to your YouTube channel that you've set up, with lots of keywords in the description.)

Add in checklist

### 3.8 Review your homepage

Take a good look at your homepage

Does it meet the objectives you set out in Action 3.1?

Use the checklist here to see if all questions are answered

Where are you?

How much are your rooms/packages?

What are your rooms like?

What amenities are there?

Any special offers?

How do I contact you or book?

What's your availability?

What food do you serve in your restaurant?

What makes you different – why should I book with you?

What changes do you need to make? **Now make them!**

### 3.9 Get feedback on your website

Ask 5–10 target market prospects to take a look at your new homepage and website. Set them questions to find the answers to

Also don't forget to ask guests for their feedback on the website. Could they find all the information they were looking for? Did they book online?

### 3.10 Review your booking system

How do people book with you:

**Online?** – review your booking forms, enquiries, ask a question, email address?

**By phone?** – is 24 hour coverage taken care of? Does your website show your 'office hours'?

**By email?** – who picks up these emails? How quickly are they answered?

Can they check **availability status** live on your website?

**From overseas?** – offer alternative phone numbers and the international dialling code

**Another way?** How do your ideal customers want to book? Text message? Twitter?

### 3.11 Brainstorm key words and phrases

Brainstorm key words and phrases related to your hotel, the holidays, facilities and services you offer.

Look up the popularity of these phrases using a keyword tool.

Decide on which phrases you want to compete (remember less popular phrases are still searched for - more focus and less competition is good).

## Chapter 4

### Communication

#### 4.1 Put yourself in your guests' shoes

Put yourself (or a friend or colleague) in your guests' shoes and ask yourself:  
What's in it for me to stay in this hotel?

(Your answers from Chapter 1– Identity and emotional/physical/results description might be helpful.)

#### 4.2 Put AIDA into practice

Think how you are going to:

**Attract** your potential customers with a headline statement

**Interest** your customers with information that is different about your hotel

Arouse your customers' **desire** by making your offer irresistible

Give a call to **action** – a reason to respond straight away

#### 4.3 Identify your communication channels

Ask yourself:

How I am going to communicate with my customers?

What types of message will appeal to them?

What style of communication would be most relevant to them?

What type of language do they use?

What publications do they read?

Where do they socialise?

Where do they spend their time?

What access do they have to the Internet?

#### 4.4 Think about the look and feel of your promotional material

What images do you want to show?

What colours do you want to use?

What words are going to attract your ideal guest? (Make sure it's language **they** use)

#### 4.5 Make offers scarce or urgent

How can you make your offer(s) 'scarce'? For example, 'first 10' 'only 3 rooms available'.

Can you put a deadline on your offer(s) to make it 'urgent'?

What will you do when you are fully booked or the deadline is reached? (Have a plan)

#### 4.6 Identify your contact options

Write down all your contact options, with special numbers, addresses or promotional codes, and opening times:

Telephone number

What will you say on your voice-mail message?

Fax number

Email

Online form

In person

## 4.7 Information about your prospects and customers

Think about the information you want to hold about your prospects and customers that sets them out as ideal customers.

Which is the most important, and which can wait until you know them better?

## 4.8 Review your contact management

Look at your current business processes and systems to see if you need to set up an email management system or a CRM.

If you already have a CRM, run a review to see if you are using it to its best efforts.

If you don't already have a list, or way of easily managing or segmenting your contacts set this up now.

When evaluating a new solution, look for compatibility with other existing systems. It usually makes sense to go with a system that already has integration with other software you use (e.g. your booking system, your accounts system, your database)

## 4.9 Building your list

Identify what incentives you can offer in exchange for people's contact details

How will you capture details?

## 4.10 Competition ideas

What do you (or could you) offer that would make an irresistible prize?

Thinking about your ideal customers, what other prizes or incentives would appeal (this will help you to think about suitable joint venture partners who can offer these prizes if you cannot)

#### 4.11 Contacting your list

What methods could you use to contact your list?

What contact details do you already have?

What else is needed?

How will you gather contact information?

What topics could you write about within the next month?

#### 4.12 Targeted offers

What events or promotions have you planned that you need to announce to your list?

What messages do you need to convey?

Plan your sequence of mailings for the next month/3 months/+ so you have a plan of regular contact.

## Chapter 5

### Add value to increase spend and frequency

#### 5.1 Review your own tariffs and pricing

How do your guests perceive your prices?

How do your prices compare with other hotels targeting the same guest profile?

What do you already offer that differentiates you from them and gives value for money from your guests' perspective?

What can you offer which any indirect competition could never compete with?

What else can you do simply to add value for money without lowering your prices?

#### 5.2 Try before you buy

What services or offers could you offer as a try before you buy?

#### 5.3 Inclusive deals and packages

What inclusive deals and packages could you offer?

What activity packages?

What does your hotel have which is unique and could form the basis of an offer or deal?

#### 5.4 Use your expert topic

How can you use your 'expert' topic to offer value for money?

#### 5.5 Early bird offers

On what service(s) could you offer early bird offers?

What incentives will you offer to the guest?

#### 5.6 Upgrades

Where or when could you offer upgrades?

#### 5.7 Joint venture opportunities

What opportunities can you identify to get together with others?

Suppliers?

Joint venture partners?

#### 5.8 Guarantees

What guarantees could you offer your guests?

## Chapter 6

### Market your hotel online

#### 6.1 Trial and track pay per click

If you have budget available for online marketing PPC is a good way to have a measurable campaign.

Trial using PPC for one offer or set of keywords (destination/holiday type/service/seasonal offer).

If you're already using PPC – are you constantly reviewing and changing your ads? Are the keywords you are using a match to those you came up with in Chapter 3 (Action 3.11)

#### 6.2 Find partner sites and forums

Use search engines to look for suitable partner sites that could bring you traffic – use the keywords and phrases your guests would use, and see what sites come up in the results.

Find a forum(s) that your ideal guests spend time on and pose questions and comment.

#### 6.3 Write articles and blogs

Start a list of all the topics you feel confident to write about on your blog or as articles:

about your area

about your holiday experiences

about events

about your expert topic

Find other blogs it would be good to comment on and join in – destination and travel-related or associated with your expert topic

## 6.4 Find out where your customers go online

Ask them – when booking, feedback forms, in conversation.

Google their interests to see sites that come up

Look at printed media's online sites (newspapers, magazines).

Find online communities that reflect your ideal guest demographic and interests (mums' sites, business sites, sport sites, etc).

Look at social media sites to choose the best one for your hotel to engage on.

## Chapter 7

### Traditional marketing

#### 7.1 Identify press opportunities

What publications or newspapers do your customers read?

What events either past or future are newsworthy? Think of an angle – one point that will be different and interesting.

What press coverage have you already had that you can capitalise on?

#### 7.2 Write an advertorial

Write down ideas for advertorial features, such as travel features or expert features

Write up an advertorial article you can place in printed media

#### 7.3 Prepare a radio interview

Make a list of topics you'd like to speak about – make notes and have some case studies ready.

Approach radio stations that have shows which cover your topics.

Record an audio file (or a few!) to have on your website of you being interviewed on your topics so you have examples ready. The interview can be you/member of staff, but it means you've got more content for your website and an example for radio stations.

## 7.4 Plan print inserts

If your ideal guests read printed publications:

Make a list of offers you can promote in an insert.

Write out headlines, calls to action and offer details.

Design a flyer or insert and test this in a targeted publication (by region if it's a large subscription base).

## 7.5 Prepare a leaflet drop

Generate ideas for a local offer.

Design a leaflet with a clear call to action for your offer.

Target your leaflet by area, or postcode.

Measure response with a code or landing page.

## 7.6 Conduct a direct mail campaign

Draft direct mail letters or postcards

Test to a sample of your database

When you have a result you're happy with – roll out to your entire database, or with a partner to their database.

## Chapter 8

### Build your guest relationship

#### 8.1 Get to know your guests

What else can you do to get to know your guests better?

In what ways can you get feedback from your guests?

What can you do to raise your visibility with guests?

What networking events or forums are there where your target guests meet? Or where their contacts meet?

#### 8.2 Reward guest loyalty

What could you do to reward guest loyalty?

#### 8.3 Respond to your guests' wants and needs

What do you need to do to respond to guests' wants and needs?

What don't you provide currently that guests have requested?

Where do you need to provide greater flexibility to meet guests' needs?

What particular challenges stand in the way of your guests making a booking?

What special diets do you get requests for? What do you need to do to get started on these?

What values do your guests have that need to be reflected in your operation?

What other products or services could you provide before, during or after their visit?

Do you sell gift vouchers, and if not what needs to happen to make these available?

#### 8.4 Maintain your guests' interest

What events or activities could you organise to maintain your guests' interest?

Forthcoming promotions?

Promotion of the month?

Seasonal events?

Competitions or prize draws?

#### 8.5 Get your existing guests selling for you

How can you get your existing guests selling for you?

What do you do that demonstrates exceptional service and will prompt guests to talk about you?

What system do you have in place to gather referrals?

What else do you need to do to get referrals?

How do you reward people who give you referrals?

## Chapter 9

### Involve your team

#### 9.1 Identify the attributes you need

What are the attributes you need in each of your team members?

What more can you do to build your reputation as a good place to work?

#### 9.2 Train your team in guest service

What training do you need to give your team in guest service basics?

What systems or procedures do you need to clarify or write down so that team members can deal with them confidently?

What are the common issues that you could delegate to staff?

Take the guest journey now (and schedule it in regularly).

### 9.3 Involve your team in selling

Do all your staff know **all** your products and services?

Does your front of house team know what items and services to promote **each day**?

Do **all** your team know how to upsell?

Do you conduct **daily** briefings with the team?

If not, when could you schedule these to take place?

### 9.4 Give responsibility

What process can you put in place for staff to obtain and act on guests' feedback?

Who could be appointed champions for certain tasks?

How could you encourage the team to take responsibility when you are not there?

### 9.5 Think about staff incentives

Do you give any incentive for team members to give exceptional guest service or upsell?

How effective is this in motivating all staff, in all roles or departments?

## Chapter 10

### Collaborating for success

#### 10.1 What to outsource

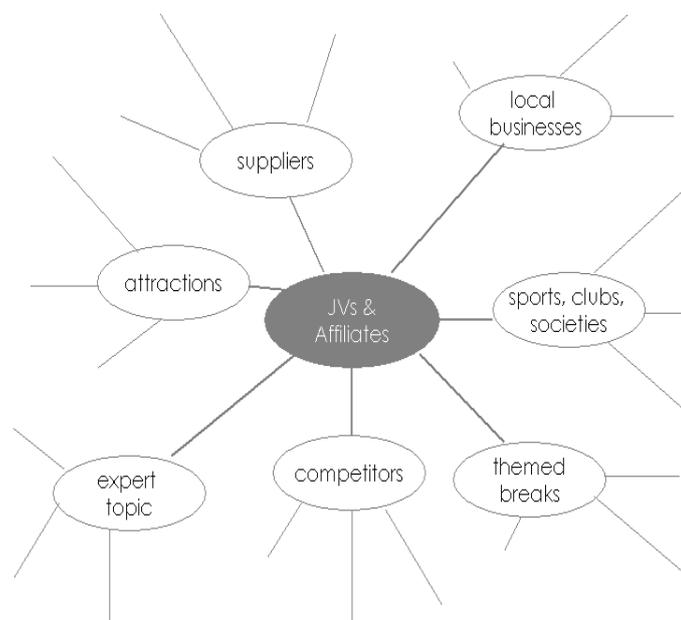
Looking at your list of actions to date, what are the areas where you don't have the expertise?

What are the actions where it might be cheaper for someone else to complete?

What are the actions that would get done more quickly or more effectively by someone else?

#### 10.2 Mindmap your joint ventures and affiliates

Using the mind map below, brainstorm what options you have for joint ventures and affiliates. Aim to have at least three ideas for each heading, but don't stop at three if you have more ideas!



Now for each potential joint venture or affiliate, identify at least two projects or ideas you could do with them which will appeal to your ideal guest, and be of benefit to both you and the joint venture partner.

### 10.3 Bring it all together

Now update your plan with all your ideas from this chapter.

Who have you identified as potential joint venture partners or affiliates?

What further research do you need to verify these ideas?

## Chapter 11

### Bringing it all together

#### 11.1 Identify business goals

What I want the to achieve for the business:

#### 11.2 Update your plan

Now update your initial plan, and add in priorities and dates. There is a template in the resources area of [www.HotelSuccessHandbook.com](http://www.HotelSuccessHandbook.com)

#### 11.3 Add in the detail

Highlight just one thing to get you started – don't be too ambitious at this point – better to get the ball rolling on just one thing and do it well.

Do you have a goal for this action?

Have you identified how you will evaluate it?

If so, now break this down into all the actions needed to achieve this.

Now schedule these into your diary including any review dates.