



Hotel Marketing Guide 2023

By Net Affinity

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A note on marketing in 2023

Amidst economic uncertainty that is wracking much of the world at the moment, experts still expect a healthy and prosperous 2023 for the hospitality industry. Fantastically, **direct bookings are up and gaining the loyalty and trust of your guests** is more important (and potentially tougher) than ever. As well as digital nomads and remote workers, other trends to be mindful of include wellness, smart technology and environmentally sound practises. **Behind all of the trends, audiences, offers and budgets is your marketing.** The knowledge you have and the platforms you use are crucial to your success in 2023 and beyond. We have put together **a short guide to help you decide what to invest in, and to inform you of what's happening across the landscape.**

Facebook Ads



Facebook Ads

What do you need to know?

- 36.8% of the world's population use Facebook monthly
- As of October 2022, there are 3,765 100 Facebook users in Ireland, which accounts for 74.9% of its entire population
- According to a study completed by Wordstream, the **average conversion rate for all industries is 9.21%** with travel and hospitality obtaining an **average of 2.82%**
- Facebook has an immeasurable reach worldwide and nationally. With this data, Facebook allows you to create custom audiences where you can target people based on whether they have visited your site, demographics such as their age, location, gender or on much more granular level their interests, hobbies or behaviors
- With Facebook acquiring Instagram back in 2012, meta have expanded not only their audience but their flexibility with regard to ad creation and placements available. The platform allows you to run many different ad formats, such as a single image, video, collection or carousel. These formats can run across a multitude of placements available, which gives your ad a wider scope of places to be seen and potentially convert through. Some of the top placements we select for our clients can vary from feeds, stories, reels and in-article



Prospecting campaigns

Prospecting campaigns target a new audience, and the goal is to move these prospects through the sales funnel until they convert to revenue-generating customers. One of the most important aspects of effective prospecting is identifying good-fit customers for your business. This means finding leads and prospects who truly need your product or service to solve their challenges and pain points.

Remarketing campaigns

Remarketing campaigns target people who have already visited your website. These ads are a great way to increase conversion and build brand loyalty. At Net Affinity, we build our remarketing campaigns based on your customers' behaviour and our client requests. Using the meta platform we can target audiences who have visited your site or a particular landing page up to 180 days prior.



Although both campaigns serve a particular business objective, we recommend a marketing strategy that combines both campaigns types. It is simply not enough to run these campaigns on their own. Prospecting reaches a new audience who is not familiar with your brand, while remarketing aims to increase conversions with qualified leads that have visited your site and who are interested in your product. Together, both campaigns nurture the entire customer lifecycle from brand awareness to conversion.



Google Ads



Google Ads

What do you need to know?

With an estimated **5.6 billion searches made per day**, Google has 90.46% of the search engine market share worldwide.

Google Hotel Ads allow you to be right up there (with your best rate!) beside the OTAs when someone initially Google searches for your hotel. The increase in customer visibility from this exposure cannot be underestimated. As well as benefiting from more direct bookings for low acquisition costs (the dream), you can also use customer data gleaned from Google Hotel Ads to better understand your customers and develop personalised remarketing strategies.

On average, you will pay the likes of Booking.com between 15-18% commission on a booking. Due to much lower commission rates with Google Hotel Ads, you can compete directly with OTAs by placing your best rate in front of your guests.





Here's what to do:

- Define your target audience
- Define your business goal
- Pick the right channel
- Measure the right KPIs





You need to create an account for your hotel on your Google My Business page. Make sure you list all the information guests need to know including:

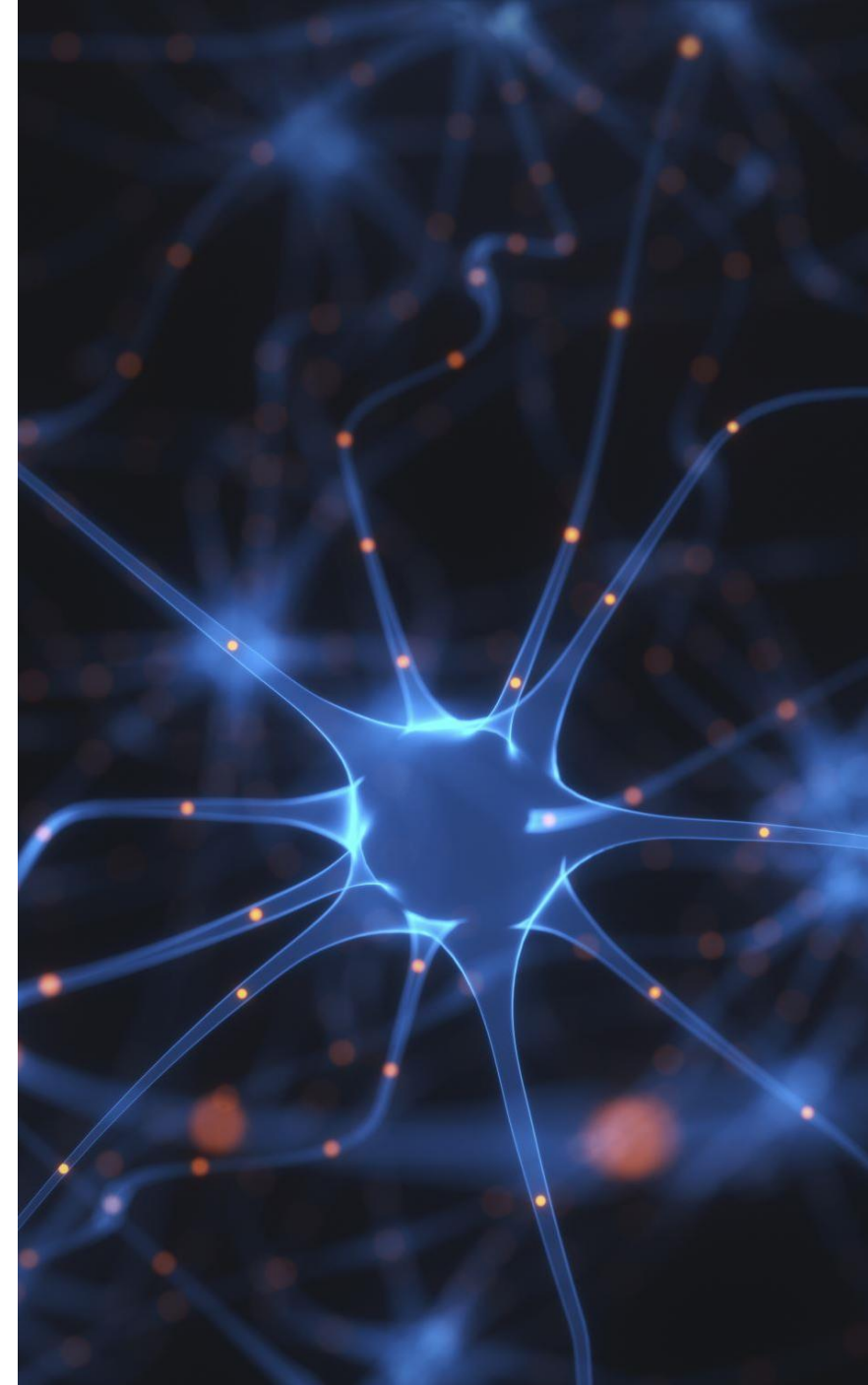
- Your hotel name
- Room and hotel images
- Amenities
- Address and phone number
- Link to your site

Don't neglect your Google reviews. Customer reviews have the power to influence your guest and their decision! 93% of customers read online reviews before buying a product. It's just as important to reply to them as it is to read/filter through them, so consider these as much a part of your profile as your hotel's name and details.

Next up is pricing. Your guest will be faced with a selection of prices for your hotel's available date/room, and they will obviously go with the best price. This is where your rate and website strategy comes in – are you keeping your best rate for your direct channel? Don't lose out on a booking by allowing an OTA to display a better rate for your room.



- **Brand Awareness/Traffic:** Unless your guests keep coming back every week, you are going to need to keep finding new guests to welcome in your hotel.
- Leverage your best visual content to attract and inspire people across the **Display Network and YouTube Network** with Prospecting campaigns
- **Discovery** campaigns allow you to connect with people thanks to their visually rich ads delivered across multiple Google properties (YouTube, Gmail and Discover)
- Target generic keywords (e.g. hotels in Galway, couples spa breaks Ireland) to meet those users who are in the early stages of their search, browsing for options with **Google Search**. Being such broad keywords, the competition to show your ads will be stiff: not only will you compete with OTAs but with other hotels too
- **KPIs:** Impressions for Display, Views for Video campaigns, Interactions for Discovery (Clicks + Engagements), CTR for Non-Branded Search





Enquiries

- If you host meetings, conferences and weddings at your property, Google Ads might not be as resourceful as your Sales team, but it can certainly support you by:
- Generating brand awareness through **Prospecting** campaigns for those who are still in the early stages of their planning (we like Display and Video for Conferences; Display, Video and Discovery for Weddings)
- Targeting generic keywords (e.g. hotels with conference rooms, unique wedding venues Ireland) to capture high-intent searches from who already started planning and are turning to **Google Search** to find options. Just like with generic keywords for leisure, competition will be pretty high as you will compete with directories and other hotels
- **Remarketing** website visitors through Display, Video and Discovery to encourage them to return to your website to submit an enquiry

Google Analytics 4



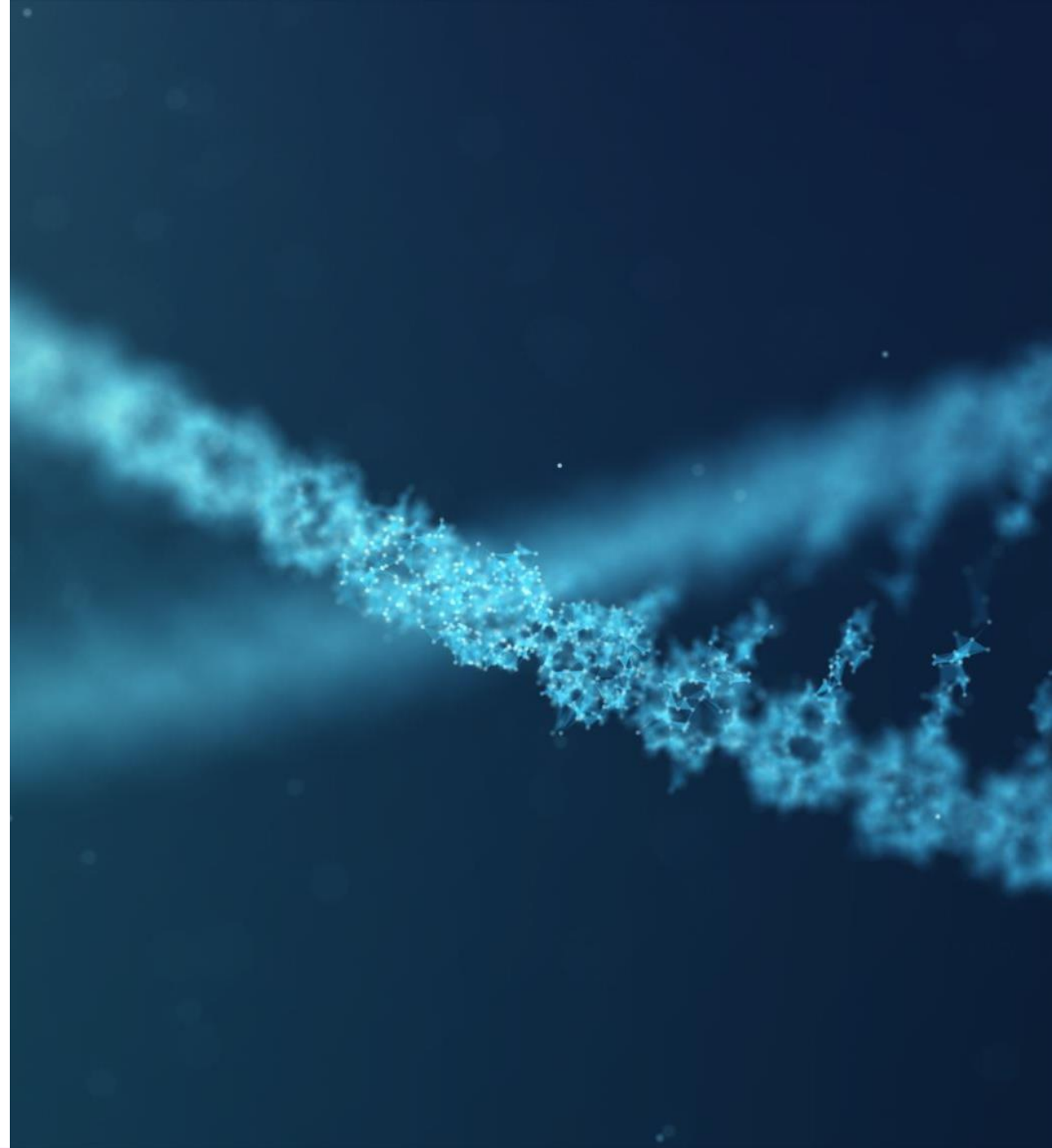
Google Analytics 4 (GA4)

What do you need to know?

Google Analytics 4 (or GA4) is the next evolution of Google's popular web analytics service - an invaluable tool used to track website, app and marketing performance since 2005.

As of July 1st, 2023, Google Analytics 4 will replace the previous iteration of the service, called Universal Analytics (or UA).

If you haven't already, you should setup GA4 now to begin gathering data, ready for the switchover in July 2023.





Google Analytics 4 was created for three key reasons. The first is that any up-to-date web analytics tool needs to work across different devices and platforms.

The second is to better adhere to multiple data privacy laws like GDPR and CCPA.

The third is related to GA4 offering AI-powered machine learning that can give businesses insight into those users who refuse to be tracked at all.

Not only is the GA4 dashboard more comprehensive, but the setup is almost intuitive. With a real-time report, you can see what's happening on your hotel website as it happens.





The “Life Cycle collection” of GA4 includes four types of reports: acquisition, engagement, monetisation, and retention. The thoughtful combination of these metrics is a much more accurate way of calculating the customer journey; allowing your team to get a top-level view of how potential guests are finding you, engaging with your content, making bookings, and coming back for more.

Additional reports, like those for ‘audience’, can give your business a clearer insight into the demographics behind your current audience in order to help you target them more strategically in the future.

As visitors become more likely to opt out of cookie usage and other methods of data collection, businesses that rely on these services will find it increasingly difficult to acquire complete and/or accurate data due to cookie consent options and international privacy regulations. Thankfully, GA4 uses machine learning algorithms to fill in these missing data points tracked with its event-based tracking system. Concerns around data privacy, cookie reliability issues, and web tracking limitations are solved with these new features.

If you haven't gotten around to setting up GA4, now is the time to do so. This will allow you to collect historical data, familiarise yourself with the new interfaces and data structures, and utilize the benefits already available within GA4.

Cookieless Tracking



Cookieless Tracking

What do you need to know?

“A tracking cookie is a text file that a Web browser stores on a user’s machine and that is used to track a user’s activity online.”

Third-party cookies are created by a third party to collect search and browsing data, and are typically used for advertising purposes like remarketing and cross-device tracking. Cookies were once a fundamental element of digital advertising. Now, a new era of digital marketing is approaching, and with it, there will be different ways of targeting potential customers online.

It's been three years since the implementation of GDPR. People have been becoming ever more concerned about their privacy online, with 70% of Americans believing their personal data is less secure now than it was five years ago.



With new privacy changes from Apple and user level tracking from Facebook and Google, a lot of the familiar ways in which marketers have previously collected data will disappear over the coming years.

With all of the key browsers becoming more privacy-driven, having a solid first party data strategy in place will be crucial for your marketing success.

What's been affected specifically?

The iOS14 update has primarily affected tracking on Facebook by requiring active opt in to in-app tracking.

From 2023, Chrome (the largest internet browser) will block all third party cookies by default.



With privacy measures increasing and the ever-increasing desire and ability to block third party cookies, we will start to see some large gaps in campaigns we've become heavily reliant on. The biggest blow will be to **remarketing campaigns**. Without third party cookies, remarketing campaigns cannot build new user lists, and so, may stop being a viable option.

What is first party data?

First party data is **unique to your business**. It is the data you own and collect with consent from your customers via email and loyalty programs. A first party data strategy relies heavily on solid email databases. Building a database should be your starting point.

Before you start, review how you're collecting email addresses and try to determine whether you have made it easy and pain-free for your guests to see the benefits of sharing their data with you.

Unlike remarketing lists (with which a device receives a cookie and subsequent ads are easily blocked using browser extensions) asking someone to consent to you sending them emails is a big request and one that warrants suitable benefits in exchange!

Under GDPR, you'll need to actively ask users to 'opt in' in order to communicate with them, so if you are planning on using your first party data for email newsletters as well as social/Google campaigns, review your consent wording and make sure you're covered to avoid any potential fines down the line.

How can you collect first party data?

Newsletter sign ups via your website and booking engine are very effective ways of collecting database contacts – however, volumes tend to be low enough to require additional efforts to scale your database.

Facebook lead generation ads will allow you to build databases quickly with highly qualified users. It's a key way to grow your database!

TikTok



TikTok

What do you need to know?

The Gen Z member of the social media family, TikTok, has an algorithm that prioritizes content types over creators. Marketers who have tried to chase success with direct response ads on the platform have failed - "unscripted, off-the-cuff content blew the direct-response-style content away in all of our metrics. Testimonials [also] always do well and continue to perform in simple static ads with real people." - Jeannie Assimos, head of content for Way.com.

TikTok name themselves 'the leading destination for short-form mobile video. Our mission is to inspire creativity and bring joy'. They are a social media platform built upon sharing short videos that usually continue to loop.

More recently, travel companies in their droves have begun using TikTok to build brand awareness and attract new customers. There are numerous reasons for this - it's the most downloaded app for two years in a row, it dangles the potential for global reach and the video format gives hoteliers the opportunity to immerse people in their surroundings as well as showing off their brand's personality.





How should you go about using TikTok as a hotel?

Engage with other users

TikTok is currently the most engaging social media platform. As a hotel, you can benefit from this by going for it and engaging with other users by liking/replying to comments and answering questions in the Q&A section of your profile.

Allow your sense of humour to shine

It is in the nature of TikTok to facilitate fun and humour. As a hotelier, don't be afraid of this - have some fun with it!



Show off what your hotel has to offer

There's a lot you can do to show off your property on TikTok, and unlike creating videos for the likes of Instagram and Facebook, the beauty of TikTok videos is that they are shorter - which mean there's only room for the best bits. What kind of impressive amenities can you showcase? Do you have any unmissable views from a rooftop or balcony? Serving five-star food? Show it off in a flash on TikTok. You can also show people what's going on 'behind the scenes' with staff or at various exciting times throughout the year. This can be another area where you bring a bit of fun and humour into the mix.



Give a tour

You're well used to posting tours on Facebook or Instagram we imagine. Use TikTok for this too. It's all about enticing users into considering your property and its surroundings, too.

Try partnering with a local influencer

If you are ever considering working with an influencer, it's often a good idea to try working with a 'micro' one, or someone local (a 'micro' influencer typically has under 10k followers). Working with smaller, local influencers can help to position your hotel as a champion of the community while also expanding your reach.

Thank You

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