



E-Commerce 101

Surviving in the Hospitality Industry

June 24, 2020

A Word About Our Sponsors -

The folks who are making this happen for all of us.



The Russian River Chamber of Commerce and Sonoma County have generously sponsored this webinar series.

The Chamber has resources available to help local business owners, ranging from consulting to education, with a focus on finding ways to add marketing, advertising, and branding components to help brick and mortar businesses find their footing in these uncertain times.



Please check in with the Chamber or the County to find out more about programs and opportunities they are making available at low or no cost to help you keep your business running and to start looking towards a successful future.

Getting Started -

Hospitality Industry Specifics

01 | Getting Started -

Today We Are Talking About -

- Hotels & Lodging
 - Booking Engines/OTA inclusion
 - The “Billboard Effect”
 - Analytics
- Restaurants
 - Delivery app traps
 - “Deal” sites like Groupon
- Niche travel market
- Worst places to advertise



Hotels & Lodging -

Get bookings. Maximize margins.



Hotels come in more than one flavor, obviously.

Flag hotels and franchise properties -

- + brand, advertising, rewards programs,
- corporately controlled, data and analytics difficult to get

Independent hotels using a flag hotel booking engine (Ascend Collection for instance) -

- + corporate booking engine adds exposure
- also corporately controlled, data and analytics difficult to get

Independent hotels and B&Bs -

- + choose your own SaaS booking engines
- + more business due to exposure from OTAs with these engines - the "Billboard effect"
- commissions and fees are very high usually

Try to leverage all exposure you get into long tail opportunities.

If you are a franchisee, with corporate limitations, what flexibility do you have in the agreement? How much access to data and statistics do you have? Is it possible to get more data?

If you are an independent hotel using OTAs and booking engines, what kind of data are you receiving from the software platforms?

What are some ways to leverage customers into booking directly through you next time? Or this time, if possible?

How much creative license do you have with your listing in the booking engines?

Restaurants & Food Service -

Is there any money in it now?



As if it weren't tough any day...

- Reduced occupancy, increased costs to comply with directives
- Delivery apps gouging restaurant and consumer for fees and commissions
- Deal programs such as Groupon, Living Social, etc
- The "Yelp" factor
- Google Places/Google My Business still free, but Adwords is still not
- Some cities working on community delivery apps



**Best Practices -
Don't Miss a Trick.**

If you are not online already, your successful competitors are.

- **Build right the first time; start small and then expand**
- **Decide on your platform**
- **Hire a developer, designer, advertising consultant, whoever you need to help you make this work today**
- **Be mindful of your budget - don't blow it all in one place**
- **Resources like the Russian River Chamber of Commerce - grants, free advice, consulting, free quick websites, other SBA or government programs**

But wait, there's more!

- SSL certificates/secure transaction and data handling
- UTM tracking
- Google Analytics set up, make sure you are integrating all your Google items in same account with verified domains
- Email updates to customers and prospects - make them look like a million dollars
- Payment options - the more the merrier, review after 90, 180 days, and one year
- Customer reviews - respond to positive and negative reviews on Google
- Responsive design, mobile first
- Authenticity, story, personality
- Disposable income is not a need based distribution system
- Cleanliness is the new sustainability



**Box? There's a
box around here?**

Don't be afraid but try to minimize the cost of mistakes.

- **Plenty of online courses, classes, many available for free - mind the forest and the trees, only learn what you need in the next 30 days.**
- **Ask other small business owners what's working for them, figure out how to replicate it for your business.**
- **Partner with complementary businesses to reduce cost, increase exposure and drive purchase amounts in positive direction.**
- **Analyze, strategize, monetize.**
- **Be ready to adapt or pivot quickly.**
- **If this works, how easily can you scale? This is not a stop sign, but you should be aware of the potholes in the road.**



Opportunity Knocks.

Niche travel is one of the first categories likely to rebound and surge as we head more into the summer travel season. Be sure you are ready to take advantage of these additional opportunities.

- These are more dogs than kids in San Francisco
- The dog travel market in California is a multi-billion dollar opportunity, no longer considered a niche
- Dog-friendly wineries, hotels, and eateries have a BIG advantage
- Get your website and your property listed on the pet-friendly travel apps and websites, and make sure you include it your Google My Business listing for best

Don't waste your time and money.

Some advertising 'opportunities' are simply not worth the time or hassle.

Whether it's a site that is going to drag your Google results in the wrong direction, or it's a listings site that gives preference to its own content instead of sending those visitors to your website or listing, or companies who offer you listings or traffic with no verifiable statistics about the traffic they are sending you, not all opportunities are good opportunities.

Be skeptical about:

Weekend Sherpa

WineCountry.com / NapaValley.com

And ANY site that drives traffic to their own internal content rather than generating real leads for you

We've compiled a list of links with more helpful information.

Pet friendly/dog friendly listings

- DogTrekker.com -
- rover.com
- BringFido.com

Google services

- Google My Business - <https://www.google.com/business/faq/>
- Google Analytics - <https://marketingplatform.google.com/about/analytics/>
- Google Ads - <https://ads.google.com/home/>

Mobile Wallet Marketing Made Easy Podcast -

<https://dominoresearch.com/podcast/restaurant-delivery-apps>

Restaurant listings and reviews apps and listings

Yelp

TripAdvisor

OpenTable

Zagat

Foursquare

Google Reviews

Facebook

Online travel agents - bookings aggregators

[Booking.com](https://www.booking.com)

Expedia

Travelocity

Tripadvisor

Ares

Cloudbeds

Rezovation

Bookassist

Net Affinity

Siteminder

D-Edge

Pegasus

Guestcentric

VRBO

AirBNB

Hotels.com

That's all for today.

Thanks for participating.

Kim Stuart - KimStuart.net

Roger Coryell - Brandhound.com

Russian River Chamber of Commerce - <http://resources.russianriver.com/>

Sonoma County - sonomacounty.ca.gov/Home/

