

How to Really Sell Yourself on the Web

These days people are looking not only for accommodations or a place to stay when searching online – they are looking for a vacation, or better yet, an experience! And not just a run of the mill experience, a *remarkable experience!*

A lot of accommodation operator websites often tell the consumer some information about their property, their rates, contact information, and location. Some go a little further and feature a photo gallery, golf or romance package, some testimonials from past guests, but very few use their website to really "sell" the consumer on why they should book at their location.

In order to "sell" someone on coming to your B&B or cottage, tours, or even just a location, you have to make them think about what the experience could be if they were there. There are a few simple ways of doing this with your website and the internet.

1. **Photos.** Take photos of your operation every chance you get. Even if you aren't a great photographer – and most people aren't – hopefully you will be able to get a few nice photos every so often. With digital cameras, you can take as many photos as you please and then select the best ones for your website. You can crop them to get the sections of the photos that you want, and the best part is that photos only need to be 25% of the size that a newer digital camera produces. If you have a digital camcorder, you can select frames right out of the video. Remember to make sure someone is in that picture of the beach. If all we saw were photos of a property with no one there, we would wonder if anyone even visits that place! Take photos of people and families enjoying themselves and involved in the activities that you have to offer. These will sell them on you and your operation! If you feel that you still cannot acquire any quality photos, ask a friend or a professional to come and take some photos during the season. Either way, get some great photos and post them on your website.
2. **Inviting Text.** Write the text for your website so that it invites or describes what your cottage is like when they are there. Use the text to spur on their imagination. You want them to picture themselves sitting there on the deck of that cottage, overlooking the view of the beach and their children playing horseshoes in the yard in front of them. If you have a B&B, talk to them about the evenings that you and your guests sat down to a dinner, shared a bottle of local wine, and talked about your past experiences as if they were the neighbor that lives down the road. If you run a tour or experiential tourism product, sell them on the must see or must experience details of the tour or experience.
3. **Talk about your property.** Start a Blog, or a Facebook page. Send out emails or e-newsletters to past guests describing the new improvements to the property or if you have a local event or special that you think they might be interested in. Send out Christmas e-cards thanking them for their business that past year and that you hope to see them next year. Stay in contact with them (within reason and respect their privacy, of course) and they might consider you when they travel again, or better yet, refer you to their friends or families.
4. **Get others to talk about you.** Blogs, Facebook, Tripadvisor, Travbuddy, and other social media avenues create great exposure for you and your business. Encourage people to share their experiences of their stay with you. Word-of-mouth and recommendations from friends and family are one of the most influential factors in someone determining where to visit or stay when planning a vacation. *Be remarkable!* That not only goes back to you and your operation, but it also has to carry through to your website because even if your operation is remarkable, and your website isn't, then you will never get the chance to show them.

Your website needs to be remarkable, and it has to sell that fact to the consumer the first time that they see your website. If not, the opposite is, well, forgettable, and that is *not* what you want to be!