

# Hotels.com:



The leading online provider of lodging worldwide

**Hotels.com relies on the powerful combination of Tealeaf and OpinionLab for comprehensive online customer experience optimization. As a result, the company has significantly improved its customer conversion, satisfaction and retention.**

The online travel industry is often considered the most competitive market on the web. Consumers are savvy and shrewdly price conscious, and many sites provide similar inventories. Factor in that companies in this industry are often forced to compete aggressively on price, and it is understandable why so many travel sites struggle to differentiate their offerings and achieve long-term success.

However, innovative travel companies have established competitive advantage by focusing on their customers. At Hotels.com, one particularly effective approach has been to embed customer listening (also known as voice-of-customer, or VOC) into critical business processes. The premise being, successful site optimization decisions begin by listening to the customer.

## CHALLENGES

Most sites today are black boxes of customer experiences. Ebusinesses have precious few clues as to why customers succeed or fail. After all, there is no brick-and-mortar storefront at which to observe real-time shopping behaviors, making improvement efforts time consuming, challenging and based largely on guesswork. And while customer listening produces significant value for sites today, it does not provide a complete, customer-centric optimization solution.

Compounding issues, many ebusinesses are ill equipped to fully benefit from customer feedback, as they are often unable to act on the information. For example, customers might allude to a problem in the booking process but unless they provide specific details, the ebusiness will be hard pressed to identify and fix the issue. This cycle of inactionable feedback perpetuates poor customer experiences, site abandonment and unrealized revenue opportunities.

## CUSTOMER PROFILE



With services spanning 60 countries around the globe, Hotels.com provides lodging for more than 85,000 properties—from roadside motels to all-inclusive resorts. The company's services include risk-free bookings, rewards programs and access to more than 1,000,000 guest reviews. Hotels.com is an operating company of Expedia, Inc.

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

> Improved the business value of customer feedback by providing visibility into customer experience.

> Resolved major issues stemming from minor upgrades, thereby improving customer conversion and retention.

## A BETTER APPROACH

To tear down the black box that surrounds online customer experiences, Hotels.com turned to the powerful combination of OpinionLab and Tealeaf for a comprehensive optimization solution. By collecting page-specific VOC feedback, OpinionLab enables Hotels.com to pinpoint issues and notify key stakeholders in real-time. And Tealeaf's online customer experience management (CEM) solution provides unprecedented visibility into customer behavior via a unique replay ability—a page-by-page, browser-level recording of the actual customer experience. With OpinionLab providing the initial indication of customer struggle and Tealeaf affording the ability to fully understand that feedback and measure the business impact of site issues, Hotels.com can now quickly resolve nearly any source of failed online experiences.



The combination of Tealeaf and OpinionLab is great in theory and even better in practice. The ability to tie together customer feedback with actual site experiences has really taken our optimization efforts to the next level.

Joe Megibow | VP Global Analytics & Optimization

#### **WIN 1: IMPROVED THE BUSINESS VALUE OF CUSTOMER FEEDBACK BY PROVIDING VISIBILITY INTO CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

##### **Problem**

Feedback submitted via OpinionLab identified a significant customer issue: visitors were struggling to complete the registration process and were unable to book reservations. However, it was unclear from existing tools what caused the issue within the booking process. Hotels.com needed to remedy the problem quickly because hundreds of customers were impacted each day.

##### **Solution**

To make OpinionLab's feedback more actionable, Hotels.com utilized the integration with Tealeaf to map customer feedback to the actual sessions of those vocal customers. What the company discovered was surprising—some customers tried to access the site by re-registering for an existing account. Consequently, the system recognized a duplicate email address and returned an error page that kept customers trapped in an endless loop. Based on this eye-opening qualitative information, Hotels.com redesigned the page and created a 'book without registering' option, a completely new feature for their site.

##### **Benefits**

With nearly 50% of all customers using the new booking option, the feature implementation was a major success. The combination of Tealeaf and OpinionLab enabled Hotels.com to quickly identify and resolve a significant impediment to conversion and paved the way for a much improved customer experience.

#### **WIN 2: RESOLVED MAJOR ISSUES STEMMING FROM MINOR SITE UPGRADES, THEREBY IMPROVING CUSTOMER CONVERSION AND RETENTION**

##### **Problem**

To keep its customers engaged, Hotels.com frequently updates site functionality through weekly minor upgrades. However, after these updates go live, unexpected issues can arise that frustrate customers and impede conversion. After one such upgrade, negative customer comments submitted via OpinionLab skyrocketed, and while page-specific feedback identified the general location of the problem, it did not indicate the cause.

##### **Solution**

With OpinionLab providing the initial indication of an issue, Hotels.com used Tealeaf to determine precisely why customers had struggled on the site. Drilling down into abandoned customer sessions, the company found a problem that would have been impossible to recreate without Tealeaf. Customers who moved between SSL and standard pages experienced a catastrophic error and could not proceed with their bookings. To make matters worse, the issue occurred during the final stage of the checkout process, so customers were forced to restart their reservations from scratch.

##### **Benefits**

With the problem clearly identified, Hotels.com was able to implement a code fix that rectified the issue. As a result, conversion rates and customer satisfaction improved while negative feedback pertaining to the issue subsided.

#### **ABOUT TEALEAF TECHNOLOGY**

Tealeaf provides online customer experience management solutions and is the unchallenged leader in customer behaviour analysis. Tealeaf's CEM solutions include both a customer behavior analysis suite and customer service optimization suite. For organizations that are making customer experience a top priority, these solutions provide unprecedented enterprise-wide visibility into every visitor's unique online interactions for ongoing analysis and web site optimization. Online executive stakeholders from ebusiness and IT to customer service and compliance are leveraging Tealeaf to build a customer experience management competency across the organization. Founded in 1999, Tealeaf is headquartered in San Francisco, California, and is privately held. For more information, visit [www.tealeaf.com](http://www.tealeaf.com).

#### **ABOUT OPINIONLAB**

By inviting consumers to share feedback at anytime, from anywhere, OpinionLab harnesses the collective intelligence of millions of customers around the world. For over a decade, the patented, proven methodology behind OpinionLab's familiar [+] symbol has helped many of the world's top brands collect, analyze, distribute, benchmark, and leverage actionable voice-of-customer data essential for: optimizing digital properties, managing customer experience, expanding business intelligence, improving product development, and streamlining marketing and communications. For more information visit [www.opinionlab.com](http://www.opinionlab.com).