

## **Online commerce - It's not just about the price: TripAdvisor research demonstrates consumer travel reviews influence online purchases**

NEEDHAM, Mass. - March 11, 2004 - TripAdvisor([www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)), the leading travel research site, announced today the results of its study on how online consumer travel reviews and opinions affect hotel property bookings. The message to hotel owners: reviews and articles posted about your property on the Web really do matter.

While traditional "best" lists like the NY Times Bestseller list measure popularity via overall sales volume, the Internet provides consumers with real time rankings of products and services based on the input of other consumers. Online companies like Netflix, Amazon and TripAdvisor now allow consumers to base purchase decisions on the experience of others. The rants and raves of consumers online do make an impact on online sales.

TripAdvisor, the 7th most popular online travel site worldwide, demonstrated that consumers care about the opinions and experiences of other travelers when making their travel plans. Specifically, TripAdvisor's research demonstrated that online travel reviews drive transactions, and that consumers can influence travel purchases through what they publish about their travel experiences online.

TripAdvisor examined the online purchase behavior on [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com) for two of the most popular U.S. travel destinations: San Francisco and New York City for the month of December, 2003. In both cases, TripAdvisor found that the most popular hotels, based on consumer reviews and positive articles, garnered a disproportional share of commerce activity for that city.

In the month of December, 2003, for example, the top 20 San Francisco hotels in TripAdvisor's Popularity Index, which ranks hotels based on the number of positive reviews and articles for a given hotel, garnered 40% of all San Francisco hotel commerce inquiries (consumer click-throughs to travel booking sites), even though these 20 hotels represented only 7% of the total number of hotels in that city.

While online consumers are always looking for a "deal," they are also looking for quality. Seeing rave reviews by other consumers reinforces the perceived quality of a hotel. The Orchard Hotel was the top rated hotel in San Francisco on TripAdvisor for the month of December, 2003, due to reviews like:

"The staff were outstanding, gave great recommendations for activities and dining, never steered us wrong. The management sent us a bottle of wine on our first night after hearing we were on our honeymoon...a very nice touch. The beds were comfortable, rooms spacious and housekeeping meticulous..."

In the same month, for New York City, the top 20 hotels in TripAdvisor's Popularity Index garnered over 20% of all commerce inquiries for that city. These 20 hotels only represented 6% of the total number of hotels in New York City.

"The ability to easily post and read other consumers' shopping experiences online has contributed to people using the Web for research before they make a major purchase, like a vacation," said Steve Kaufer, CEO of TripAdvisor. "Consumers should leverage the collective experience of others at sites like Netflix, Amazon and TripAdvisor for help with their online purchases. Online merchants, hoteliers in particular, should take note of the input consumers are giving them online. One's reputation online is really part of one's brand."

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