

# Social Media Ambush

*How to deal with challenging social media situations, from special requests to review blackmail*

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# Guest: Daniel Edward Craig

- Author and former GM turned hotel consultant
- Speaks and blogs about online reputation management, social media and storytelling for hotels
- Featured speaker at TripAdvisor's Master Class series
- Provides training, guidelines and best practices in social media and online travel marketing



# Overview

1. Social media: a double-edged sword.
2. Increasingly, travelers using social networks as a customer service channel.
3. They're also using social media to voice likes and dislikes — sometimes while still on property.
4. Handling demanding guests is nothing new to hotels, but the public and scalable nature of social media raises the stakes.
5. In this webinar we discuss how to deal with sensitive situations, from special requests to review blackmail.



# Scenario 1: Hint at special treatment



**Lateefah Thompson**

SO EXCITED TO STAY HERE!! cant wait til Friday...HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME ♥

Like · Comment · August 16 at 3:52pm



# Scenario 2: Request for special treatment

facebook



Search



**Roy Gordon**

My wife and I are staying with you for 3 nights from Tues to celebrate our 20th wedding anniversary. Would it be possible to reserve a room on one of the upper floors with a nice view (over the park?)

Also we will be arriving mid morning on Tuesady and it would be great if our room was available

Many thanks for your help

Roy



# What's at stake

- It's great when guests use social networks to express excitement.
- But we don't always have the availability and resources to accommodate.
- And what happens if we don't or can't accommodate requests?
- Will guest find reasons not to like the hotel? Voice disappointment via social networks? Go on the attack?
- People active on social networks like Facebook and Twitter tend to be active on review sites like TripAdvisor and Yelp.
- Guest satisfaction builds reputation, which drives demand.



# Proof


The **Revinat** Blog The Ultimate Social Media Solution for Hotels 

[Blog Home](#) [About Revinat](#) [Best Practices](#) [Social Media](#) [Contact Us](#)

[« The Faces of Revinat – Wayne Huang | Main](#)

August 15, 2011

## A Big Texas Welcome






I just checked into my room at the [Sheraton Fort Worth Hotel and Spa](#) and found this awesome, Texas-sized welcome gift. Surprised and delighted? Yes! Very full after eating the boot and part of the horn? Yes! Going to tell my friends and networks about the great hospitality here? You bet.

 **Revinat** on Facebook


Like You like this.


378 people like Revinat.


 Michael  Seth  Jay

 Facebook social plugin

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**Michelle Wohl**


I love the hospitality industry. I just checked into the Sheraton Fort Worth and was pleasantly surprised by a Texas-sized cookie platter.





Wall Photos

 11 hours ago ·  Like · Comment · Share

 Julie Bridgham, Phyllis Miller, Jennifer Chou Nocerini and 9 others like this.

 **Christina Carey Caruana** yay cookies :)  
11 hours ago · Like

 **Jennifer Chou Nocerini** love the longhorn with the googly Cookie Monster eyes  
9 hours ago · Like

 **Megan Propp** Cookie diet?  
9 hours ago · Like

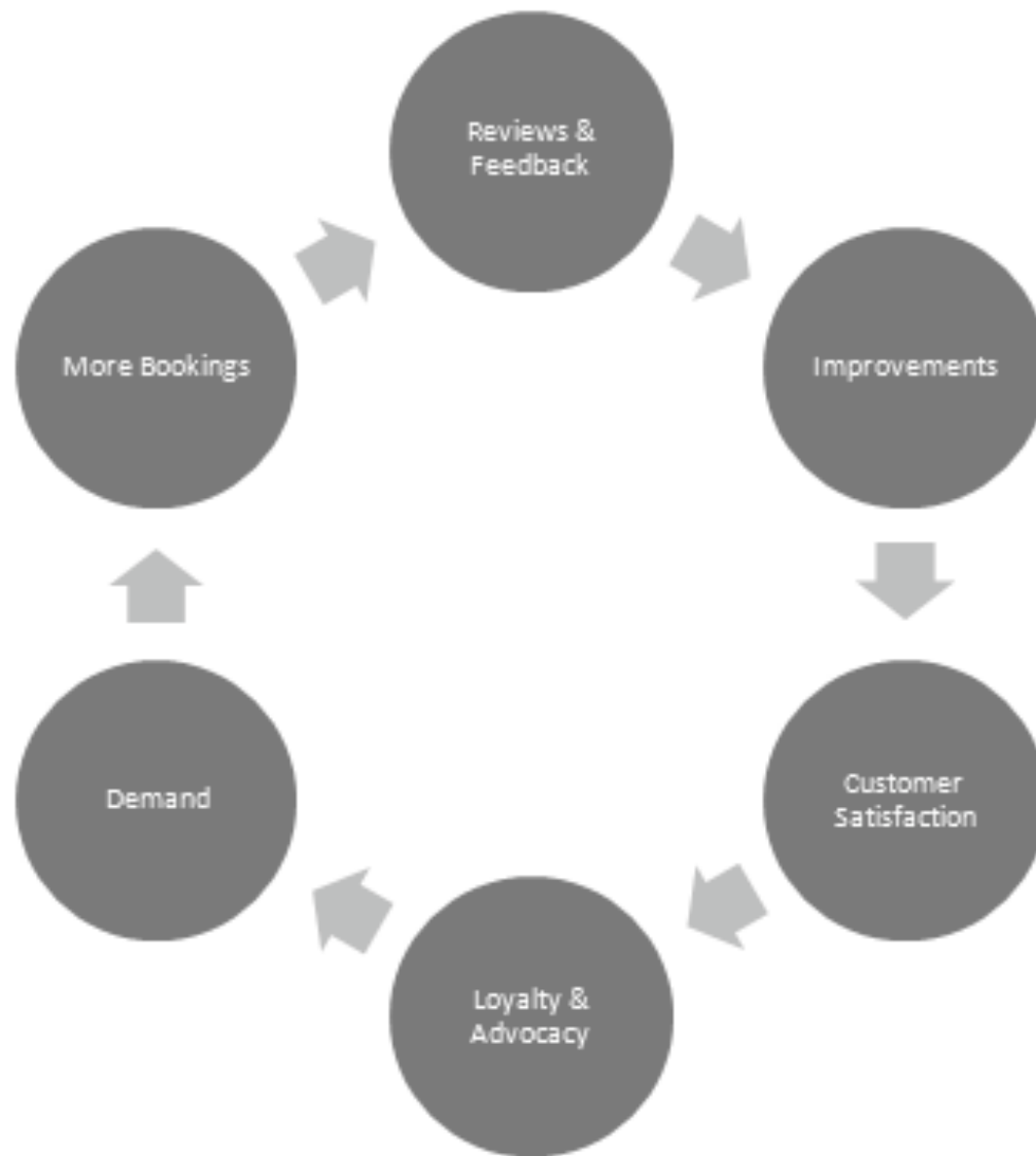
 **Kate Cunningham Slaughter** what a nice surprise!  
49 minutes ago · Like



**40** revinate - 12 hours ago

Experiencing 'surprise & delight' at this great hotel. Thank you @fwsheraton @richfield\_HMC <http://t.co/nSxOtX5>





**The Virtuous Cycle of Online Reputation Management**

# What to do

- Monitor social networks closely.
- Acknowledge all comments. Share the excitement.
- Inquire about occasion. Offer to assist. Don't make any promises.
- Flag the reservation. Alert front desk and other departments. Prioritize based on occasion and availability.
- Set aside a promo budget for social guests.
- A personal note and list of suggestions can go a long way.
- Follow up. Check back in during and/or after the stay



# Hotel response, Scenario 1



**Lateefah Thompson**

SO EXCITED TO STAY HERE!! cant wait til Friday...HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME ♥

Like · Comment · August 16 at 3:52pm



**Red South Beach hotel** Welcome Lateefah! We are so happy that you've decided to celebrate your birthday with us! Please come and visit our Front Desk staff to set up some wonderful outings for you and your friends! We have great VIP Club packages that we can set up for you too... Happy Birthday to you From your Friends at Red South Beach

August 19 at 12:39pm · Like



# Hotel response, Scenario 2

facebook



Search




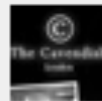
**Roy Gordon**

My wife and I are staying with you for 3 nights from Tues to celebrate our 20th wedding anniversary. Would it be possible to reserve a room on one of the upper floors with a nice view (over the park?)

Also we will be arriving mid morning on Tuesady and it would be great if our room was available

Many thanks for your help

 The Cavendish London likes this.



**The Cavendish London** Thanks Roy! I've added the requests to your booking, and hoefully we will be able to grant them. Congratulations on your fantastic anniversary, have a great weekend and see you Tuesday! Fab @ The Cavendish London  
August 5 at 4:49am · Like



# Building advocacy

“I would prefer to know about a guest’s special occasion and delight them than fail to meet expectations and generate dissatisfaction.”

“I believe [the special treatment] has built massive loyalty and repeat business and supports positive reviews on websites too.”

Ciarán Fahy

Managing Director, The Cavendish London



# Here's proof



**Helen Hagenbuch Adams**

We had a great stay at your hotel this weekend! Thanks for the chocolate toffee!! I loved the view from our room. I just left a great review on Trip Advisor. Thanks so much!

Like · Comment · Tuesday at 9:25am



**Hyatt Regency Chicago** Thank you, Helen! We are so glad you enjoyed your stay and look forward to welcoming you back.

Yesterday at 1:00pm · Like



# Why wait for them to ask?

facebook



Search



Hyatt Regency Chicago's Profile



## Hyatt Regency Chicago


We need a VIP for this holiday weekend! Tell us why you deserve it and you could get the extra special treatment!



### Hyatt Regency Chicago VIP Guest

[View Image in Album](#)

 Like ·  Comment ·  Share · September 1 at 1:00pm via Hyatt Regency

 2 people like this.



**Sumi Khan** Its my second stay at the hyatt in two months..and its my birthday!

September 1 at 1:02pm · Like



**ClubPhoto Booth** My Crew has been working NON stop back to back events with only a few hours of sleep in between! They have worked zoo hard, and deserve to be treated as we treat our clients! LIKE VIPS!

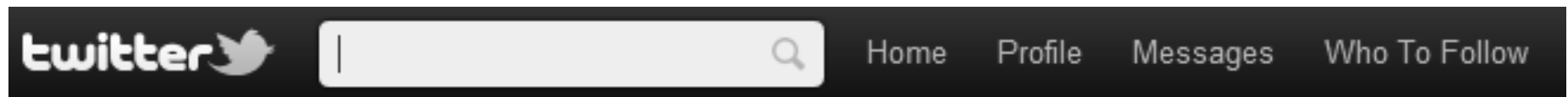
September 1 at 1:04pm · Like




**Teri Drennon** My boyfriend and I are expecting our first baby in January, and we just found out it's a girl! My boyfriend is in Zurich



# Scenario 3: On-property complaint



 **MLmarilyn** marilyn london  
The **Hotel** in NEW YORK!!! **Sucks!!!!** The decor in the rooms are horrible and depressing and NO TUBS!!! ...  
[tmi.me/fHQFP](https://tmi.me/fHQFP)  
7 hours ago



# What is the guest thinking?

Giovanna [redacted]

I have a confirmation email for the hotel but they don't have me in system. Not a good sign. — at [redacted] Resort & Casino Las Vegas.

 2 hours ago via iPhone · Like · Comment



Ray [redacted] Hopefully they compensate you for your inconvenience

2 hours ago · Like



Giovanna [redacted] I would have been happy with an "I'm sorry about this. Let me help you." Nothing. Apparently it was MY fault because my company put my reservation under Ginna and not my full name as on my license.

about an hour ago · Like



Ray [redacted] That's why there's customer feedback.

about an hour ago · Like



Giovanna [redacted] Yup. And I remembered to note the name of the guy who "helped" me.

about an hour ago · Like



Brian [redacted] I hope you turned that into a free spa appt or something. ;)

about an hour ago · Like



# Your options

What should you do?

1. Ignore the comment.
2. Post a reply saying you're sorry.
3. Throw the guest out.
4. Contact the guest and try to resolve things.

Hmmm ....



# How not to handle things



**MrWorkrate** Tom Edwards

As desk clerk was moving me from **my broken room** at

@ hotel I asked about suite **upgrade**. Was told it'd be \$50.

Never mind. #miamitrip



# What to do

- Monitor. Respond quickly.
- If offensive or abusive, you can ignore or delete
- Take it offline
- Contact the guest. Opportunity to resolve before escalates.
- As with any complaint: listen, apologize, empathize, offer solutions
- Follow up
- Win them over with your concern, professionalism, thoroughness. It's an opportunity to turn a detractor into an advocate.



If not well handled ...

**“Incompetent staff. Clueless manager.”**

 Reviewed 26 July 2011



If well handled ...

**“Wonderful resort, amazing staff, a few problems but would definitely return!”**

 Reviewed April 29, 2010



# Scenario 4: Review blackmail



“If you don’t give me what I want,  
I’ll write a terrible review!”



# What to do?

## Options

1. Hold your ground
2. Give them what they want
3. Try to negotiate a compromise

Training is an essential component of online reputation management: train and empower staff to prevent on-property complaints from escalating to online complaints.



# Responding to review blackmail

- Remain calm and reasonable. Treat irrational behavior with rational behavior.
- Offer options. Ask what you can do to resolve situation.
- Take threat seriously, but don't let it cloud your judgment.
- Hotel staff shouldn't be held hostage by unreasonable demands and threats
- Record details for future reference.
- A social media policy and guidelines will help staff know where they stand, the options they have, and that management will support decision.



# If they do post a bad review

Most guests won't follow through with threat. If they do:

- 1) Post a response to set the record straight;
- 2) If false and damaging, dispute review with host site
- 3) Learn, support the team and move on.

The occasional negative review is inevitable. It's hoteliers, not guests, who fret over them. Don't be complacent, but accept that sometimes you'll be a victim and other times you'll simply mess up.

Take comfort in having done your best. Focus on burying negative review by generating positive reviews.



# Summary of guidelines

1. Listen: monitor reviews and commentary
2. React quickly
3. The more engaged staff are with guests, the more likely they'll bring grievances to their attention before logging on to a social network.
4. Train staff to defuse upset guests, turn detractors into advocates.
5. Accept that it's not a level playing field. We're in hospitality to please, and that sometimes means compromising, letting it go.
6. Develop a thicker skin. Hotels aren't only things subject to scrutiny in the age of social media. Learn from negative, focus on positive.



# And remember...

“Grant me the serenity to accept the things  
I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And wisdom to know the difference.”



# Resources

- Daniel Edward Craig – [dec@danieledwardcraig.com](mailto:dec@danieledwardcraig.com)  
[www.danieledwardcraig.com](http://www.danieledwardcraig.com) @dcraig
- Michelle Wohl – [michelle@revinate.com](mailto:michelle@revinate.com)  
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- Watch for email with link to slides and video

