

## Case Briefing

# Guest Services - Social Media



## The Situation

The C-Blitz Hotel in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, has been behind the industry in responding to the rapid changes brought on by the growth of social media. As a first step, the management wants to improve the properties ability to monitor and respond to issues raised on social media sites. They feel this will help them increase bookings because negative reviews on social media are keeping customers away.

## Your Role

You've been hired as the new Guest Satisfaction Manager/Social Media, reporting directly to Sales & Marketing and working closely with the digital team, front desk and the General Manager. Your initial focus is dealing with social media concerns and transforming negatives into opportunities to improve. Your secondary role is to work with your colleagues to fix underlying problems which are causing the social media complaints.

## Learning Phase

Step-by-step instructions will guide through the dos and don'ts of managing your social media profile. You'll start with what NOT to do and see the negative effects of neglecting social media. Next, you'll learn how disconnects between your responses and actions can lead to even worse situations. Eventually, you will launch an effective response and see improvement. The Phase ends with a summary of how to attack the problems you'll face in the Challenge Phase.

## Challenge Phase

Some recent big events at the local University have drawn big crowds and caused some guest dissatisfaction. Your goal is to minimize backlash on social media and address the issues for upcoming events. You are also likely to find emergent issues which will also need addressing on social media and with hotel operations staff. Your goal is total bookings for the month; the specific goal is given in the simulation.

At the option of your Professor, you may be able to retry the Challenge Phase multiple times. Only your best grade will count.

## Social Media in the Simulation

Each of the thousands of potential guests in the simulator will form opinions about your hotel offerings, service, etc. They may then choose to share those opinions on social media using two simulated sites within the model: TripHelper (like TripAdvisor) and Tweeter (like Twitter). Other potential guests will read those posts and consider that information in deciding where to stay. As a result, it is critical for you to respond to negative posts; the simulator gives you a mechanism for doing this. The more timely the response, the less damage is done to your hotel's reputation.

## Discussion Questions

If you were the owner of the hotel, how easy do you think would be to remain objective about hotel weaknesses?

Are all guest complaints, in-person or online, accurately reported and justified?

How do you personally evaluate companies' responses to negative online product or service reviews when you are shopping?

Do you think a disappointed guest is more concerned about receiving compensation for the mishap, or making sure that the problem is taken care of?