Welcome to the IHG Guide to Social Listening

In this toolkit, you’ll find a step-by-step guide to monitoring online reviews, responding appropriately, and turning the insights you uncover into action that directly impacts your business. Read on to find:

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- The impact of reviews
- Time & resources

**02**
**Getting Started**
- Logging in
- Monitoring reviews

**03**
**What Widgets Mean**
- Reading the dashboard
- Response recommendations

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**How to Respond**
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- Changing your business
- Measuring success

**06**
**Listening Worksheet**
- Make a plan
- Set goals

Taking ownership of your online reputation through Social Listening is the first step in your broader social engagement strategy.
The Bottom Line

It pays to listen and respond

79% of survey respondents say management responses to bad reviews reassure them - TripAdvisor

+20% Guests pay 20% more for hotels with 4 or 5 star ratings on travel review sites - Comscore & Kelsey Group

$0 IHG’s Social Listening Tool is NO COST to you today

49% of travelers won’t book a property without reviews - Olery
What you’ll learn:

✓ Understand why it’s critical for you to respond to reviews
✓ Learn why you should use the IHG Social Listening Tool
✓ Determine how much time it will take to monitor and respond
✓ Understand your Social Listening responsibilities

Why respond to reviews?
Your guests are talking about your hotel online. Listening and responding to social media feedback can help you improve the guest experience and drive **profitable revenue and RGI**

Why use the IHG Social Listening Tool?

* This is a **FREE** tool for hotels, and the **ONLY** place you can manage both IHG Guest Ratings & Reviews (NEW!) and TripAdvisor
* You can also find information about your competitors, and see conversation on Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and other Social Media sites
Your Social Listening responsibilities

How should you spend your time?

40%  Reviewing and responding to reviews
20%  Organizing feedback for analysis & insights
15%  Presenting feedback & trends to staff
15%  Reading reviews in the IHG Social Listening Tool
10%  Following up with staff to take action on feedback

And how much time should you spend?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly review volume</th>
<th>Login frequency*</th>
<th>Estimated weekly time</th>
<th>Choose your Social Media Champion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1</td>
<td>Every 3 days</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>GM, AGM or FOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5</td>
<td>Every other day</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>GM, AGM or FOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>2-3 hours</td>
<td>GM, AGM or FOM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>4+ hours</td>
<td>GM, DOS/DOM or dedicated resource</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This is the recommended timing to meet IHG’s guideline of 72 hours for responding to online guest reviews.
Getting Started

Follow these six easy steps
What you’ll learn:

✓ Learn **where to find** the IHG Social Listening Tool on Merlin
✓ Understand how to **log in** and **respond** to reviews within the tool
Step 1
Find the IHG Social Listening Tool on Merlin

Step 2
Select your property

Step 3
Find reviews on your property dashboard

Step 4
Click to respond to the review
Click through to review details
Step 5  Respond to your review

If you're having trouble accessing your dashboards, contact channels@ihg.com

Step 6  Publish on the review site

You can change the default timing from “Last 30 Days” to last month, quarter or year
What Widgets Mean

Log in
Find insights
Take action
What you’ll learn:

✓ Understand how to read each of the widgets within the **IHG Social Listening Tool**
✓ Know how to **collect insights** from each widget
✓ Learn about **IHG Guest Ratings & Reviews** (NEW!)

**What you’ll find on your dashboard**

- Recent **IHG Guest Ratings & Reviews**
- Recent TripAdvisor reviews
- Competitive data
- Indicators on areas for improvement
- Conversation about your hotel on Facebook, Twitter, Blogs and other Social Media sites

03 What Widgets Mean
What widgets mean

Guest Reviews latest posts

- Shows all your reviews from IHG Guest Ratings & Reviews
- The IHG Social Listening Tool is the ONLY tool you can use to respond
- Click to read full text and follow the link to the response page
★★ Respond to ALL 1-3 Star reviews & at least 80% 4-5 Star reviews within 72 hours

TripAdvisor widgets

- Latest Posts: Shows the most recent TripAdvisor reviews
- Overall Ranking: Compares your ranking to competitors
- Attributes: Shows your rating across five attribute areas
- Click to read full text and follow the link to the response page
★★ Respond to ALL 1-3 Star reviews & at least 80% 4-5 Star reviews within 72 hours

Overall sentiment

- Shows overall online sentiment compared to competitors
- Each post is given a score of positive, negative or neutral
★★ Pay special attention to any negative sentiment posts
Category sentiment

- Shows sentiment for each of the key attribute areas
- Notice how attributes trend over time with the change arrows
  ★ Pay special attention to attributes with negative sentiment

Social channel & review sites

- **Social Channels**: Helps identify highest volume social channels
- **Review Sites**: Helps identify highest volume review sites
  ★ Both help you understand which online channels and review sites need attention or are generating negative feedback

Volume of posts

- This widget provides a timeline view of social media conversation around your property & competitors
- Click through to understand events that impact volume
  ★ Use this to identify trends or competitor activity

03 What Widgets Mean
What you’ll learn:

✓ Know IHG’s recommendations on how to **prioritize** reviews, the **timeframe** for responses and the **percentage** of reviews you should address

✓ Get examples of responses to **positive** and **negative** reviews

✓ Learn how to respond to different types of reviews

✓ Understand things to **keep in mind** when responding

**Review response guidelines**

- **Respond to** 100% of all negative reviews
- **Respond to at least** 80% of all positive reviews
- **Respond ideally within** 48 hours & no more than 72 hours
- **Highest priority:** IHG Guest Ratings & Reviews and TripAdvisor

*Learn more on page 23*
Drafting the right response to a review (especially a negative one) takes careful consideration. The right tone, approach and content can be the difference between winning back an unhappy customer and causing irreparable damage to your property’s reputation. Here are some tips to help you win every time.

**Do.**
1. Thank the guest for their review
2. **Note any positive element(s) of their stay**
3. Acknowledge any element(s) of their dissatisfaction
4. If appropriate, state you will send a Private Message for additional info, or provide information for the guest to reach you
5. Be aware the you’re personally responsible for any content you publish

**Don’t.**
1. Disclose IHG company sensitive or confidential information
2. Make disparaging remarks about IHG, colleagues, customers – really anyone!
3. **Post a Private Message without a public acknowledgment**
4. Respond in anger, assign blame or make excuses
5. Post any copyrighted material without permission

**LEARN MORE:** **DO** check out the Social Marketing Team Space on Merlin for more response tips.

**BE SPECIFIC! DON’T** cut and paste from a template. Customize your responses to guests.
Customize your approach

When responding to reviews, each comment should follow these steps:

**Acknowledge**
- Tell the guest you appreciate their feedback, and recognize their specific concern

**Empathize/Apologize**
- Apologize for their experience, or if you are dealing with a legal issue, inform the guest that we take all concerns/allegations seriously

**Acquire**
- After acknowledging the guest publicly, ask for additional information to follow up on the conversation offline

Your responses to reviews should be personalized for each guest. The next few pages are a guide, based on some common types of reviews, for what to include in your response.
Dear Travelor504,

Thank you very much for taking the time to write about your comments. We are sorry to hear you had a less than pleasant stay with us. Our hotel is scheduled for a $6 Million renovation, which will include updated lighting in the corridors, upgraded bathrooms including new tile and fixtures, a complete new restaurant and lounge concept, as well as the expansion of our lobby area. This large scale renovation will start in 3 weeks and take approximately 3 months. The items you have mentioned regarding the cleanliness and quality of the room will be addressed with our Housekeeping Manager.

Please also contact us at yourhotel@hotel.com so we can obtain additional detail regarding your stay.

Again, we regret that this impacted your experience at our hotel and hope to offer you a more pleasant stay in the future after our full renovation is complete.

Sincerely,
Jill Freeman,
General Manager

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Sample response: IHG Customer Care

Dear Travelor504,

First of all, thank you very much for your recent stay at the (Fill in the blank) Hotel. I am so sorry to see you did not enjoy your overall experience with us. We’d like to obtain some additional detail regarding your experience so we have sent you a private message. We hope to have the honor of serving you again should your travels bring you back to (fill in the name of the city).

Sincerely,

Name
IHG Customer Care
“Great Place to Stay”

Reviewed September 7, 2012

My wife and I stayed at this property when we came to Kansas City to attend a Royals game. The room was spacious and clean, the staff was warm and friendly and the shuttle driver who took us to the Royals game was very entertaining and funny. We ate in the restaurant and our waitress was very good and attentive. We didn't have any kids but I can see where this would be a kid's paradise with the water park and all. I would definitely make this a place to stay when in KC and especially if attending a Royals game.

Rex and Amy G from Iowa

Stayed August 2012, traveled with family

5/5 Value
5/5 Location
5/5 Sleep Quality
5/5 Rooms
5/5 Cleanliness
5/5 Service

Sample response: hotel

Dear Rex and Amy:

Thank you so much for your review of our hotel. I am pleased to hear you enjoyed your stay with us and that you feel you received great service. It’s something our staff takes great pride in, so we appreciate your feedback. I agree with you our shuttle drivers are definitely entertaining. I love how they take on the spirit of the Royals Games by dressing up for their favorite teams! Next time you return to our restaurant, be sure to check out our extensive dessert menu which is delicious! Thanks again for staying with us and we hope to see you again soon!

Sincerely,
Katherine Smith, Manager

Highly positive:
• Acknowledge positive elements
• Thank the guest for the post
• Invite the guest back for their next visit

Next steps:
• Share positive comments with staff
• Consider partnerships with the water park or Royals if a trend emerges in future reviews
How to respond: factually incorrect

Sample response: hotel

If the guest mentions items the hotel staff feels are factually incorrect like "The room was so cold... I don't think there are any temperature controls in the room." Address this publicly:

Dear Christina12,

I'm sorry you found the room cold. Our rooms do have individual temperature controls for your complete comfort. The Temperature Control is located on the wall directly inside the door. Additionally, please remember we are a "Green Hotel" so a room key card must be placed in the Energy Module by the front door to turn on the lights and heating unit. If you have concerns about the comfort of the room on future stays, please contact the front desk. Thank you for sharing your feedback and we hope you will stay again in the future.

Sincerely,

Bob Jones, Manager

If the review isn’t for your hotel

If the guest mentions amenities in the review that your hotel doesn’t have – for example, your hotel does not have a restaurant, you can flag this review.

When it's very obvious the guest has attached the review to the incorrect hotel, click the flag in IHG Guest Ratings & Reviews, or use the "Problem with this review" section, and select, “Review posted to wrong location” option on TripAdvisor.

Factually incorrect

• Acknowledge other elements of their review (positive or negative)
• Politey indicate correct info
• Post contact information for further assistance if needed

Next steps

• Investigate any complaints
• Make changes if appropriate
• Watch other reviews or hotel feedback to see if misinformation is a trend
• Consider proactively communicating to avoid confusion from other guests
Dear Nelson420,

Thank you very much for taking the time to write your comments. Your review appears to be from a stay more than 2 years ago. Since then, the hotel has undergone a full renovation which included upgrades to the hallways, rooms and public areas. In addition, we have added 6 more housekeeping staff members. Our hotel is now in excellent shape and I'm delighted to invite you back to our hotel. To ensure your complete satisfaction, please contact me at yourhotel@hotel.com so I may obtain additional details about your experience.

Sincerely,
Tom Johnson
General Manager

Sample response: IHG Customer Care

Dear Nelson420,

First of all, thank you very much for your recent stay at the (Fill in the blank) Hotel. I am so sorry to see you did not enjoy your overall experience with us. We’d like to obtain some additional detail regarding your experience so we have sent you a private message. We hope to have the honor of serving you again should your travels bring you back to (fill in the name of the city).

Sincerely,
Name
IHG Customer Care
Sample response: hotel

“Dear BluesTraveler41,

Thank you for your review. Our hotel does review and address these situations very carefully. Safety and security are our first and foremost concern. We have reached out privately to obtain additional details of your experience.

Sincerely,
Janet Arlington
General Manager”

Guidelines for legal implications

It may feel counter intuitive, but in these scenarios, we need to be careful not to admit liability or fault:
- Don’t apologize or write “I’m Sorry”
- Don’t make promises you (or IHG Customer Care) can’t keep
- Do try to move the guest into a private space (ask them to contact us offline – don’t go back and forth in public)
- Be careful with the Public Acknowledgement, but keep in mind the “General Audience” is watching

Legal implications

- Inform reviewer we take all allegations seriously and will review the situation immediately
- Post contact information to get more details from the guest offline

Next steps

- Immediately respond in public to get offline contact info & say you will follow up
- Notify key contacts at your hotel of the concern immediately
- Follow your hotel’s existing escalation procedures
**POSITIVE REVIEWS**

- Show guests your hotel is engaged and acknowledge guests as you would offline; we recommend responding to about 80% of positive reviews, strategically addressing those that can help reinforce your property’s competitive advantage
- Watch that you don’t make responses to positive reviews sound like a sales pitch – it can turn off other potential guests

**BE HONEST**

- Unless your property’s GM is actually responding, don’t sign that person’s name – you don’t want your GM to be caught off guard if the guest contacts them another way

**PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE RESPONSES**

- Always begin by publicly acknowledging a review, so other readers will know it has been addressed
- Never publicly share personally identifiable information for staff or guests

**IHG CUSTOMER CARE**

- You are encouraged as a representative of your property to be the first line of response as hotels are in the best position to assist
- IHG Customer Care may respond to unanswered 1, 2 or 3 star IHG Guest Ratings & Reviews after 7 days, and TripAdvisor after 14 days or sooner if there is no indication of hotel engagement – this service is at no cost to you today
Set goals & measure success
What you’ll learn:

✓ Learn more about the **insights** you can collect from **online reviews**
✓ Set specific **goals** for your Social Listening activity
✓ Understand how you can directly impact your **guest experience**
✓ Identify **key contacts** at your property to share insights from guests

Using the IHG Social Listening Tool for business insights
## Discovering insights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dashboard result</th>
<th>Finding insights</th>
<th>Who should you inform at your property? (fill in)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Underperforming attribute areas (guest room, bathroom, etc.)</td>
<td>Address areas during weekly staff meetings and implement an improvement plan</td>
<td>For housekeeping concerns, Director of Housekeeping: ____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low sentiment score</td>
<td>Use click-through analytics to read more about what comments might be driving this score. Share trends with staff to discuss potential changes</td>
<td>___________________________________________________________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor IHG Guest Ratings &amp; Reviews or TripAdvisor rating</td>
<td>Compare your score to competitors. If your score is low, this could be a sign to make improvements or be more responsive to reviews</td>
<td>___________________________________________________________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low volume of reviews</td>
<td>Start thinking about a proactive strategy to increase review volume*</td>
<td>___________________________________________________________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social engagement volume</td>
<td>Start thinking about whether or not a proactive social media strategy is right for your property*</td>
<td>___________________________________________________________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social engagement channels</td>
<td>Use these results to understand the best channels to engage your guests*</td>
<td>___________________________________________________________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive attributes that are beating competitors</td>
<td>Use positive results in sales pitches, to reward staff or to validate progress vs. goals</td>
<td>___________________________________________________________________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*See the [Social Marketing Team Space](#) for guidelines.
Taking action

Make online guest feedback part of your weekly staff meetings, sharing both positive & negative feedback

Collaborate with appropriate staff/departments to make necessary changes

Follow up with staff to ensure agreed-upon improvements have been made

Increase review volume by proactively asking guests to review your property (See the Social Marketing Team Space for Best Practices)

Measuring your success: set goals

Listening & response
1. Are you logging in to the IHG Social Listening Tool at least twice a week?
2. Did you respond to 100% of your negative reviews within 72 hours?
3. Did you strategically respond to 80% of your positive reviews?

Reputation management
1. Have your scores on review sites improved vs. competitors?
2. Are you taking steps to address concerns?
3. Are you increasing positive social volume about your property?

Business performance
1. Have you noticed changes in occupancy or revenue based on your improved Social Listening performance?
Your Listening Action Plan

Your plan to win
### YOUR SOCIAL LISTENING ACTION PLAN

**01** Have you designated a Social Media Champion at your hotel?  
- [ ] Yes  
- [x] No

What is his/her first and last name?  
________________________________________

**02** Have you completed any of the following IHG Social Listening training?  
- [ ] My Learning on Merlin  
- [ ] CENTRA – Social Listening Training  
- [ ] Social Media IQ Virtual Training Class

**03** About how many guest reviews does your hotel receive each week?  
- [ ] 0-1  
- [ ] 2-5  
- [ ] 6-10  
- [ ] 10+

Based on the Social Listening responsibilities chart in Section 1 of this guide, how many hrs/week should you be listening & responding to reviews?  
- [ ] 30 min  
- [ ] 1 hour  
- [ ] 2-3 hours  
- [ ] 4+ hours

**04** What is your goal for turnaround time when responding to online reviews?  
_____ hours

*IHG recommends responding within 72 hours as a best practice.

**05** When & how often do you plan to share insights with staff from the IHG Social Listening Tool?  
________________________________________

**06** What percentage of reviews are you committed to responding to, and on which sites?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IHG Guest Reviews</td>
<td>_____%</td>
<td>_____%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TripAdvisor</td>
<td>_____%</td>
<td>_____%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelocity.com</td>
<td>_____%</td>
<td>_____%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yelp.com</td>
<td>_____%</td>
<td>_____%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+ Local</td>
<td>_____%</td>
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<td>_____%</td>
<td>_____%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*IHG recommends responding to 100% of negative reviews and 80% of positive reviews, giving priority to IHG Guest Ratings & Reviews and TripAdvisor. Other review sites can be considered as resources allow.

**07** What are three goals you would like to achieve by using the IHG Social Listening Tool?  
________________________________________

Ex: Overall rating vs. competitors, login frequency, volume of posts vs. competitors, etc.

**08** Have you registered as the manager of your hotel’s TripAdvisor account? If so, enter your account info:  
Login: __________________________  
Password: _______________________

If not, visit [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com) and claim your property.
Questions?

Contact: channels@ihg.com
www.ihgmerlin.com/socialmarketing