

Hotels can lose up to **30** customers for each bad review

'97 per cent
say cleanliness
is the most
important factor
when choosing
a hotel'



don't let
housekeeping
be the cause

With persistent low growth, volatility and record levels of supply affecting occupancy rates, there is increasing demand on hotels to add value in order to win both new and repeat business.

Introduction


A weak economic backdrop has resulted in business users economising and has seen many consumers not willing to sacrifice vacations entirely, but instead adjusting the length of stay, destination and increasing bargain hunting behaviour to compensate for tightened purse strings.

Consumers are not only more informed, but they have more choice and less disposable income, making them more cautious about how and where they spend their money; [strong brands with positive online customer interaction will be the ones to prosper.](#)

The British Hospitality Association (BHA) estimates the UK hotel industry is worth an annual £40bn¹ but figures suggest that less people will be staying in hotels this year and revenue is expected to fall slightly. A report by PWC² showed that occupancy is expected to fall to 70.7 per cent, with ADR falling to £82.26 and RevPAR falling to £58.21.

[The challenge for hotels is how to enhance the guest experience and boost positive online reviews in light of increased competition and this downward pressure on room rates and occupancy.](#)

Average Day Rate (ADR), Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR)



Cleanliness is the most important feature for guests – scoring ahead of other areas such as bed and furniture comfort, room lighting, internet access and a customer service focused attitude.

Cleanliness is the leading global driver of value

Hotel brand values are built around a number of factors such as value for money, comfort, cleanliness, customer service, facilities and the standard of food and drink. For hotels, first impressions really do count.



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Housekeeping standards and cleanliness have a huge impact on the guest experience, which in turn adds value and revenue in terms of repeat business, referrals and positive reviews. Although guests might complain about poor service, shabby décor or rude staff, dirty rooms and amenities top the list of reasons why they won't return. A clean environment might not technically be a revenue generator on its own but it can make a real difference to the bottom line.

Figures from one study show³ that room cleanliness is the leading global driver of value in both Europe and the Americas for hoteliers. Scoring the highest in both the Americas region as well as in Europe, it demonstrated that room cleanliness was the most important feature for guests ahead of other areas such as bed and furniture comfort, room lighting, internet access and a customer service focused attitude.

In another study⁴ 97 per cent of guests agreed that cleanliness is the most important factor when choosing a hotel, café, bar or restaurant - more important than cost, service, location and little perks.

Guests vote with their feet

It pays to be clean

When guests are unhappy with the standard of cleanliness in a hospitality establishment, operators should be prepared to lose their repeat business. Most are more likely to stop going to a restaurant or hotel with poor cleanliness standards than to register a complaint.

Running the numbers:

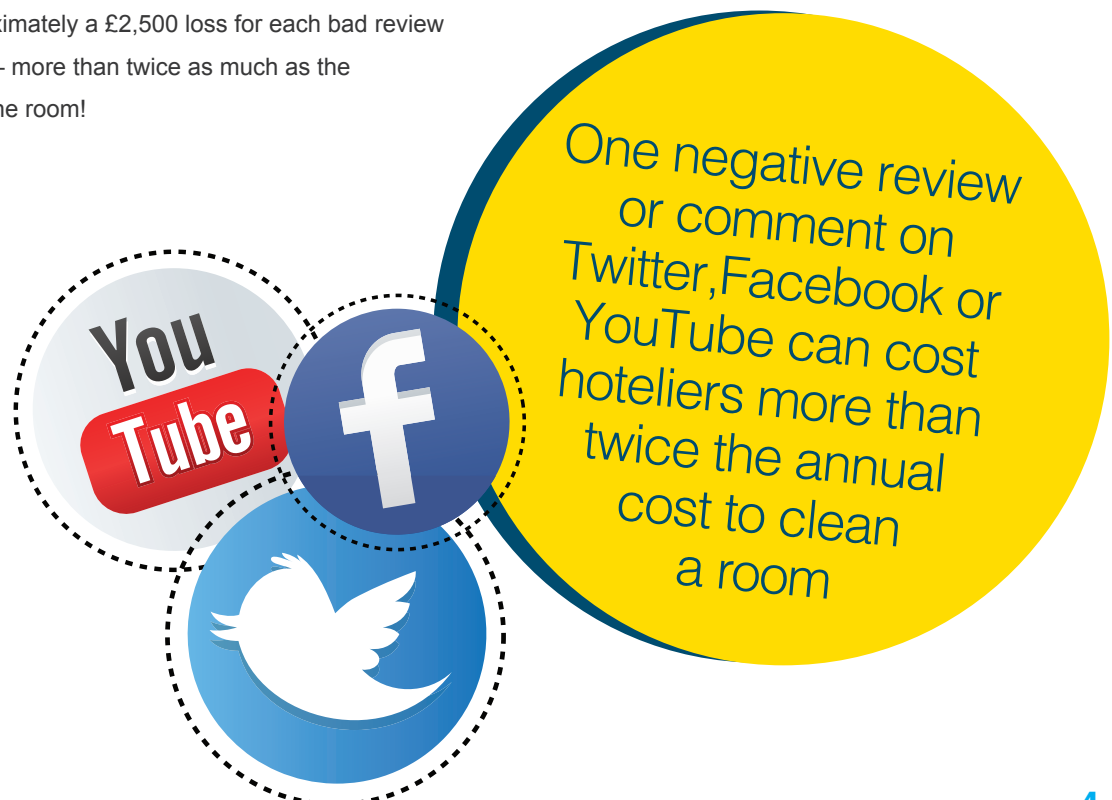
If 100% capacity = 100 rooms, a hotel with an ADR of a £82.26 and a 70.7% occupancy² would generate £2,122,760 revenue per annum

If as little as 1% of guests don't return because they are unsatisfied with the standard of cleanliness, a hotel would stand to lose over £21,000 per annum in lost revenue.

Think social

64% use social media to make travel plans⁵, 35% change their choice of hotel after browsing social media⁶ and 90% of travellers avoid booking hotels labelled as “dirty” in online reviews⁷.

A negative review or comment on Twitter, Facebook or YouTube can lose companies as many as 30 customers⁸. Losing 30 customers, on the basis of £82.26 ADR², could equate to approximately a £2,500 loss for each bad review regarding cleanliness – more than twice as much as the annual cost to clean one room!



Use housekeeping services to add value and retain customers

In the current economic climate business objectives often include cost reduction strategies. A particular trend in housekeeping is outsourcing.

Although outsourcing services may appear to be adding cost to the bottom line, outsourcing key services such as housekeeping can add value and create both cost and time efficiencies. A robust housekeeping strategy that effectively manages costs and cleanliness standards can be a strong proposition that adds to the bottom line through customer satisfaction and retention as well as an increased perception of value for money among guests.

With the power and reach of social media and online reviews, negative comments can damage a brand and lose customers very quickly. It's clear that, as cleanliness is a hotel guest's number one priority, it's the one area where you can't afford to take shortcuts.



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**Top tips for increasing
guest satisfaction through
improving cleanliness:**

1. Don't take shortcuts when it comes to cleaning
2. Carry out regular guest satisfaction surveys and target problem areas
3. Use your cleaning provider's expertise! Ask them how to improve areas that cause complaints
4. Get the maximum for your minutes per room – work in partnership with your service provider to implement thorough but efficient methodologies
5. Create a cleaning regime that flexes to your capacity requirements – clean used rooms to an excellent standard, but don't waste time and money completing tasks in unused rooms purely for the sake of process
6. Ensure service providers have a strong network of cleaners and are flexible in their approach
7. Make sure your housekeeping team is aligned with your brand values

What is “economising” on cleaning really costing you?

Hoteliers need to be cost conscious and efficient to remain competitive in today’s market. But would cutting cleaning costs genuinely save money? Or do you pay a price for the bottom line saving?

Based on 100 bed hotel, if you were to cut one minute off the cleaning time of each room every day, you could save around £4,864 per annum.

However, reducing the minutes per room by just one minute is, on average, a 4 per cent reduction of the cleaning time per room, and as it is unlikely that any of the housekeeping tasks previously allocated can be dropped, this means corners may have to be cut. Cutting corners on housekeeping leaves hotels vulnerable to potentially very damaging online reviews⁷ – and with 90 per cent of travellers saying they avoid booking hotels labelled as “dirty” in online reviews and every bad review potentially losing 30 customers⁸, this is a high risk strategy.

If a hotel was to increase its occupancy rate by just 1% on the back of positive reviews, it could generate an additional £25,550 revenue per annum – far in excess of what could be saved by ‘economising’ on cleaning.

(based on 70% occupancy rate,
a 100 room hotel and £100 ADR)



Outsourced Vs. In-house Housekeeping?

There is a strong business case for ensuring cleaning is carried out to the highest standard and for outsourcing cleaning provision.

While it is argued that it is a necessity rather than a means of competitive advantage, cleaning is clearly a big deal for hotel guests who place a priority on this above anything else – so cleanliness must be prioritised! There are many distinctive benefits of outsourcing cleaning to a specialist supplier including a flexible approach, recruitment and training and utilising their expertise as well as reducing overheads and contributing to the bottom line.

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Benefits of outsourcing housekeeping services:

- Cleanliness is a key driver and indicator of **customer satisfaction**
- Working in partnership with an outsourced supplier can reduce overheads and increase revenues
- Working with a specialist cleaning provider delivers additional value on the cost of housekeeping services because sickness cover, HR and other personnel costs are absorbed by the supplier.
- Outsourcing guarantees that responsibility for cleaning regardless of circumstances, such as staff illness or turnover, lies with the provider and not the hotel, so standards and continuity of service can be guaranteed
- An outsourced supplier can bring improved methods and cleaning techniques
- High housekeeping and cleanliness standards can potentially increase brand loyalty and customer retention due to increased satisfaction and trust
- An effective cleaning strategy can provide organisations with added value in terms of repeat business, referrals and positive reviews

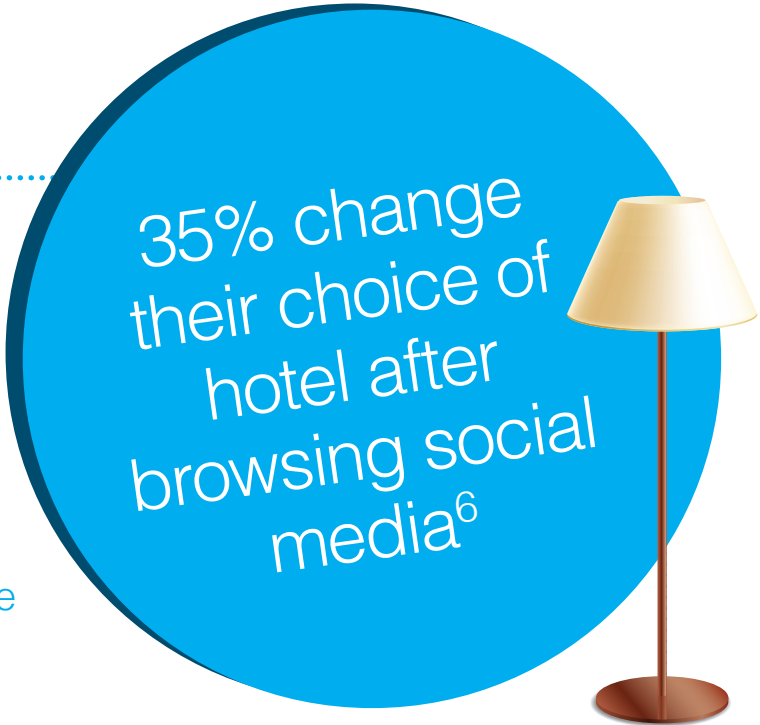
Conclusions

With occupancy levels and room rates set to fall this year, combined with over supply in some areas, hotels need to look at how they can add value to the guest experience in order to gain and retain their customers.

Consumers have more choice than ever but less disposable income so how and where they spend their money is paramount. Couple this with freely available information both online and via social media and the hotel brands that have positive reviews will be the ones most likely to succeed.

The challenge for hotels is how to ensure they create a positive guest experience and generate positive reviews given increased levels of competition and testing market conditions. Cleanliness is clearly a big deal for consumers and research shows that an unhappy customer is unlikely to complain about dirty facilities but will simply not return, whilst others take to travel websites to voice their negative views. Having an effective housekeeping strategy that has high standards of cleanliness at its core is a positive way for a hotel to gain a competitive advantage in terms of repeat business, referrals and positive reviews.

Working in partnership with an outsourced service supplier can provide a wide range of benefits. Outsourcing housekeeping services may be seen as an additional cost but for key services such as front of house and room cleaning outsourcing can add value and create efficiencies including cost reduction, staffing flexibility, recruitment and training, quality assurance and time. The cost benefits of outsourcing these services and delivering an effective cleaning strategy provides a strong argument for improving guest satisfaction as well as contributing to the bottom line.



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About emprise

Emprise is a leading support services provider specialising in cleaning and security since 1986. The company has a turnover of £90 million and employs around 8,000 people.

Emprise has been working in the hospitality sector with clients ranging from luxury Knightsbridge hotels to national business and leisure groups for over a decade. Consequently, we have the experience and expertise required to design and deliver the best possible cleaning solutions for hotel environments, ensuring efficiency, quality and cost.

Emprise continually develops its operational model and delivery methods to ensure the company continues to meet clients' diverse and evolving needs. This involves working to output specification models offering efficiency and flexibility and helping many organisations manage their environmental impact via green cleaning services.

Emprise clients include De Vere, Hilton, Puma Hotels, the National Theatre, Royal Albert Hall, John Lewis, Waitrose, Derwent London, DTZ, MWB Exchange and David Lloyd Leisure.

To find out more about Emprise or for an informal discussion with a member of our team please call us on 020 7549 0800 or visit our website www.emprise.co.uk





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To learn more about how Emprise can help you to create a better hotel experience and improve your guests' satisfaction with your hotel, get in touch with Emprise today

Call **020 7549 0800** and quote **"hotel cleaning"**

Or for more information about our company visit

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