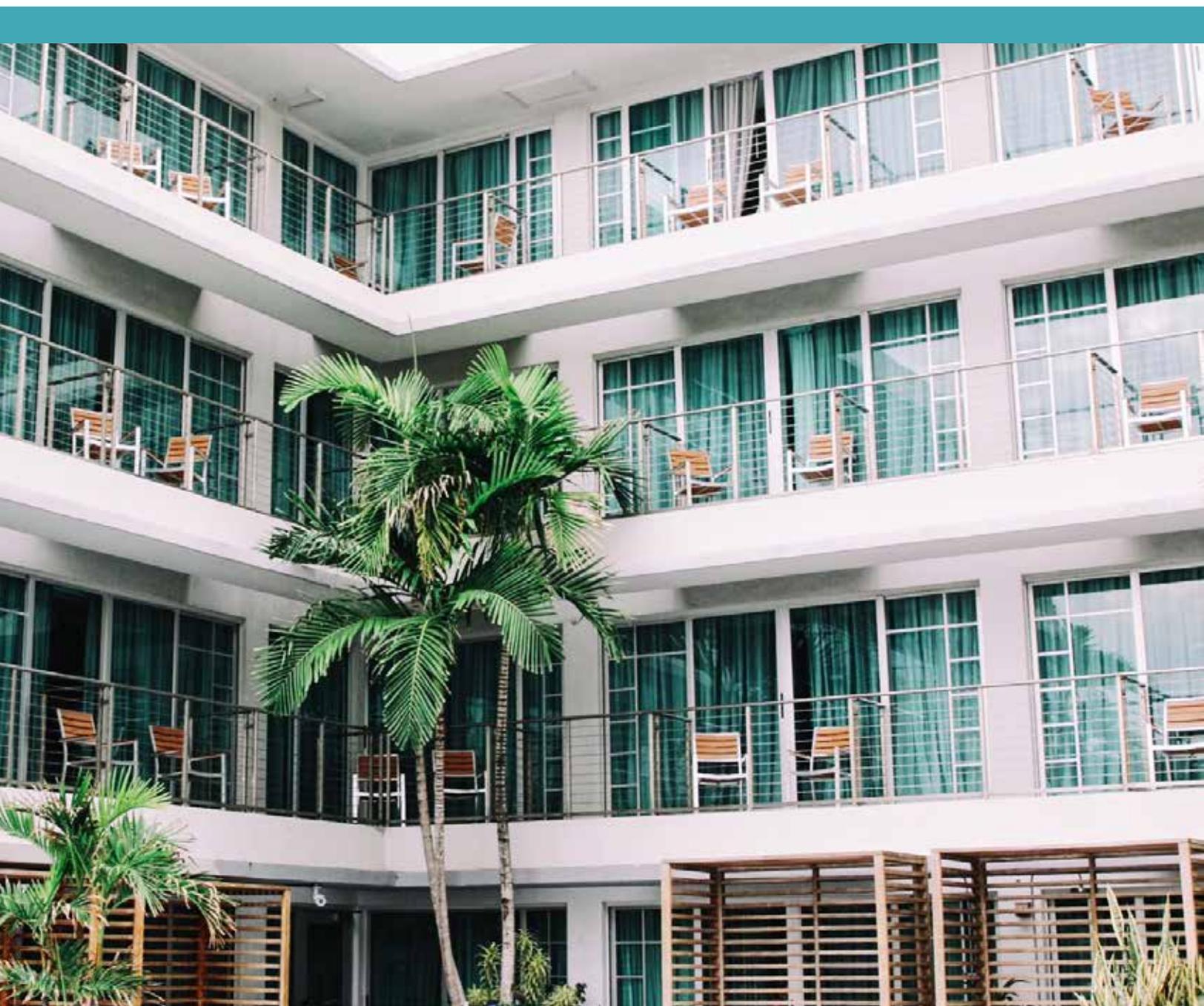




7 Ways to SELL MORE of your Technology to Hotels, MORE OFTEN

By Jennifer Nagy, President of [JLNPR Inc.](#)



There are literally hundreds of articles on every hotel industry news source about how hotels can improve their marketing to potential guests, increase their ROI, secure more customers, etc. Unfortunately for vendors who are marketing their product or service to hotels, there is much less information available on effective B2B marketing tactics.

That's where I come in...

My agency, JLNPR, specializes in B2B marketing in the hospitality industry. When many competitors offer similar products within the same marketplace (like in the case of technology vendors in the hospitality industry), credibility and brand recognition are crucial to make your company/solution stand out from the crowd.

In this guide, I will tell you the seven BEST marketing tactics for increasing your company's visibility to potential hotel clients, improving your credibility and brand recognition, AND boosting the ROI on your marketing spend. In short, adding these seven tactics to your marketing strategy today will help you to **SELL MORE, MORE OFTEN.**



So, let's just right in with the first marketing tactic...

Public Relations

Public relations (PR) is a highly effective tactic for B2B technology companies in the hospitality industry, as it builds brand awareness and credibility with potential customers, which will shorten a company's sales cycle over the long-term – all at a fraction of the cost of traditional marketing. I have personally seen the phenomenal impact that public relations can have on a company's financial success, especially for start-ups.

As in the hospitality industry, when there are many competitors trying to sell similar products/services to hotels worldwide, a company's credibility and the customer's prior knowledge of and trust in the brand become very important factors when making a purchase decision.

How Does PR Help Drive More Sales?

When shopping for a vendor, most hoteliers will start researching the companies that they already know and trust. If hoteliers aren't familiar with any suppliers, most will look for recommendations from trusted third parties.

Well, that is exactly what PR is – an endorsement from a journalist, who are known to be required to adhere to strict ethical standards in terms of accurate, fact-based reporting. This type of endorsement (especially if your company has secured many placements in a variety of trade industry publications) will ensure that your company is at the top of the shopping list when hotels start searching for a new supplier.

As part of a company's PR outreach, B2B companies should be regularly contacting journalists with stories about their company, product or service and/or timely industry stats/info, in an attempt to secure editorial coverage.

To learn more about how to create and implement PR campaigns that will close more sales, download JLNPR's free guide, [“How to Use PR to Boost Your Sales Without Blowing Your Budget,”](#) or visit diy.jlnpr.com.



Content Marketing

Unlike many other industries, the hotel trade media market offers a very unique opportunity for B2B companies to increase their exposure. While many outlets publish their own original content (written by their staff reporters), many hospitality industry publications - especially online - are willing to publish articles written by guest authors, giving companies a fantastic platform on which to interact with and educate potential customers on the company's area of expertise.

Content marketing is a very successful marketing strategy for B2B vendors; to execute your strategy, you can write expert articles and submit them to media outlets for publication. The articles should be how-to articles (or similar) that provide hoteliers with easy-to-execute tips on how to improve their operations, increase occupancy/revenue, etc. - focus on any specific benefits that are provided by your product or service.

For example, if your company sells revenue management technology, you could write articles about how hotels can improve their revenue management strategies to increase bookings and revenue, how hotels can use technology to up their revenue management game, the components of an effective RMS, etc.

There is literally no limit to the type of educational content that you can provide to your potential customers via the hotel trade media outlets.

Vendor-Neutral Content

A huge caveat is that **your articles cannot be self-promotional**. All articles published (free of cost) with the hotel trade publications must be vendor-neutral.

Other than your company name in your byline and a boilerplate (an 'About Us' section at the bottom of the article), there can be no mention of your company or your products by name in the article.

What are the Benefits of Content Marketing?

Over time, hotels will realize that the content that they find so helpful is written by your CEO (or media representative), creating brand awareness and firmly establishing your company as an expert in your area of expertise (specifically, the problem/operational process that your product or service solves).

As with PR, when a hotel is shopping for the products or services that you offer, their brand recognition will put your company at the front of their list of vendors.

Once the initial information request is made by a potential customer, there is another important benefit from PR and content marketing: your sales cycle will also be shortened drastically because the potential client already knows your level of expertise and trusts your company (because of the high-quality educational articles that you've published).

To create the most visibility from your expert articles, they should also be posted on your company's blog (on your website) and shared via your social media sites.



Blogging

Your blog should also be used to share informational articles from other sources (never your indirect or direct competitors!) as additional resources for potential customers to learn about your industry. The goal is to make your blog a destination for hotels to learn about all aspects of running a successful hotel, including your specific area of expertise.

Best Practices

- You can share some promotional type material on your blog, but it should never account for more than 30% of your content.
- Promotional content should never be posted consecutively [with other promotional posts].
- Good content to share on your blog about your company includes updates about new products, services, upgrades to any current products, new clients, other company news, sales or other promotions being offered, etc.

With regular updates and with consistency, potential clients will know to come back to your blog to find out about the latest tips and information that you are sharing.



Conferences & Industry Events

Industry conferences are a fantastic way to meet potential clients face-to-face, which helps to develop relationships much more quickly than email or phone contact alone. As such, these relationships are more likely to make a potential customer more receptive to your sales pitch.

Whether you are choosing to sell to international flagged brands or small, independent hotels, there are conferences that are better suited to your specific niche.

Unless you have millions of marketing dollars at your disposal (which is becoming more and more infrequent nowadays), I would recommend only selecting only the top two to three annual conferences that will appeal to your target audience.

With conferences, 'quality over quantity' should be your mantra because it does take a significant amount of money to make your booth (and your product) stand out amongst the hundreds (or even thousands) of other suppliers attempting to reach the same audience, at the same event.

There are three options for possible involvement in industry events and conferences, and I recommend that B2B companies consider including all three at every event in which they choose to participate (if possible).



Conferences & Industry Events

EXHIBITING

Your B2B company should be exhibiting during the trade show portion of the top industry conferences.

Best Practices

- To stand out, create a booth with a strong brand image, as well as lots of interesting/engaging visuals.
- Before the conference, spend a great deal of time developing collateral that will appeal specifically to the attendees of this conference.
- Reach out to your marketing list and invite them to arrange meetings/demos with you on-site.
- Consider planning an on-site event that will bring potential customers to your booth; food and cocktails are always very popular with conference attendees so if you have the budget, consider organizing a cocktail party or a special dinner to entice visitors to your booth.



Conferences & Industry Events

SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES

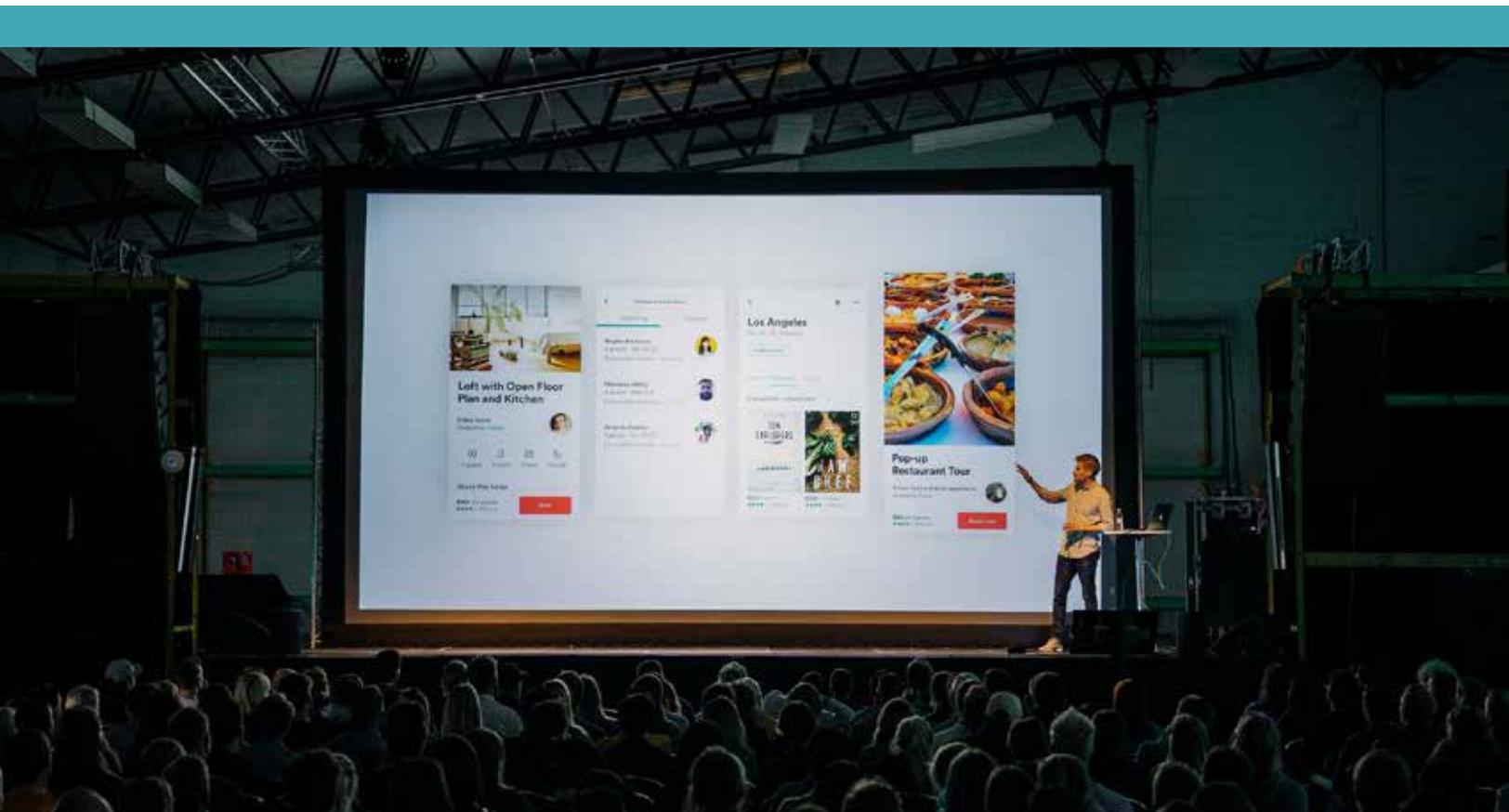
You should also consider applying to be a keynote speaker or participate in an expert panel at your selected conferences.

Key Benefits

Speaking opportunities give you the opportunity to demonstrate your expertise in your subject matter of choice, making any potential customers who are listening more apt to trust you, your company and respond more favorably to your sales pitch at a later date. Speaking opportunities are also a great way to secure trade media coverage (I'll go into more detail on this in a moment).

How to Secure Speaking Opportunities

- Most conference organizers start planning the event (including selecting the keynote and panel topics and presenters) at least six months – or, sometimes, even up to a year - in advance, so you need to start your outreach in advance as well.
- Some conferences require a specific application package to be completed, while others simply request that you send an email outlining your proposed speech topic.
- Either way, you will need to have a specific topic/angle in mind to be considered. Consider what info conference attendees would need to/want to learn during the event and work your proposal around that subject matter. The more interesting your topic to potential attendees, the more likely you will be to secure a speaking opportunity at the event.



Conferences & Industry Events

MEDIA OUTREACH

Finally, conferences offer a fantastic opportunity to secure media coverage for your company and/or product/service. At most larger conferences, organizers invite trade media from around the world to attend and cover the event. Many publications even publish dedicated conference issues so they are always in need of interesting stories to share.

Benefits of On-Site Media Outreach

- More likely to drive traffic to your booth, as it creates on-site visibility.
- It will also help your company to develop stronger relationships with media that will yield even greater coverage over time. Like with potential customers, it is harder to say no to someone who you've met in person so use this opportunity to meet as many journalists who cover your industry as possible.

Before starting to pitch, it is important that you decide upon an interesting angle for your company's presence at the event:

- Are you launching a new product?
- Have you moved in a new strategic direction?
- Are you planning an interesting/fun event at your booth?
- Is your product changing the way that hotels operate?

All of these angles could interest media in interviewing your company's spokesperson, on-site, during the event.



5 Steps to Secure Media Coverage at Industry Events

STEP
1

Reach out to the event organizers at least a month before the event and ask if they would be willing to share the list of confirmed media attendees. In most cases, the event organizers are happy to share this info, especially with their confirmed exhibitors.

STEP
2

In the same email, ask the organizers about their process for issuing media passes to the event, as you should invite all your other media contacts in the region to attend and, help them to secure their complimentary media passes.

STEP
3

Once you have the list, reach out to each journalist with a short email introducing your company and product/service, and outlining your unique story angle. Invite them to come by your booth and meet with you and/or view a product demo.

STEP
4

If you have an international trade media list (or you work with a PR firm who does), reach out to all other media to find out if they are planning the conference, and if not, invite them to attend. Offer to secure them a media pass to the event (which can be obtained from the conference organizers). The few minutes that it takes to secure their media pass can be highly beneficial; journalists are much more likely to book an interview and run a story about your company when you've helped them out.

STEP
5

If you can, confirm a time for the media interview in advance of the conference because journalists' schedules do fill up quickly. To keep organized, create a schedule for your spokesperson, which includes all pertinent information about each interview (i.e. outlet name and description, name and contact info of journalist, angle of story, demo request, etc.) and keep it updated as new media interviews are added.

Pro
TIP

Media who are covering industry events and conferences are typically on a VERY short deadline – sometimes, as short as a few hours. Coverage in the daily publications gives companies extra visibility - which can drastically increase foot traffic to your booth - but, most of these journalists must finish their stories before the end of the business day. To make sure you don't miss any opportunities, make sure that you have all of your media materials and visuals (i.e. images, headshots, videos, press kits, etc.) ready before the event.

Whitepapers

A whitepaper is a more in-depth marketing piece that is designed to educate potential customers on how to solve a business problem that they may encounter. Ideally, the topic of the whitepaper should be related to your product offering or service capabilities. In most whitepapers, readers expect an in-depth review of the topic, which is supported by research and references.

Key Benefits

- Whitepapers can generate a great deal of PR exposure, both on the short and long-term, for a business, especially if they provide new, timely information or statistics that could be of use for media covering the hotel industry.
- Whitepapers also offer the chance to demonstrate the company's expertise and generate new business leads.

MORE WHITEPAPERS = MORE SALES LEADS



RECOMMENDATION: One whitepaper per quarter

Whitepaper 101

When writing your whitepaper, your goal should be to educate readers about the business problem/issue and how it can be solved; of course, your technology product or service should be what will help them to solve the problem but, remember, whitepapers cannot be a sales pitch.

Instead of blatantly selling your product, your whitepaper should provide more generalized information about solutions that are available; although you can't say your product's name, you should be recommending that the reader chooses ONLY a tech solution that includes your product's USPs.

For example, if your company is the only company offering a machine learning-based RMS, then your whitepaper should recommend that hotels NEED an RMS with machine learning capabilities or else they risk leaving revenue on the table.

At the end of the whitepaper, you should include an 'About Us' section, which provides more specific info about your company and product/service.

Best Practices

- In general, whitepapers should be approx. 5 to 10 pages long and should include illustrations, charts, infographics, etc.
- The whitepaper must be designed by a graphic designer to match the style of your company's branding and website.
- The writing should be clear, concise and professional.
- It is very important that the content is fact-checked and thoroughly reviewed to catch any grammar or spelling issues. Any errors can greatly diminish the credibility of your company and decrease the ROI of your whitepaper.

Distribution

- Once completed, the whitepaper should be uploaded to your website and accessible from a special landing page. On this landing page, you should include a brief outline of the whitepaper topic and a call-to-action.
- To download the whitepaper, readers must provide their contact info (typically, name, telephone number, email address and company name), which helps to build your company's marketing list.
- Make sure that you promote the whitepaper (and the landing page link) via all your other marketing channels, including website homepage, email marketing, social media, PR outreach, etc.



Webinars

Webinars are another very effective tool for generating both PR opportunities and new business leads. Like a whitepaper, webinars are designed to educate listeners on a particular topic or issue and provide a solution if necessary. Also like whitepaper content, the **webinar cannot be a sales pitch for your product or service** or else you risk losing listeners' interest and credibility.

5 Important Things to Consider when Planning a Webinar:

- 1 What is the topic of your whitepaper?
- 2 As well as your key executives, you will want to consider inviting one or two other guest speakers to provide a more well-rounded presentation on your chosen topic.
- 3 Platform to use to create and present webinar.
- 4 Marketing (how you'll get people to sign up for your webinar). Like with a whitepaper, you should create a landing page on your website where people can register for the upcoming webinar, by providing their contact info (again, helping to grow your marketing list). Publicize the webinar in all your marketing channels, including social media, PR outreach, email blasts, on your website's homepage and with any potential customers that you contact prior to the event.
- 5 Creation of content and visuals. Your webinar slides should include high-level points/stats that you can reference while you are speaking. Include graphics, charts, etc. to ensure that your slides are visually appealing, interesting and easy to understand.



RECOMMENDATION: At least one webinar per year - but if you have the resources, one webinar per quarter would yield EVEN better results

Industry Surveys

Industry surveys are an effective way to collect industry information that will benefit your company in many ways, including introducing the company and its products/services to key decision makers and influencers, building a potential list of sales leads and providing real industry data for ongoing PR efforts.

The goal with a survey is to discover information (especially stats) that would be timely and of interest to potential customers and media in the hospitality industry.

Copywriting Best Practices

- Keep the survey short - no more than 10 to 15 questions - as any more could make respondents less likely to want to complete the survey.
- Use a combination of multiple choice and long-form questions.

Marketing Best Practices

The difference between success and failure when doing an industry survey is how you market the survey because, to get accurate results, you need many respondents.

- You should send an email to your entire marketing list requesting that they complete the survey.
- Ask your social media followers to do the same.
- Offer an incentive for people to complete your survey. Consider entering all respondents' names into a draw for a desirable product (like an iPad), a financial prize or a discount.
- Also, let anyone know who completes the survey that you will send the results via email once the data is compiled. That can be an added incentive for people to complete the survey.
- Once the data analysis is complete, share the results with everyone who answered the survey, your marketing list and your entire trade media list. If your survey results are interesting and timely enough, you should be able to generate quite a bit of media exposure, both over the long and short term.



RECOMMENDATION: One industry survey per year

And that's it... the top SEVEN ways for your company to boost the ROI on your marketing strategies and

SELL MORE OF YOUR PRODUCT & SERVICE TO HOTELS.

If you have any questions about any of these marketing tactics or to find out how JLNPR can help your company increase your visibility with the audiences that matter most, please contact me at

jenn@jlnpr.com or visit www.jlnpr.com.

If you'd prefer to implement these strategies yourself, check out DIY.JLNPR's online course, "**PR That Closes Sales**," which offers step-by-step instructions on how to execute your own B2B hospitality PR and content marketing campaign.

Learn more at diy.jlnpr.com.





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About JLNPR Inc.

JLNPR Inc. is a full-service public relations and marketing agency that lives and breathes all facets of the travel technology industry. From online travel agencies to revenue management systems, tablet-based aviation automation solutions to IFE technology, hotels to airlines and everything in between, JLNPR uses our knowledge and experience to get your B2B travel technology company noticed by media, influencers and potential customers – and whenever possible, without the overused, often abused press release. We also ghost-write exciting, educational articles that are published (in our client's name) by top hotel industry media outlets, which will boost your company's visibility with potential customers, improve potential customers' brand awareness and increase sales.

Learn more about our services at www.jlnpr.com.

About DIY.JLNPR

If you'd prefer to DIY your company's PR, DIY.JLNPR is the answer! Registration is now open for DIY.JLNPR's online course, **PR That Closes Sales**, which teaches hospitality technology vendors how to implement the EXACT PR and content marketing strategies that JLNPR uses to boost clients' visibility, brand awareness and increase sales of their product or service.

The course includes 25+ step-by-step, online video lessons, as well as easy-to-use document templates (making it easy for you to create the PR materials that you'll need), and provides access to the exclusive DIY.JLNPR Facebook group, where you can work directly with the instructor in completing your first campaign, network with other students and read other free articles/info about hospitality industry PR, marketing and content marketing best practices.

In short, the DIY.JLNPR course gives you ALL the tools and personal support that you will need to close more sales of your technology product or service to hotels, using PR and content marketing.

Register TODAY to save 10%, gain access to exclusive bonus lessons and materials and get a free one-hour Skype consultation with Jennifer Nagy, the instructor (\$250 value!). This special bonus is only available for a limited time so [register for PR That Closes Sales here now](#).