

THE KEY TO SUCCESSFUL GUEST ENGAGEMENT

Best practices for collecting guest data

Your reservations and front desk team play pivotal roles in building memorable guest experiences *and* collecting valuable data for your data-driven marketing efforts. Discover how to elevate the quality of your data and maximize your bottom line.



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In the competitive world of hospitality, connecting with customers through personalized experiences is more important than ever. Of course, your frontline staff plays a huge role in creating memorable experiences that support your brand and keep guests coming back. But did you know that they also play a significant role in the success of your marketing strategies? The accuracy and completeness of the data collected at reservations and the front desk can make or break your marketing efforts and how they resonate with audiences. That's why it's crucial to establish effective touchpoints between these teams and your marketing department to identify data-collection best practices for your property.

The importance of accurate data

Experienced hoteliers and marketers know that data is more than just numbers; it's the catalyst that can transform your guest experiences and turn marketing campaigns into powerful communications. Accurate data equips you with insights into the nuances of guest preferences, behaviors, and expectations. These insights are fundamental, allowing you to tailor content that strikes a chord with your guests. Then, you can elevate guest engagement, foster loyalty, and propel revenue through this personal connection.

The power of teamwork

Your reservations team or front desk staff are the first to interact with your guests. These service-driven specialists are uniquely positioned to communicate with guests and collect valuable information to enhance their experience throughout their stay. Every inquiry, reservation, check-in, and check-out presents an opportunity to create a comprehensive picture of your guests and personalize their stay experience. But it doesn't end there. This data is also invaluable to your marketing team, constantly looking for meaningful ways to connect to new and existing audiences.

Data for data's sake is not the goal, of course. Accurate and focused data is crucial; your reservations and front-desk teams must capture it diligently. No matter how small, every piece of data has significance for both service and marketing potential. For instance, documenting a guest's preference for room type or amenity may seem trivial, but it can lead to targeted and high-performing marketing strategies. Remember that the level of detail and personal attention your frontline teams provide can enrich your data and create a



80%

of consumers are more likely to buy from brands that offer personalized experiences.

[EPSILON](#)

persuasive portrayal of your guests. This clear picture, in turn, can inspire your marketing team on new ways to entice guests back.

Creating a collaborative data collection process

We've established the importance of data collection and accuracy, but how do you work through when, how, and what data is collected? The short answer: together. Reservations, front desk, and marketing teams must collaborate to identify the most relevant data points shaping a guest's on-site experience and ongoing marketing strategies. Each team navigates different parts of the guest experience and, through discussion, can create a more holistic understanding of the guest journey, including how best to collect valuable data.

Fostering a culture of communication and collaboration between your marketing department, reservations, and front desk staff improves outcomes. Envision a two-way street where information flows seamlessly between teams, enhancing the precision and usefulness of your data. Encourage regular team huddles and interactive sessions that bridge the gap between these key players. This way, everyone knows what kind of data needs to be collected and its role in shaping the complete cycle of a guest's experience before, during, and after their stay.

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To ensure alignment, provide regular training and workshops that underline the importance of each data point and how it contributes to the broader narrative. Incorporate feedback loops and continue refining both the data and your collections processes. Collaborating and problem-solving can transform your data and the resulting experiences and marketing into a personalized dialogue that resonates with your guests.

A well-rounded approach to data collection thrives on shared insights and collective progress. It's about understanding that the pathway to a robust marketing campaign is paved with accurate and complete data, and this is a journey that requires the involvement of everyone on the team.

Best Practices for Collecting Guest Data

Guest data is a valuable asset for any property. Still, it can only be effective when collected accurately and efficiently. We see properties of all sizes struggle with the basics of data collection, resulting in inaccurate or incomplete data that is difficult to use effectively. To ensure your data is as clean and usable as possible, consider integrating the best practices into your data collection systems and processes.

Reservations data collection

Whether future guests complete reservations online or via phone, you may miss opportunities to gather valuable data before their stay. Here are some things to consider as you evaluate your reservation processes.

1. Progressive data collection. To avoid overwhelming guests, implement a progressive data collection strategy that gathers high-value data first. Email addresses, phone numbers, and preferred names or pronouns can provide a strong foundation.

2. Clear Value Proposition. Communicate the benefits of providing details. Guests are likelier to share their information when they know it will improve their experience, like getting personalized recommendations or exclusive offers.

3. Mobile Optimization. For guests who prefer to reserve online, ensure a seamless experience, regardless of their screen size. Make it easy to provide the information you need for their stay and to communicate with them later.

Front desk data collection

The front desk is the most important link to effective data collection outside the reservations team. All front-desk team members are instrumental in the success of data collection efforts and guest outreach initiatives. To create the most robust data set, consider these tips and tricks.

1. Prioritize. At check-in, confirm the accuracy of the most valuable data — spelling of first/last name, home addresses, and preferred email addresses.

2. Develop scripts. Consider developing scripts as part of your front desk training program to help your staff collect guest data with respectful and compelling verbiage.

3. Celebrate wins. Be sure to highlight the team's progress on data collection in your weekly meetings. Show how their efforts have impact. (HMA's data analysis service includes data quality report cards. Ask us about them.)

4. Create a data culture. To increase awareness and sustain the effort, encourage leaders and managers to reinforce data collection as a business priority.

5. Make it fun! Create an incentive program and reward your team for their efforts. Data-driven marketing successes include everyone who made it possible. Celebrate wins as a collective team.

Front desk scripting options

Your front desk staff plays an important role in your data collection efforts. Prepare them for anything by role-playing or providing helpful scripts demonstrating your expectations. While you can't anticipate every scenario, they'll feel confident knowing what to say and how to address resistance if it comes up.



83%

of consumers
are willing to share
their data to create
a more personalized
experience.

[ACCENTURE](#)



Personalization
can reduce
customer acquisition
costs by up to

50%.

[ADWEEK](#)

Scenario 1: Guest provides requested information. The Front Desk Agent presents the guest with a Registration Card. “Please confirm that we have your home address correct?” Or “May I please have your home address?”

Scenario 2: Guest questions your request for information. Guest: “Why do you want my home address?” Front Desk Agent: “Primarily, we collect home address information for security purposes. If you leave anything behind, we would like to be able to notify you.”

Scenario 3: Guest becomes confrontational. The guest continues to refuse to give their home address. Front Desk Agent: “We ask for this information for security purposes and if you leave something behind. However, if you prefer to leave your business information on file, I would happily complete the check-in using your office address.”

Scenario 4: Asking for guest email addresses. If a guest questions why you are obtaining their email address, consider this an appropriate response. Front Desk Agent: “Our property has an Opt-in Policy to protect customers from unwanted email. Guests are invited to join the email contact program and can opt-out anytime. Special promotions are available every season, and it’s a great way to learn about them!”

Clean data is usable data

The phrase “garbage in, garbage out” certainly applies to data-driven communications. These are the best practices of data entry for all data entry teams.

Name Fields

- Enter both First Name and Last Name
- For First Name avoid using initials or abbreviations (e.g., R.J. or Rob for Robert)
- No salutations (e.g., Mr., Mrs., Dr.)
- Confirm that the company name appears in the *company field*

Address Fields

- Use *no punctuation* in the address; no periods, commas, dashes, slashes.
- Enter the house/building number and street name in the *first address field*
- Enter numbered streets completely (e.g., 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th)
- Indicate Street, Road, Avenue, etc.; include directional as appropriate.
- Streets *must* use postal standards: AVE, BLVD, CIR, CT, FWY, HWY, LN, MNR, PKY, RD, ST, TPK. No punctuation. Exceptions include unique names and spellings, including Courte, Camino, Caminitio, and Avenida.
- Enter *directionals* without punctuation: N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, NW
- Enter the apartment, floor, or suite number in the *second address field*.
- Enter company addresses in the *company address field*; include suite number (e.g., Ste. 100) *after* street address; use floor number (e.g., Fl. 3) only as a last resort
- Populate city, state, and zip code fields
- Verify all address details
- *Refrain from entering miscellaneous notes in the name or address fields.*

Common data collection pitfalls

We've seen it all as guest data analysis, cleansing, and augmentation experts. If your data isn't providing you the access or effective outreach to your guests you expect, take a look at your processes. Here are common data-collection pitfalls:

- **Incomplete or inaccurate guest information** like incorrect phone or email addresses.
- **No essential guest preferences or interests** that can help personalize communication.
- **Lack of consistency** in data entry processes across the team.
- **Failure to verify and update** guest information on a regular basis.
- **Inadequate training** on data entry protocols.

By addressing these common pitfalls, you can improve your data collection practices, leading to informed staff, successful marketing campaigns, and happy guests.

Get your teams involved

Changing processes and mindsets can be hard work. How do you get everyone on board? Here are ways to align teams on the importance and value of accurate data collection.

1. Conduct regular training sessions. Consider conducting regular training sessions with all teams to educate them about the importance of accurate data collection. Use these sessions to explain how marketing communications — with precisely captured data — can shape guest experiences and your property's bottom line.

2. Share success stories. Sharing success stories of marketing campaigns that were successful due to accurate data can help employees understand the significance of their role in collecting data.

3. Use visual aids. Try using tactics such as checklists, infographics, and videos to explain the importance of accurate data collection to reinforce your messages. These visuals can help employees understand the need and prioritize their efforts.

5. Conduct regular audits. Regular audits help identify any gaps in data collection and ensure that employees follow established protocols. These audits can help improve your data's accuracy and, ultimately, the effectiveness of your efforts.

Ready to get started?

No time like the present! Use the flier on page 7 as a starting point for a conversation about cleaner, more valuable data with your teams and how they enable effective marketing campaigns that drive increased sales.

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“It's inevitable that data will continue become a bigger part of our day-to-day work.”

[REVZIN & REVZIN](#)

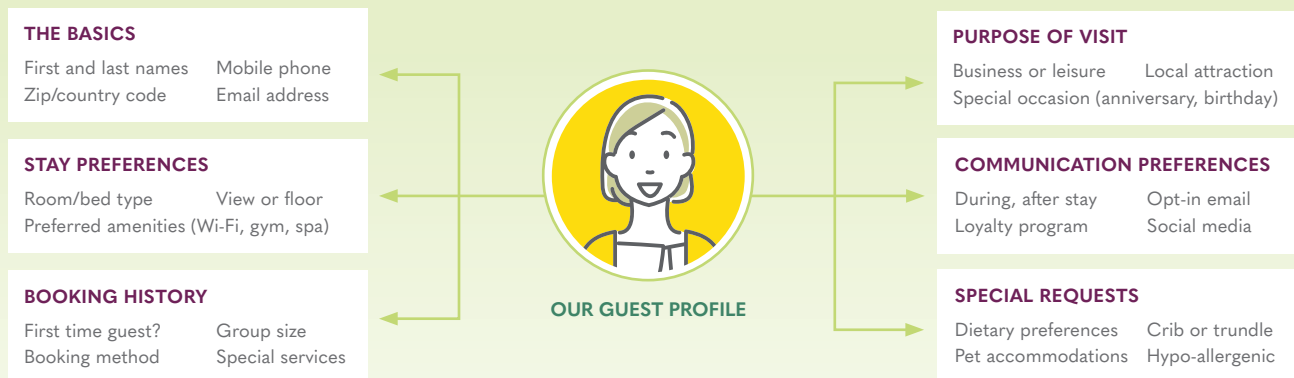
Interested in knowing how your data rates? Call us and inquire about our data analysis, cleansing, and augmentation. We're ready to take your data from raw and incomplete to accurate and actionable. Let us help you unlock the full potential of your data and take your business to the next level. Contact HMA^o Intelligent Marketing to learn more.

Clean Data Delights Guests

Capturing the right guest data accurately and completely is the key to creating magical moments for our guests before, during, and after their stay. Let's make every detail count and keep our standards sky-high. Thank you for being champions of guest experiences!

GUEST DATA THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Whether you support reservations, guest services, or marketing communications, data is everything. These data points are especially valuable in wow-ing our guests and boosting our bottom line.



KEEP YOUR EYE OUT FOR COMMON PITFALLS

Things can get hectic, especially in hospitality. But don't let your diligence and attention to detail falter. Data is only valuable when captured accurately. Let's all do our part!

1. ACCURACY ALWAYS!

Double-check all information entered into the system, especially first and last names, email addresses, and zip codes. We can use these data points to entice guests back for future visits.

2. COMPLETENESS COUNTS

Collect as much data as possible during check-in, including special requests, preferences, and payment details. The more data we collect, the better equipped we will be to create memorable experiences.

3. TIMELY UPDATES

Keep reservations and guest profiles up-to-date. Be sure to follow protocols for making revisions as needed. Communicate changes promptly to prevent discrepancies and keep our teams in sync.

QUALITY DATA LEADS TO QUALITY GUEST COMMUNICATION AND EXPERIENCES.
AND YOU MAKE THE DIFFERENCE!



With 40 years of expertise in data and hospitality, **HMA° Intelligent Marketing** transforms your data into a strategic asset. Our proprietary services include data cleansing, analysis, and segmentation, providing refined insights for agile decision-making. Our diverse team of analysts, engineers, designers, and strategists ensures a fusion of innovation and creativity, driving your marketing goals to reality. We guide you through each data management phase, aiming to be an extension of your team. Whether it's email campaigns, brand refresh, or strategic planning, let us handle the challenges of your integrated-data marketing, allowing you to focus on operational excellence, delighting your guests, and growing your bottom line. **Contact us to discuss your unique needs.**

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