

**TripAdvisor response to HOTREC's 10 principles relating to hotel review providers
February 14, 2011**

1. Editorial control

Travelers put their trust in TripAdvisor's reviews and we take the responsibility of earning and maintaining that trust very seriously. We have a zero tolerance policy for fraud, and work constantly and diligently to maintain the high integrity that travelers expect from our content.

TripAdvisor employs a team of moderators that examine questionable reviews. We also use automated tools on the site that help flag questionable content for review, and our large and passionate community of millions of travelers are an invaluable resource in helping to detect anomalies and maintain our high standards.

However, with tens of millions of reviews and more than one million hotels, restaurants and attractions on TripAdvisor; it would be almost impossible to conclusively fact check each of the details of every review submitted millions of travelers. Travelers add an average of 21 reviews and opinions to TripAdvisor every minute and we believe that the sheer volume of reviews allows travelers to get the facts, spot trends among reviews and determine whether a property is right for them.

2. Prevention of manipulation

TripAdvisor's policies are established and clear, with more than ten years of practice underpinning their effectiveness. Reviews must be based on the traveler's experience, not second-hand information or hearsay (unverified information, rumors or quotations from other sources or the reported opinions/experience of others). All reviews on the site are identified as to their source, either by TripAdvisor member user name or by indication of third-party site source.

TripAdvisor only accepts reviews from travelers who have a travel-related experience with the hotel. Travel-related experiences can occur without ever staying at the hotel, and we believe that allowing reviews of reservations processes, cancellation policies and other factors provides valuable information to the traveling public, and benefits the hospitality industry by helping travelers to find the property that is best suited to their own particular needs.

TripAdvisor's popularity ranking system is kept highly confidential to prevent manipulation by outside parties. The ranking system takes into account a very large number of variables derived from the user-generated content on the site.

3. Quality assurance

TripAdvisor launched the Owners' Center (www.tripadvisor.com/owners) in 2009, giving property owners and managers an unprecedented ability to control and correct the descriptions and details of their properties' listings on TripAdvisor. Owners/managers can add to, or subtract from, their lists of services and amenities at any time, keeping the information current and accurate, thereby setting accurate expectations and promoting a better, more relevant selection by travelers.

The TripAdvisor review submission form includes a list of amenities that are pre-selected with their default setting set to "don't know," so that travelers will comment on only the amenities with which they have experience. The content for which TripAdvisor is most widely known, and which has contributed to the ranking of TripAdvisor as the world's largest travel site, is the open text that all travelers are encouraged to contribute.

4. Anonymity

TripAdvisor members provide registration information for their member account and agree to legally binding terms and conditions when they submit a review on TripAdvisor.

5. Minimum number of reviews

TripAdvisor strives to provide the most useful information possible to travelers no matter where they hope to travel. To withhold potentially valuable information from a traveler, information that could help them have the perfect trip or avoid an inappropriate choice, solely on the basis of an arbitrary threshold of reviews would be a disservice to the traveling public, and would have the effect of unfairly penalizing smaller properties and the many consumers who might wish to read reviews about these properties.

6. Business relations

TripAdvisor is a media company that provides content to the traveling public, and is able to do so without charge to the traveler by the benefit of advertising revenue derived on TripAdvisor's pages. TripAdvisor offers travel suppliers effective graphical advertising and cost-per-click marketing platforms.

7. Right of reply

TripAdvisor was among the first, if not the very first, travel review site to offer properties the right to provide a management response to any review. The management response is also the last word in the discussion, as travelers are not permitted a subsequent rebuttal.

TripAdvisor provides daily updates via email to property management, after they have registered for the service, with the latest reviews for their property. Embedded in the email is one of

several links providing the opportunity for managers to quickly craft a response to the reviews mentioned therein.

8. Legal certainty

Travelers who contribute a review on TripAdvisor enter into a legal contract with TripAdvisor stating that they are representing the truth of their experiences. Hoteliers who believe that a review is a violation of TripAdvisor's terms of service can easily notify TripAdvisor via the owners' center and request the review's removal, providing explanation and justification for the request.

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“TripAdvisor wishes to ensure that reviewers are not affiliated in any way with the establishment they are reviewing. By checking this box, you certify that you are not employed by the establishment, are not related to anyone employed there, and do not otherwise have a business or personal relationship with the owners or managers of this establishment that might bias your review. In addition to being a violation of our terms of service and an unethical practice, review fraud is also prohibited by the law and regulations in many jurisdictions [see (UCP 2005/29/EC) and (FTC 16 CFR Part 255)]. In the United States, companies submitting fake reviews have been prosecuted, resulting in fines of up to \$300,000 (State of NY v. Lifestyle Lift Holding, Inc.). TripAdvisor exercises a zero tolerance policy for fake reviews. Please see our Content Integrity Policy for more information.”

9. Up-to-date data

TripAdvisor's popularity algorithm takes into account the age of reviews, and puts higher weight on the most recent reviews for a property when determining the rank of a property within its geography. TripAdvisor does not disclose the exact formulation of its popularity algorithm, but does disclose that as reviews age, their impact is lessened and the oldest reviews can be expected to have a minimal effect on the ranking.

However, TripAdvisor firmly believes that travelers can find value in older reviews and rejects the need for an arbitrary cutoff for removal from the site. Rather, we believe that in this, as with other issues, the traveler is best served if they have the benefit of choice, and can choose which reviews are the most relevant to their own situation and style of travel.

In particular, in the case of small properties with limited numbers of rooms that may not generate a high number of reviews, to remove older reviews may deprive travelers of any information about a property at all, or, at the very least, severely limit it.

10. Official star classification

TripAdvisor continues to applaud HOTREC's suggestion that official star classifications can provide a valuable point of comparison for travelers, and we ask HOTREC to help TripAdvisor procure the official listings so that we may implement them.