

LateRooms.com conveys its brand values of innovation and personal service through Google+



About LateRooms.com

- Founded in 1999
- The hotel booking specialist
- Headquartered in Manchester, UK

Background

LateRooms.com is the UK's leading online accommodation specialist, providing deals on over 55,000 properties in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world. Available in five languages, the site offers regular savings of up to 70% off the normal room rate across a variety of both independent and branded hotels.

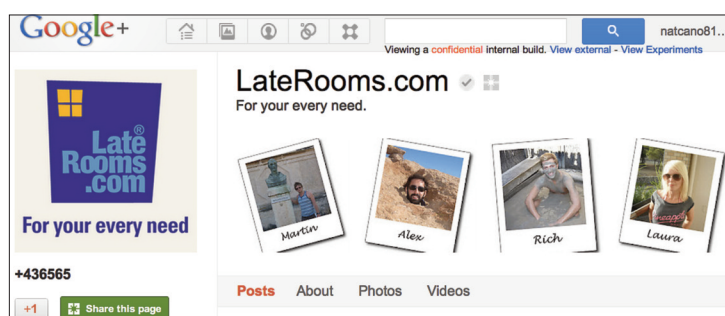
LateRooms.com aims to be a truly global brand, capable of matching customers around the planet with suitable hotel rooms throughout the world. As a dot-com, technical innovation is intrinsic to the company's core values. And while LateRooms.com does not have a bricks-and-mortar presence, it makes personalised one-to-one service a priority.

With its emphasis on innovation and personal interaction, LateRooms.com is a seriously active presence in social media and dovetails this activity with its more traditional marketing efforts both on and offline. When it learned about the worldwide reach afforded through Google+, the company was quick to embrace the channel and exploit its unique opportunities.

Google+ matches LateRooms.com's social media objectives

"Our primary social media objective is to raise the profile and brand awareness of LateRooms.com in the social spaces to make sure we're front of mind whenever anyone is thinking about hotels," says Social Media Manager Rich Kemp. Success around these objectives is measured not through clicks to the site but instead by engagement. "People aren't in the frame of mind to book a hotel when they're on social media. That's not what they're there for; they're there to socialise. So we measure success by looking at increases in the number of fans, interactions with users, the amount of times people share our content and talk about us, and the sentiment of the mentions of our brand."

When Rich began exploring Google+, he used it to discover what people were saying about LateRooms.com in particular and hotels in general in their own conversations on the channel. He then launched the brand's Google+ page, which was featured as a recommended page to follow, and the company's number of followers rapidly shot up. "They're not all from the UK like some of our other social networking platforms," Rich reports. "They're across the world, absolutely everywhere, so we are raising our profile in places where people might not have heard of us. It's important for us to really portray our brand values of being experts in travel and also a fun, personal company." The LateRooms.com page features pictures of all the members of the team, who also sign their posts and messages by name. "That's one thing that we really believe in, that people would rather speak to a person than a faceless brand."



Hangouts let LateRooms.com engage at a personal level with fans

A number of Google+ functionalities enable LateRooms.com to present its identity and messages effectively. Offering the opportunity for high-quality, easy-to-use video chat, hangouts are a feature unique to Google+. "Yes we are a worldwide brand, but you can actually come and talk to us on a one-to-one level," Rich explains. Hangouts are perfectly suited to emphasise this aspect of the LateRooms.com ethos.

LateRooms.com organised their first hangout with outdoor and adventure expert Ray Mears, live from a Destination Inspiration travel event at a top London hotel. Through it, they engaged with all of their fans who were curious to learn useful top tips about enjoying an adventurous short break.

"At LateRooms.com we're quite innovative and we're web-based, so we want to be at the forefront of social media. We try to get straight onto any new emerging trends, and Google+ is definitely one of those."

- Rich Kemp, Social Media Manager, LateRooms.com

LateRooms.com successes

- Approaching 600,000 followers
 - Posts reshared over 2,500 times
 - 500 comments per post
 - 9% CTR uplift in AdWords due to social extensions
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Travel content is inherently visual, and Rich finds the channel's treatment of imagery outstanding too. "I really like the way photos are displayed in the platform. They're given a really nice space in the stream. You don't have to click and do that extra step; you can clearly see them straightaway."

Ripples help LateRooms.com identify brand influencers

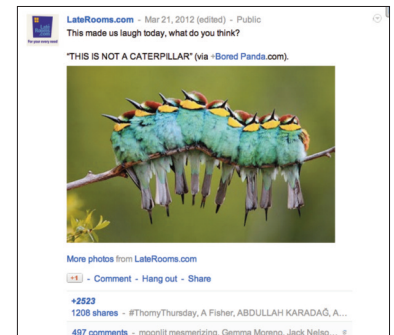
He has also used the ripples feature to see how LateRooms.com posts spread across Google+. "Ripples are a really nice feature. On the big posts that we've done that have had a lot of shares, it's really cool to drill right down and see who has made those shares, and then what interaction those people have had from sharing those posts." This is a helpful way of identifying influencers and watching how communities form around specific content.

Benefits and results so far

LateRooms.com is approaching **600,000 followers** on Google+, has had one post that has been **shared over 2,500 times** and another that's been shared 2,000 times - and counting. Both of these have garnered **500 comments**, the maximum allowed on the platform. Clearly the channel is directly addressing the company's objectives around engagement, and Rich is confident that their success has only just begun.

"We're big believers in our content," he explains. "We're not just trying to direct traffic to our website. If someone is in a social environment then you should be trying to reach them in that environment and keep them there. A lot of people put a link back to their site on every update; we don't. If someone's in Google+ we want to engage with them there in that space."

A photo of a row of birds that looked like a caterpillar and an aerial shot of a kitesurfer gliding frighteningly close to a huge whale have proved the most popular content so far. "The most effective updates that we've done are interactive, engaging, fun photos that suit the environment," says Rich. "We realise that not everyone wants to talk about hotels as much as we do, so we try to get a balance between content that's LateRooms.com-centric and interesting travel-related content that shows we've got some personality."



Next steps: getting the most out of social extensions and circles

With that well underway, LateRooms.com's next steps focus on enhancing their use of circles and social extensions. Circles make it easy to group followers so that certain messages can be shared with relevant segments. Social extensions meanwhile are helping LateRooms.com obtain a higher number of brand recommendations, +1's and direct traffic to their Google+ page, increasing their number of followers by doing so. The company started to use social extensions for its brand search campaign, benefiting from a **9% CTR uplift** so far. After seeing these great results, LateRooms.com decided to enable social extensions on all their AdWords campaigns.

With benefits like these LateRooms.com is pleased to have entered the space sooner rather than later. "There are so many social media platforms out there it's impossible for us to be everywhere," Rich says. "We have to identify the ones that are going to give us the biggest payback and be the best fit for the brand. I think Google+ is a nice fit; it's worldwide and it appeals to everyone."

About Google+

Google+ brings the benefits of personal recommendations to Google Search and ads, delivering recommendations when people need them most and making it easy to start conversations with those that care about your brand. Linking your site to your page unifies your +1's across, search, ads, your Google+ page, and your homepage. Google+ pages let you share your content with new audiences and connect with them in more engaging ways.

To learn more about Google+ Pages, visit www.google.com/+business

