

## CASE STUDY



CAMPAIGN TITLE:	Hotel Tonight Everywhere
CATEGORIES:	App Expertise, Data Campaign, Events, Expert Positioning, Flagship Story, Hyper-Local, Influencers, International, Investor Targeting, Media Relations, Product Launch, SxSW, Travel
DURATION OF CAMPAIGN:	July 2011 - April 2012

### Background

Founded in San Francisco in 2010, [Hotel Tonight](#), the mobile app for booking same-day hotel rooms, was getting a lot of attention after launching on iOS. Looking to make a splash as they expanded, Hotel Tonight enlisted Inner Circle Labs to raise awareness of the company’s disruption of the travel industry.



### Objectives

With upcoming plans ranging from launching on new devices to going international, Hotel Tonight needed to be the hottest hotel booking app for spontaneous travelers. Our objectives were to increase hotel partner flow, downloads and investor interest – and help drive the company to the one million download mark.

## Strategies

**1. Be the new “Joneses”:** Everyone aspires to be more “in-the-know” and Hotel Tonight naturally tapped into an audience of mavens. We needed to use the excitement of this group – and the desire of people who wanted to be like them – to build a deeply engaged community.

**2. Bring the unexpected:** Become the must-have travel app by taking something people understand (hotel booking) and injecting excitement through one-of-a-kind promotions and creative seasonal tie-ins – all in an effort to show that well-priced no longer meant low budget.

**3. A real win-win:** Hotel Tonight brought together the world’s easiest booking experience with hot boutique hotels making it an obvious choice for today’s most valuable, hard-to-please consumer. It also solved the unsold inventory problem for hotels. Unlike most travel offerings that play to either industry or consumer, we needed to expose the inner workings that made Hotel Tonight a champion for both.

**4. Form & function:** Just like the app – which offered great deals in a beautifully designed interface – we needed to establish CEO Sam Shank as the hottest innovator in travel using his years of experience and trailblazing design sense.

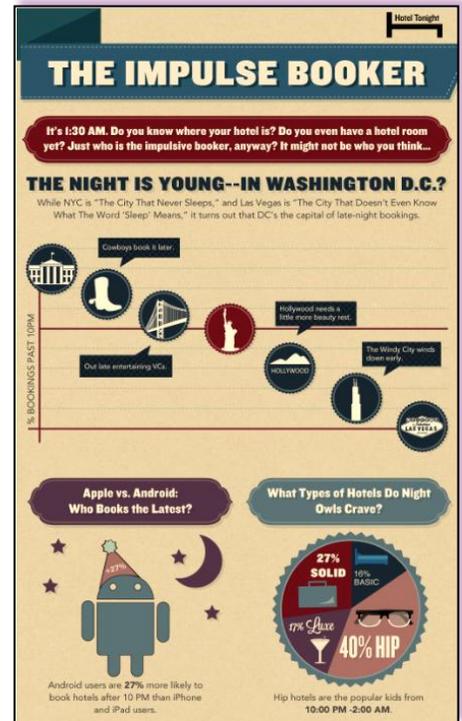
### Tactics

Inner Circle Labs developed a program that highlighted Hotel Tonight’s product and partnership news while driving consumers to download the app and become regular users. To make Hotel Tonight the number one hotel app for Android and iOS, we:

- **Hit the right media at the right time:** To make the most of each announcement during the period, we had to find the right reporters and give them the news that would resonate and drive reader action.
  - Business press engaged around Hotel Tonight’s funding, one million download milestone and expansion into Canada and the UK.
  - Travel and consumer media were pitched with hot last-minute campaigns – including “Vegas” news (from High Roller rooms to \$19 options) that made Hotel Tonight stand out from other offers in a city known for deals.
  - Tech and mobile reporters were given in-depth access on the Android and iOS redesigns, mobile web and iPad app launch to showcase the clean aesthetic and broad platform play that let users dive in on any device.
- **Engage users & go social:** In order to promote Hotel Tonight’s brand, we developed relationships with existing and potential new users where they spent the most time: online.
  - Social media campaigns encouraged users to participate (i.e. the first person to take 10 photos at 10 Hotel Tonight hotels wins a free night’s stay, guess this hotel from a photo and win a free night’s stay, etc.).



- We engaged followers at SxSW through Twitter with on-site scavenger hunts and invitations to Hotel Tonight's roving room – an RV that had been transformed into a restful oasis.
- **Be the travel expert:** To be seen as an expert in the saturated travel industry, we inserted Hotel Tonight into relevant conversations and created data that spoke to our users, breaking the mold of the "traditional traveler."
  - Business and travel outlets got creative mailers to generate awareness (e.g. a business travel survival kit) and top influencers, both media and non-media, were given Hotel Tonight credit so they would give it try.
  - With infographics (i.e. the most popular time to book, most popular bookings, what your hotel style says about you, etc.), we reflected the tastes of Hotel Tonight's highly sought after demographic and shared it with an ever-hungry-for-data media world.
- **Stay in the spotlight:** With an aggressive product roadmap, we balanced product news and industry partnerships ensuring Hotel Tonight stayed visible across key audiences throughout the period.
  - We emphasized the importance of different partnerships to show Hotel Tonight's market versatility and full capabilities and issued press releases around more significant announcements.
  - We pitched hyper-local media in new Hotel Tonight cities across the U.S., launched Hotel Tonight in Canada and expanded our consumer footprint via media outreach, editorial coverage and social/promotional efforts.



## Results



Over the course of a year, Inner Circle Labs:

- Secured over 150 feature stories
- Helped Hotel Tonight reach one million downloads and secure a flagship [business story](#) in the print edition of Bloomberg Businessweek tied to the news
- Launched the Hotel Tonight app on two new platforms: Android and iPad
- Launched internationally to great success in both Canada and the UK

## Coverage Sampling

- 7x7, [Hotel Tonight Offers "Impulse Bookings" on Mobile and iPad](#)
- BetaKit, [Hotel Tonight's Same Day Booking App Goes International](#)
- CNNMoney, [Venture Capital Deals](#)
- Fierce Mobile Content, [Hotel Tonight books \\$9M in Series B round](#)
- Forbes, [Late Night Deal Vendor Hotel Tonight Knows Where The Hipsters Roam](#)
- Fox Business, [Use Your Smartphone to Book Last-Minute Hotel Deals](#)
- GigaOM, [Hotel Tonight releases an iPad app for same-day hotel bookings](#)
- HotelChatter, [Need a Hotel Room Last-Minute, Eh? Hotel Tonight Has You Covered in Canada Now](#)
- Inc., [Hotel Tonight Raises \\$9 Million](#)
- KRON 4, [Tech Startups Thriving in San Francisco](#)
- KTLA, [Hotel Tonight High Roller Suites](#)
- Mashable, [Who's Up Late Booking Memorial Day Weekend Hotel Rooms Online? \[INFOGRAPHIC\]](#)
- PandoDaily, [Hotel Tonight Expands to Europe and Canada, Partners With Look.io for Better Robo-Human Relations](#)
- TechCrunch, [Hotel Tonight Launches on Android, Now in 18 Cities](#)
- The Next Web, [Hotel Tonight expands internationally with last-minute bookings in Toronto and Vancouver](#)
- USA Today, [Tech CEOs Ring in 2012 with Resolutions](#)
- VentureBeat, [Cash in on mobile, the third-wave of e-commerce](#)
- Wall Street Journal, [The Daily Start-Up: Plant-Moving Robots Lead Investors To Harvest](#)
- Xconomy, [Yelp, Intermolecular, Hotel Tonight: Bay Area BizTech News by the Numbers](#)

