

Website Usability Test of New York Hotel



Please note that the web site has many good qualities but our object here is to highlight the things that should be fixed in order to increase conversions. This is an unsolicited test. This is a typical report that we send although we added captions to facilitate skimming. Since each web site is different the items will vary in each report.

Home Menu Item

The website has a prominent **Home** menu item (see screen shot below), however it does not bring you to the hotel home page—instead it sends you to the hotel chain’s home page which can be disorientating. Recommendations:

- The Home page menu item should be replaced with the name of the hotel: **Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers Home**. It can be on 2 lines to save space and it can be placed next to the Sheraton Logo on the top left.
- The Sheraton logo can be use to send people to the Sheraton main page with some text to explain that this is for people who want to explore additional hotels in the chain



Unfortunately the home link takes you to the hotel chain home page instead of the hotel home page-guaranteed to disorient site visitors.

Internal Search Function

When searching for Manhattan (in the city field) the search function brought up the Niagra Falls hotel first. This is because it mentions how far they are from Manhattan. No hotels located in Manhattan were shown—even in the “We also suggest the following” hotel list.

When searching for indoor pool the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers hotel came up even though they don’t have an indoor pool. When we called the hotel, the receptionist knew that it didn’t have a pool and was nice enough to offer us other hotels with a pool In this case woman beat machine.

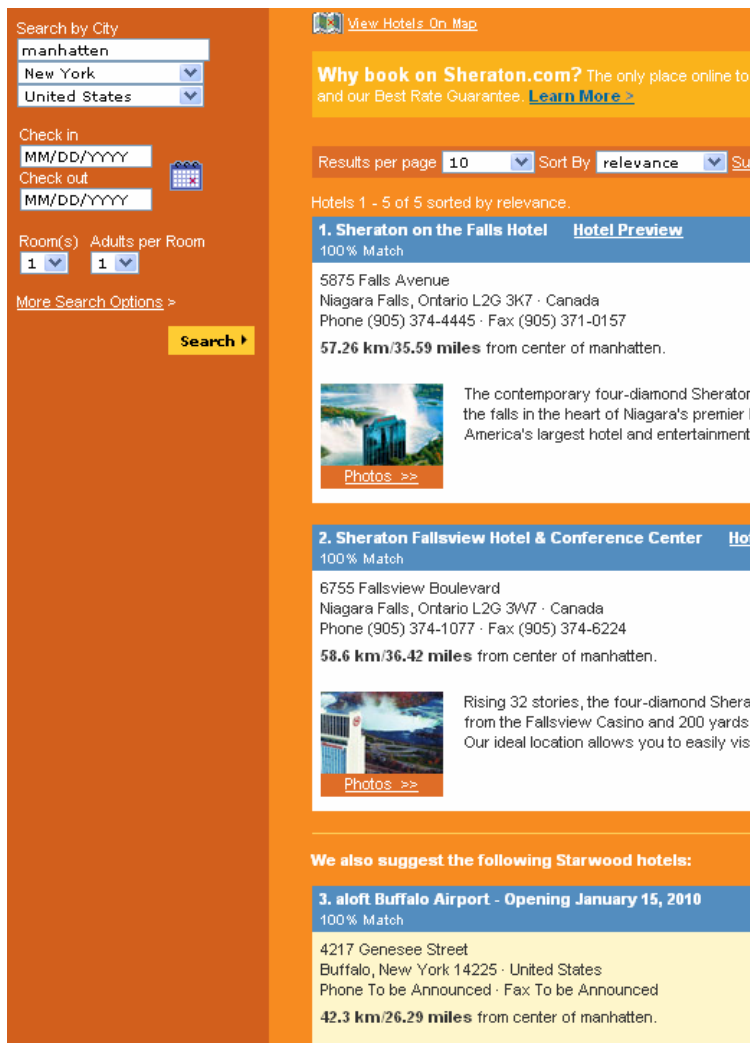
However, many people wouldn’t bother to call to confirm that there is a pool and would be very disappointed when arriving at the hotel.

When searching for a hotel you have to pick a country and a state. However the state field only has USA and Canadian states. Add a “not applicable” option with a note that this field is only for the USA and Canada.

Recommendations:

Go through your internal search log files and check all the search results for the searches people made. Correct any problems found either by:

- Fixing the search function
- And/or adding appropriate keywords to the different hotel entries so the search function will work. For example, add Manhattan to the hotels which are located in Manhattan.



Search by City
manhattan
New York
United States

Check in
MM/DD/YYYY
Check out
MM/DD/YYYY

Room(s) Adults per Room
1 1

More Search Options >

Search ▶

View Hotels On Map

Why book on Sheraton.com? The only place online to and our Best Rate Guarantee. [Learn More >](#)

Results per page 10 Sort By relevance

Hotels 1 - 5 of 5 sorted by relevance.

1. Sheraton on the Falls Hotel [Hotel Preview](#)
100% Match
5875 Falls Avenue
Niagara Falls, Ontario L2G 3K7 · Canada
Phone (905) 374-4445 · Fax (905) 371-0157
57.26 km/35.59 miles from center of manhattan.

The contemporary four-diamond Sheraton the falls in the heart of Niagara's premier F America's largest hotel and entertainment
[Photos >>](#)

2. Sheraton Fallsview Hotel & Conference Center [Hot](#)
100% Match
6755 Fallsview Boulevard
Niagara Falls, Ontario L2G 3W7 · Canada
Phone (905) 374-1077 · Fax (905) 374-6224
58.6 km/36.42 miles from center of manhattan.

Rising 32 stories, the four-diamond Sherat from the Fallsview Casino and 200 yards Our ideal location allows you to easily visi
[Photos >>](#)

We also suggest the following Starwood hotels:

3. aloft Buffalo Airport - Opening January 15, 2010
100% Match
4217 Genesee Street
Buffalo, New York 14225 · United States
Phone To be Announced · Fax To be Announced
42.3 km/26.29 miles from center of manhattan.

A search for Manhattan fails to bring up hotels located in Manhattan

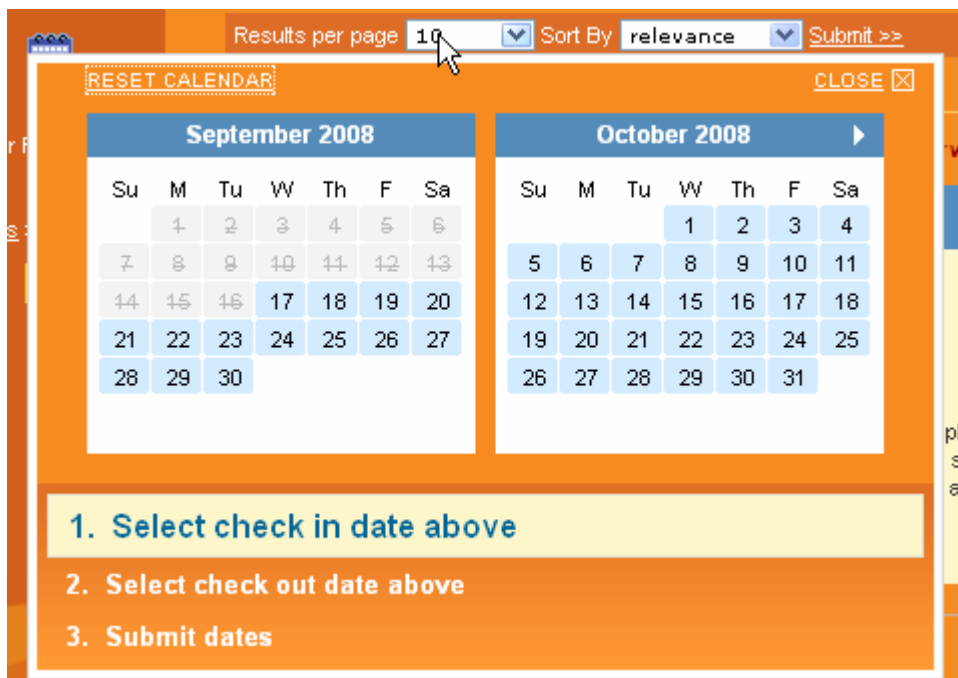
Check in Function

The directions don't mention that you must submit a check out date as well as a check in date on the SAME calendar, when the window first opens. People don't always notice that an instruction has changed in the text field so after submitting a check in date they may expect another window to open to check out.

Also the 2 calendars confuse things.

Recommendations:

- When check in window pops up, explain that you must choose check in AND check out dates in the highlighted yellow field—not everyone will notice the no. 2 instruction as it is not highlighted.
- Test to see if one calendar will work better or if there are 2 calendars they may work better if they are both set to the same month on default and one calendar is for check in and one is for check out.



Calendar: Two calendars set to two different months are confusing since you may only need one to check in and check out

Response time

It is normal for sites to take some time to return an inquiry about available rooms, however not everyone knows this and they may think there is a bug and leave the site.

Recommendation:

For search functions which take time add a note. For example: “We are now searching for your room. This may take a minute”

Cut off Pop up windows


When opening the **Hotel Preview** link (shown below) a window pops up that you cannot move or close if your browser is not set to be much wider than the hotel web site.

Results per page **10** Sort By **relevance** Submit >>

Hotels 1 - 10 of 40 sorted by relevance.

1. Sheraton Manhattan at Times Square [Hotel Preview](#)
100% Match

790 7th Avenue 51st Street
New York, New York 10019 · United States
Phone (212) 581-3300 · Fax (212) 541-9219
0.42 km/0.26 miles from center of new york.



Sheraton Manhattan at Times Square is a source of fami welcome when you visit Sheraton. After a full day sperr in one of 665 guest rooms. From the carpets to the wall

[Photos >>](#)

When clicking on the Hotel Preview link you get a window that cannot be closed—see screen shot below

Recommendation

Have pop up window open up to the left so its **close window icon** is always visible.



The screenshot shows the Sheraton website's search results for 'new york'. A search sidebar on the left includes filters for city, state, check-in/out dates, and room count. The main content area lists search results, with the first result being 'Sheraton Manhattan at Times Square'. A pop-up window for 'Sheraton New York Hotel & Towers' is open on the right, displaying a large image of the hotel and descriptive text. The pop-up window's close button is obscured by the browser's vertical scroll bar.

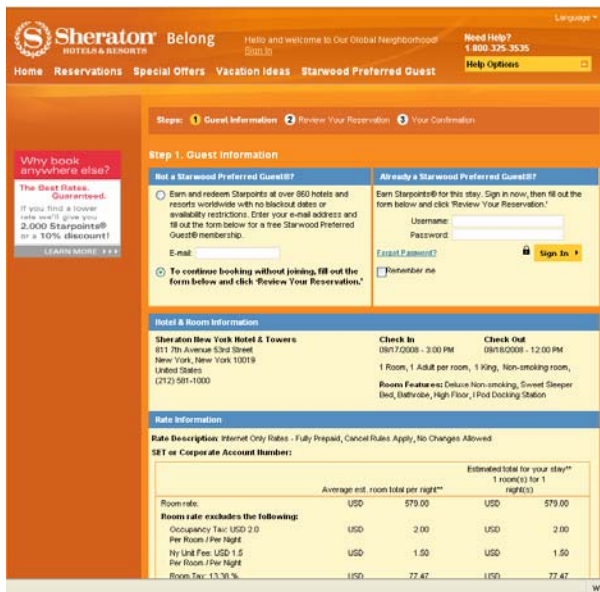
Pop up window can't be moved or closed since its **close window icon** is cut off by the scroll bar

Booking

The booking form doesn't show above the fold. There is too much information which is very confusing to the visitor.

Recommendation

You can hide most of this information and have a link which can show the information on the same page when it is clicked. That way the form will be visible without scrolling and information which many people don't need will be hidden.



	Average est. room total per night**	Estimated total for your stay** 1 room(s) for 1 night(s)
Room rate:	USD 79.00	USD 79.00
Room rate excludes the following:		
Occupancy Tax: USD 2.0	USD 2.00	USD 2.00
Per Room / Per Night		
Ny Unit Fee: USD 1.5	USD 1.50	USD 1.50
Per Room / Per Night		
Room Tax: 13.36 %	USD 77.47	USD 77.47

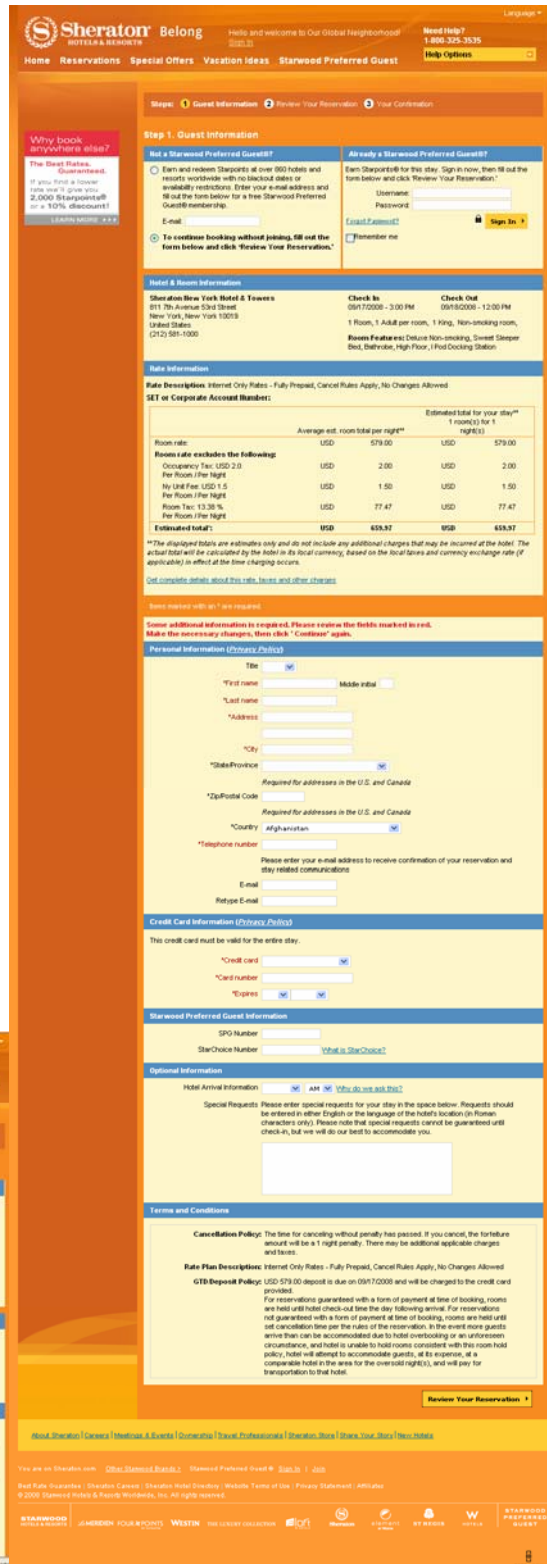
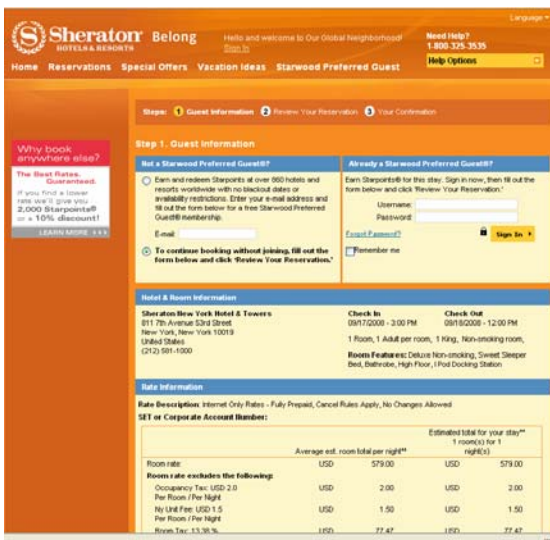
On the booking page the form is not visible unless you scroll. Why confuse them with all this information when they want to book a room?

Error message

When you forget to fill in a field in the booking form and submit the information the website sends you back up to the top of the booking page and you can't see the error message. Even if you are smart enough to scroll down the error message can be missed

Recommendation

Web site should return visitor directly to error message after submitting information.



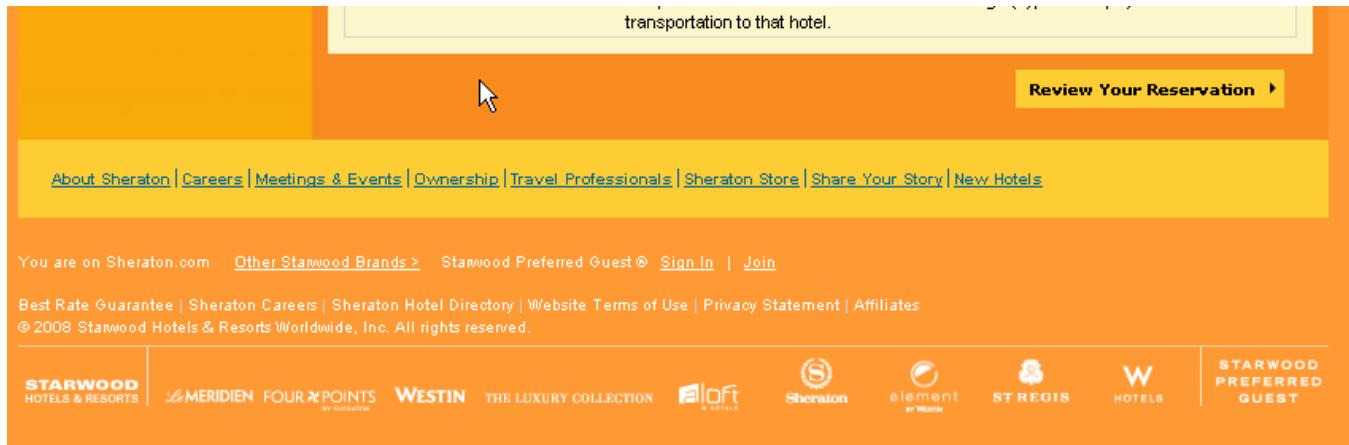
The screen on the left is what you see if you fill in the form with a mistake—no error message can be seen. The screen shot on the right shows the web page after you scroll to the bottom. Can you find the error message?

Contact Information

It is hard to find contact information on the site except for a phone number at the top right.

Recommendations

Add contact information at the bottom of each page. For long pages the telephone number at the top is not visible when the visitor is at the bottom. Give options for email/online chat also—let the client decide how they want to contact you.



No contact info or link to contact info is at the bottom of the page where many people expect it

Finding the Correct Sheraton Hotel in New York in Google

Note: Most usability tests don't include how people find the site in the search engines. However I wanted to show in this example that usability issues extend beyond the site to the search engines as they borrow some of your site and place it on theirs. Unfortunately they aren't perfect and don't always borrow the part that is with your best interest in mind as you can see below.

When searching for **New York Hotel** on Google, the Sheraton came up on the 1st page.

[New York Hotels: Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers NYC hotels at ...](#)

Sheraton **New York Hotel** and Towers offers a convenient midtown location and deluxe **hotel** amenities for the business and leisure traveler.

www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/property/overview/index.html?propertyID=421 - 64k -

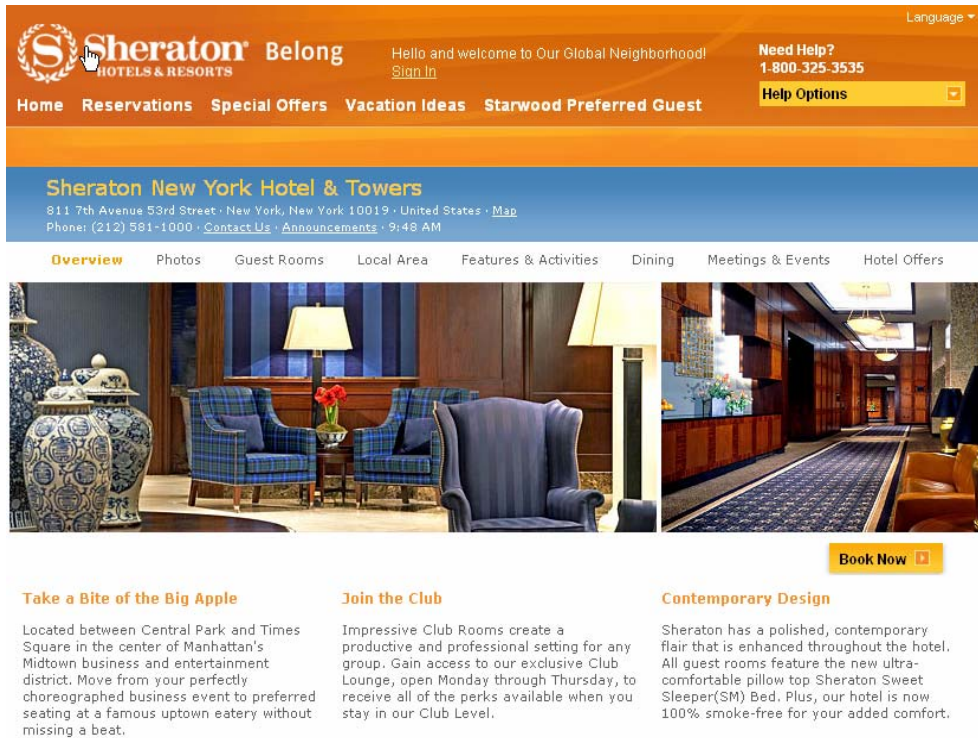
[Cached](#) - [Similar pages](#)

This is great for Sheraton as it insures that there will be traffic to the site. Unfortunately the Search Engine Result gives the impression that there is only one Sheraton hotel in New York when there are actually many in New York city and even more in New York state.

After clicking on the search result we see the landing page below. This reinforces our feeling that Sheraton only has one hotel in New York City as there is no mention of other hotels in New York

Recommendations

- Optimize the site so that the search engines will point to a navigation page that has a short description of each New York Hotel in the Sheraton Chain
- On the existing landing page mention that there are other Sheraton New York Hotel options and include a link to a navigation page with all New York hotels and short descriptions



Sheraton BELONG
HOTELS & RESORTS

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Phone: (212) 581-1000 · [Contact Us](#) · [Announcements](#) · 9:48 AM

Overview Photos Guest Rooms Local Area Features & Activities Dining Meetings & Events Hotel Offers

Take a Bite of the Big Apple
Located between Central Park and Times Square in the center of Manhattan's Midtown business and entertainment district. Move from your perfectly choreographed business event to preferred seating at a famous uptown eatery without missing a beat.

Join the Club
Impressive Club Rooms create a productive and professional setting for any group. Gain access to our exclusive Club Lounge, open Monday through Thursday, to receive all of the perks available when you stay in our Club Level.

Contemporary Design
Sheraton has a polished, contemporary flair that is enhanced throughout the hotel. All guest rooms feature the new ultra-comfortable pillow top Sheraton Sweet Sleeper(SM) Bed. Plus, our hotel is now 100% smoke-free for your added comfort.

[Book Now](#)

Google brings searches to the page above. A searcher has no idea that Sheraton has many hotels in New York—not just the one

You may want to listen to the [usability test video](#) that goes with this report.

[Order your website usability test today.](#)