

Getting Mobile: Tips for Successful Hoteliers

Social media in the hospitality industry are not a distribution channel. Social media are a tool that works well in terms of engagement of customers. Thus they play important role as a component in the marketing mix within the hotel industry. Mobile channel is legitimately the hotel distribution channel with 2.4% of online travel bookings in the U.S being done using the mobile web. This is considered to be more than 100 times the booking done using the social media.



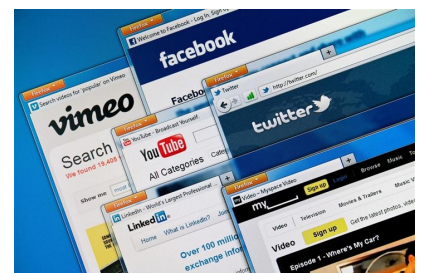
The mobile channel was growing rapidly with Morgan Stanley projecting that desktop internet use will be surpassed by the use of the mobiles. Google has also indicated that mobile searches on hotels have hit the 3,000% mark in terms of increase between 2010 and 2011 with 20% and more of the searches being conducted by the use of mobile devices. Many hoteliers have come to realize the importance of taking up of the mobile web. According to a survey by HeBS, more hoteliers than before intend to start using mobile sites and mobile device facilitated booking engines.

MUST DOS

What should hoteliers do to reach the efficient mobile marketing level?

The Uptake of Property Mobile Website

Property needs mobile websites and this cannot be contested. This is proved by the fact that such sites generate increased bookings. Optimization of mobile websites that are rich in visual and text in terms of content that is fresh must be done by hoteliers. Optimization should be done using mobile SEO.



Use of Mobile SEM

Mobile Search Engine Marketing (SEM) works wonders. Such campaigns should be launched using

Google AdWords, Bing and Yahoo and should be linked to special landing pages for your mobile website. Including the latest packages promotions and offers will be an advantage.

Utilization of Local Content

Mobile content that is local will work well as most of the searches conducted are local. Such content is the foundation of mobile content and should be taken up as a strategy for mobile SEO by hoteliers.

Other must-dos include: alignment of the mobile websites content, both official and unofficial. engagement of customers through mobile marketing continuous enhancement of mobile website, building of mobile links to mobile sites from directories and sites, use of mobile SEM campaigns, mobile banner advertising in main mobile feeder markets, use of mobile SEO.

DON'TS

However there also is a couple of 'don'ts' regarding mobile marketing by hoteliers.

Discounts on Mobile Channels

Over the last years, booking windows have shrunk thanks to the well and intensely connected social and mobile world and the uptake of the mobile web by consumers for purposes of making bookings. Mostly bookings are made for the next 48 hours. As time goes by people keep booking closer and closer to the day of arrival as it is easy for them to wait to the last minute to inquire the last minute booking rates for hotels. With hoteliers practicing all the Must-Dos, bookings will still be honored even without awarding discounts. Maintenance of rate parity by hoteliers is important at all times.



Mobile App

Hotels do not need to have mobile apps especially if they are a single-property, franchised property, independent hotel or resort, smaller or mid-sized chain and multi-property company. It is better that such hotel companies focus on enhancing their mobile websites and promote their mobile sites using initiatives like mobile marketing. This is because most users, 90% to be precise, prefer mobile browsing to mobile apps. Development, maintenance and promotion of apps are very expensive. Apps are very specific in terms of devices. Apps are not index-able by search engines.

(Based on an interview of Max Starkov, President and CEO of HeBS. by Michelle Renn of 'Inside Hotel

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