

HOTEL MARKETING: EVERYTHING YOU SHOULD KEEP IN MIND



To succeed in such a huge yet highly diversified industry like the hotel and hospitality field, which is constantly evolving, it is important to keep up with the latest trends to avoid being left behind. Hotel marketing is one of the things any hoteliers should pay close attention to.

The demands of today's guests will be history tomorrow, so to guarantee the survival of your business and provide an excellent customer experience one must constantly march forward. **Therefore, being up to date regarding the latest advances in hotel marketing is essential to find new opportunities that translate into more reservations and loyal customers.**

Here are some of the trends that will help you develop and improve the marketing of your hotel.

Increase Direct Reservations

The bankruptcy of Thomas Cook has been a sign for the industry that highlighted the importance of diversifying distribution strategy in hotel marketing and demonstrated the need for innovation and implementation of new technologies and work processes. In this sense, companies and businesses will need to invest more time and resources in creating real customer loyalty, boosting their reputation and changing the marketing strategy to increase direct hotel reservations.

Hotels will have to rethink their distribution and independence in marketing to be prepared to compete in a changing market. Being ready for the changes in trend will be important, as well as having the technological, economic and human resources to make it possible.

What this means is that it is essential to pay attention to the loyalty strategy: attracting new customers is much harder than creating loyalty. The key here is trying to make current customers repeat their stay and book through direct channels instead of using third parties.

How to Achieve This?

By creating a quality database: meaning it should be validated in real-time and comply with the GDPR (the latest EU personal data regulations). For example, this can be done through the hotel's WiFi. Automating this process allows us to obtain validated data between 60% and 95% of the total guests staying at each establishment.

Another strategy is to offer rewards during and post-stay, which will improve brand perception.

Maintaining constant and thoughtful communication - being proactive and anticipate the wishes of the customer, such as using surveys during the stay or congratulating them on their birthday. These communications are also easy to automate.

Lastly, running segmented email marketing campaigns with the obtained database over time is also an effective strategy.

While it is true that all these strategies may require a lot of time and effort, there are tools on the market that automate these processes and can be integrated with the hotel PMS.

With these integrations, monitoring reservations that come from direct channels is even easier, and since the use of automated and segmented email campaigns means having to rely less on third parties, this represents savings on commissions.

Once you have accomplished the main goal, which is to gain a quality database through the establishment's WiFi, the next challenge is making the most of it. But before considering any further strategy, it is important to see if the database can be improved.

How Can I Improve My Database?

To take advantage of the database, it is recommended to cross or combine it with the PMS, allowing you to improve it and carrying out better-segmented campaigns: by country of origin, age, customers with or without children, repeat customers, etc.

Through a CRM that allows to include this data, one can automate email marketing campaigns targeted at all types of customers, including recurring ones, and even being able to stop sending emails to those who have already made a reservation. The future of marketing is in micro-segmentation and this approach allows to maximize hotel marketing campaigns to get the most out of them.

Email Marketing

Email marketing remains one of the most effective communication strategies with the highest return for hotel managers, especially when it comes to attracting returning customers.

The market is still evolving and offering new tools that can help us gain more customers, but email marketing is still the star and the one that offers the highest return of investment (ROI).

However, for it to be effective, we must take it to the highest level: using the right marketing tools and strategies.

Therefore, it is important to work with professional tools that are capable of managing and segmenting a high volume of data. This can mean savings in costs, and especially in time.

The other main traffic sources (AdWords, display, affiliation, and search aggregators) to generate direct sales usually do not turn into returning guests, but new customers and the customer acquisition cost is much higher.

Improving Hotel Online Reputation

It is a fact that with the rise of social media and review sites, a customer is more informed than ever of a hotel's reputation. Therefore, knowing what they say about the establishment and where they say it becomes essential when it comes to loyalty.

Thanks to technology, it is possible to automate processes that allow customers to leave their opinions on the main review sites.

For most sites, the way to work your way on the rankings is not just through average rating, but the frequency and amount of reviews. A system of customer satisfaction surveys during the stay allows

to detect problems and come up with solutions that satisfy guests. A good option would be to automatically invite the guest to write a review on a site in their geographical location after the stay.

Getting to stand out in these sites is vital since they are the starting point for many direct reservations.

Adopting technologies applied to tourism is redefining the way in which processes are executed and hotel services are offered. The digital transformation is gaining ground, and more and more hotels are employing new technologies that make daily tasks easier and allow them to offer guests more personalized experiences that increase their overall satisfaction.

The most common technological advances will also evolve in 2020: artificial intelligence, mobile apps, chatbots, automation, blockchain, the IoT and facial recognition continue to have an influence on the industry, but it might be too soon to invest in all of it, at least until the full deployment of 5G, which is still in its early phases.

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