

TAKE YOUR HOTEL MARKETING UP ANOTHER NOTCH - THE GREEN WAY



One of the most important current trends for businesses is being environmentally friendly and, needless to say, the tourism industry must also face the challenge of adapting to this new scenario. Setting up an efficient green hotel marketing campaign is not that easy.

Many hotel chains and tourism companies announce their commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on social media, with their feed full of phrases such as “Save Our Planet” followed by messages asking guests to not wash towels daily to save the environment.

Consumers are more and more informed, so messages as generic and superficial as these may not be welcomed and could be considered as ‘greenwashing’ (poor green marketing that attempts to persuade the public that products and services are environmentally friendly when they actually aren’t).

Many companies choose to voice their commitment through certifications that verify that they have taken measures and that they have met specific environmental goals, but is boasting an ISO 14001, EMAS or Travelife certificate a good way to attract customers? Do clients know what they mean?

Loyal customers won’t be satisfied with these general messages. They want to know more, to know the history behind these certifications or messages, to see the motivation of the business, to check what actions have been taken and how they have contributed to preserving the environment. Consumers want to be addressed in the same language.

The company’s actions and values are distinctive elements that serve as inspiration for clients who look for real experiences and places where the environment is respected; therefore, these need to be communicated effectively if they are to have an impact.

Environmental and social communication, or Green Marketing, provides companies in the tourism industry an opportunity to attract potential customers and gain loyalty. So, what should be considered when setting up a green hotel marketing strategy?

Don’t fake it. Make it!

Environmental and social actions must be taken very seriously, and senior managers must engage in the sustainable development process of a company or business.

Environmental communication must have a solid and verifiable basis; otherwise, it could be seen as greenwashing. Carrying out an analysis or an internal audit on different environmental and social aspects of the organization is essential to identify a starting point. Data provides us with information, and only from them can we develop a green marketing strategy that revolves around these numbers. It helps us establish indicators or KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and track their evolution over time.

And don’t forget about the SDGs. The Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations provide tourism companies and businesses with information on the goals to be achieved. In the same

way that KPIs are important for environmental and social planning, the SDGs must be taken into account in the organization's strategic planning.

Start with top stakeholders: the employee

Work on internal communication. Sustainability must be transversal and reach all members or parts of the organization. Make sure that everyone is involved, and have your top talent be part of the decision making processes. Create a voluntary sustainability committee with representatives from different parts of the organization and make sure that the green strategy comes from a strong and real commitment to the environment.

Be transparent and communicate to your team the weaknesses and strengths of the company, the sustainability goals to be achieved, and promote participation in order to achieve these goals. Design training plans to motivate employees. Keep in mind that top talent is the front of the organization and no one better than them can communicate your values.

Identify clients and the channels to get their attention

Adapt the messages depending on your target audience and their corresponding communication and distribution channels. Design a multi-channel strategy that offers relevant content based on their profiles and needs. Customize the messages and get clients or potential clients involved to become part of the change.

Communicating the business or company's actions offers the necessary knowledge so that clients can raise awareness of how important sustainability is for companies. Show your clients the added value of your tourism business and share information about the benefits of opting for sustainable companies that care for the environment.

Inspire clients through storytelling

Be imaginative. Write a story based on the data and goals achieved and make your hotel marketing extra efficient. Travelers like to know those special things about a place, its inhabitants, and the company that provides their services and/or products. Don't go for a simple "We look after the environment" but **take a step further when explaining the values, the purpose, the team behind it, the actions taken, and how important your principles are for stakeholders.**

Numerous studies show that emotionally charged messages are the ones that remain etched in our memory. Move and inspire customers from honesty, commitment, credibility, and verifiability.

Date: 2020-03-16

Article link:

<https://www.tourism-review.com/focus-your-hotel-marketing-on-sustainable-goals-news11436>