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How Hoteliers can derive benefits out of Social Media?

By Suhale Kapoor, Co-founder and Executive Vice President, Absolutdata Analytics

Social media has become an indispensable part of the everyday communication strategy for organizations across the globe. In the past one decade, there has been a massive change in the way communication takes place and social media has changed how people share information and opinion about different topics. Social media has equipped businesses to connect with their customers on the go while reaching out to new ones with the latest products and services more conveniently.

With every industry using the power of social media to its full swing, hospitality industry is not far behind. Today, hoteliers and restaurateurs are busy sharing content and running campaigns about their services with thousands of followers at once and now they have discovered different ways of leveraging social media to drive success and growth in all areas.

Some of the popular ways how social media is benefiting the hospitality industry are mentioned as below:

1. Social media provides a platform to continuously learn and monitor audience behaviour

Hoteliers today realise that the key to successfully know and engage the audience is by staying in constant touch through various social media platforms. Sharing rich content regularly helps acquaint the audience with the right information about the services and upcoming deals/offers. Also, social media provides the opportunity to run highly engaged and targeted campaigns to get audience attention towards the brand and later monitor their responsiveness/behaviour towards the offer. With tools like Facebook, Hootsuite Insights, hoteliers can learn the dominant languages spoken among the social media audience, as well as their age and gender. This knowledge can help cater campaigns and product offers to the target audience, while giving a higher ROI.

2. Better customer relationship management

Social media platforms let you know the effectiveness of campaigns and measure their success quantitatively. Digital communication channel traffic can also help know what the new customers enjoyed about their recent stay at the hotel as well as what they disliked about it. Digital channel communication encourages greater transparency in receiving consumer responses on an ongoing basis and helps tackle them effectively. The results are that businesses within the hospitality industry can readily engage with consumers and update their products or services for quick improvements that have big pay-offs in the long-term. A lot of hoteliers today are

looking up to analytics service providers to tell the effectiveness of various digital channels and attribute the ROI to each using multi channel attribution modeling.

3. Improving and building brand reputation

Social media is not only used for running marketing campaigns to sell service but can also be leveraged to build ongoing relationships with your customers and the audience at large. Social media platforms are impactful communication channels that can be used for continuous brand management. For instance, a customer who was attracted to stay at your hotel for a two day trip with his or her spouse through a social marketing campaign may later complain of a poor experience using the same platform. Social media helps brands to address and assuage the customer by providing relevant solutions to the issues in real time and make them one of the influencers rather than detractors. The speed of the internet undoubtedly brings many opportunities to hospitality industry businesses. A company with a great product or service does not have to wait long to reap the fruits of their marketing labors because their enthusiastic customers become members of built-in marketing team.

4. Social media helps increase traffic on website and travel aggregators

Social channels acts like ancillary channels to the websites, the offers and promotions that are run on social channels can be used for directing the traffic to your website or the website of travel aggregators so that the audience can do bookings in real time. One of the best benefits of social media for business is using it to increase your website traffic. Not only does social media help direct the audience to your website, but the more social media shares you receive, the higher your search ranking will be.

In a nut shell, social media is ever evolving and will continue to benefit the hospitality industry at large. Social platforms empower hoteliers to disseminate the right information at the right time thereby helping many brands establish a mark in the industry and also stay ahead of the competition. Once the power of social platforms is leveraged in the right way, it can help hoteliers get more insights into their customers/ audience and drive higher ROI through each marketing activity.

(Absolutdata Analytics, a Big Data analytics firm, helps many brands from the hospitality industry in retaining their existing customers and suggesting various tricks to attract new travellers to increase their sales) ■