



Article Title

Present and future hotel website marketing activities: Change propensity analysis.

Citation

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to examine and predict website marketing activities of US hotels. An online survey is conducted to collect data from members of three major hotel associations located in the US. Change propensity analysis is utilized to evaluate future trends of website marketing activities. The results demonstrate that current website exploitation by the US hotels is relatively limited, with a focus on information dissemination. It is suggested that a number of transaction and relation-building activities will emerge in the near future. Implications based on the results are discussed.

Methods

Instrument development and data collection

To achieve the research objectives, this study will adopt the method of CPA. The CPA is a dynamic benchmarking technique which can be used to understand current status and gain insights into future development

The questionnaire consisted of a list of items for each of the four website functional dimensions. The participants in this study were members of three major hotel associations in the US (i.e., American Hotel & Lodging Association, Central Florida Hotel & Lodging Association, and Hospitality Financial & Technology Professionals).

With the cooperation and assistance of the hotel associations, researchers were able to access their membership database. To estimate the general likelihood of future use of website marketing activities, change propensity analysis was employed.

Conclusion

This study should be of interest to industry practitioners. The assessment of hotel website marketing activities can help hotel managers understand the merits and shortcomings of their websites. It is identified that the US hotels are not able to take full advantage of their websites as a marketing tool. Very limited marketing activities are present on their websites. Currently the US hotels focus only on core information applications such as accommodation information, information about the hotel, maps/driving directions and amenities information. Transaction and relationship applications pose serious challenges for the US hotels. The results of the CPA inform hotel managers of possible future trends in hotel website marketing activities. It is indicated that relationship building is the core of website marketing and should be the focus in the future. To gain competitive advantage, hotel managers need to understand

the dynamics and update their websites accordingly. Further, the identified dimensions with corresponding items are critical for a successful website marketing strategy. Hotels could use the identified items as a checklist for monitoring and improving their website performance. It should be noted that the list is not exhaustive or definite in any sense. As Internet technology evolves, some items might be added to meet new requirements in new market conditions and others might become obsolete.