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In Case You Missed It: 6 Must-Read Research Studies for Hotel Marketers

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HSMAI's Marketing Advisory Board recently had an exclusive opportunity to talk to Dr. Chris K. Anderson, professor at Cornell University, about his recent research and how it can help marketers better deliver their brand promise through service delivery.

It got the advisory board thinking about other recent research that is playing into their marketing and branding work. In case you missed them, the following 6 research studies are full of actionable information and insights.

1. **The Billboard Effect: Still Alive and Well**

“Changes in the online travel market are causing hotels to rethink their relationships with online travel agencies (OTAs) and to take a closer look at the impact on bookings from listing their properties with OTAs. One outcome of being listed on an OTA is additional bookings on the brand's own website, a phenomenon that co-author Chris Anderson labeled the billboard effect. In a 2009 study, Anderson presented an experiment in which a group of hotels was listed and then removed from Expedia.com in alternate weeks. This test found that, compared to being hidden, being listed on the site increased reservations 9 percent to 26 percent (above transactions that occurred at Expedia). That was followed by a 2011 study examining consumers' online pre-purchase research that found about 75 percent of consumers who made reservations with a major hotel brand had visited an OTA in advance of booking directly with the brand. [This report shows] that the ability of a second-party channel to influence an eventual reservation may be lower now, but the billboard effect still occurs, since many consumers visit an OTA prior to booking.”

2. **Hotel Performance Impact of Socially Engaging with Consumers**

“User reviews have become a critical aspect of the travel research process, as evidenced, for instance, by TripAdvisor having over 350 million unique monthly visitors. One benefit of these posted reviews is that hotels can address issues raised by consumers in an effort to improve consumer satisfaction along with review scores. Given the importance of consumer reviews, one goal for hotels is to find ways to improve their social media performance (with a goal of boosting financial outcomes). [This report examines] the effects of reviews posted on TripAdvisor to look at non-operational and relatively inexpensive ways in which hoteliers can improve their performance, both on the review sites themselves and in terms of actual hotel revenue and sales performance.”

3. **Demystifying the Digital Marketplace**

Sponsored by a coalition of industry organizations including the HSMAI Foundation, AH&LA, and HAMA (among others), DDM provides hotel marketers the research and analysis to compete most effectively in the ever-evolving digital marketplace. You'll learn more on the key takeaways to leverage an optimal distribution channel mix, encourage direct booking, and prioritize legislative and policy actions.

4. **Pricing in a Social World: The Influence of Non-Price Information on Hotel Choice**

“Effective pricing requires an understanding of how consumers use price and non-price information in purchase decisions. [This study uses] discrete choice analysis to examine how hotel consumers trade off price and three sources of non-price information - user-generated content (UGC), UGC-derived ratings and brand name - during the choice process. Although all types of information had a significant effect on hotel choice, review valence emerged as the dominant choice driver. Further, a qualitative data analysis suggests that consumers integrate price with non-price information to assess value pre-purchase, and can be swayed to a higher price if non-price data suggest a superior experience.”

5. **Myths and Truths about Social Media as a Method of Guest Feedback**

This article covers one aspect of J.D. Power's annual North America Hotel Guest Satisfaction Index Study, which surveys more than 60,000 hotel guests regarding both recent stays and other relevant areas pertaining to hotel choice, experience, and loyalty. The article includes some important findings pertaining to the usage and influence of social media. The full study is available from [J.D. Power](#).

6. **The Lifecycle of Visual Assets in Hospitality and Travel**

Visual storytelling is becoming increasingly critical for brands in the hospitality and travel industry. Prospective travelers expect to see the experience your brand can offer them before they book a ticket. How are brands meeting their audience's insatiable demand for visual content? What kind of content are they sourcing? Where are they sharing it? And how are they managing that process behind the scenes? This report answers these questions and presents a clearer picture of the state of visual storytelling and visual asset management in the hospitality and travel industry.

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