



Article Title

The Marketing Effectiveness of Social Media in the Hotel Industry

Citation

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Abstract

The unprecedented popularity of social media outlets have forced scholars to inquire about their marketing effectiveness, especially in the hotel industry. This study attempted to explore the marketing effectiveness of two different social media sites (Facebook and Twitter) in the hotel industry. Integrating the attitude-toward-the-ad (Aad) model with the concepts of attitude-toward-social-media-page, the study proposed a theoretical model of hotel social media marketing effectiveness. Based on the data collected from an online survey, the goodness of fit of the model implied that the Aad model provides an appropriate theoretical framework to explain the marketing effectiveness of social media in the hotel industry. The results revealed that hotel customers' social media experiences influence their attitudes-towardsocial-media-site, which in turn influences their attitudes-toward-hotel-brand, and that hotel customers' attitudes-toward-hotel-brand affects their hotel booking intentions and, in turn, intentions to spread electronic word of mouth. The study also indicated that different social media sites demonstrate the same marketing effectiveness, suggesting that hotel managers use the same marketing tactics for Facebook and Twitter marketing.

Conclusion

This study identified social media experience as a crucial aspect of marketing for hotels. This indicates that hotels need to focus on how to create a positive and satisfactory experience for their social media users. Hotels should focus on social media page design to enhance customers' experiences. Specifically, a hotel should make its social media pages more interesting, appealing, informative, interactive, and consumer centric so the customers can enjoy their social media experiences. The hotel social media pages should also be useful, valuable, and beneficial to customers. Another important factor leading to hotel booking intention is brand cognition. Thus, a hotel should try to enroll more existing customers or even loyal customers as fans on its

Facebook page or followers on its Twitter page. Since existing customers are found to have higher brand cognition toward the hotel, they are more likely to be influenced by social media marketing and are more likely to book hotel rooms in the future. Hotels should emphasize brand building on their social media pages. Hotel managers should remember that the main function of a social media page is not to exchange information, but to enhance brand reputation. The same marketing mechanism across different social media sites let hotel managers simplify their social media marketing strategy and tactics. Managers can employ the same marketing tactics focusing on the major factors in the marketing effectiveness model when using different social media

sites. That is, hotels should focus on customers' social media experience, brand cognition, and attitudes of customers regardless what social media site they are using as the marketing tool.

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