



Article Title

Leveling the Playing Field: E-Marketing's Impact on Lodging Operations

Citation

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Abstract

Since 1998 there has been a 54% increase in the number of travelers using the Internet to obtain information on destination or make travel arrangements. Electronic commerce has revolutionized the way services are delivered and changed the traditional relationship between consumers and service providers (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000). The purpose of this research is to analyze and compare the impact marketing technology application has on lodging properties in the pursuit of individual travelers. This exploratory study identified issues that respondents felt were important and affected their marketing and management activities.

Methods

The pilot survey was developed using a Delphi method that involved an expert panel from the Colorado Tourism & Travel Authority, Colorado Hotel Lodging Association, Vice President of Industry Relations for the Council of Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Educators, and members of the Estes Park Accommodations Association Technology Committee.

Results

The survey included questions about the methods employed to reach potential markets. Respondents indicated that their guests used a wide variety of sources in obtaining property information and room availability. Slightly more than 60% of respondents reported that roadside visibility, central reservation systems, advertising and Web site each accounted for 8-10% customer inquiries.

Conclusion

This exploratory study serves to highlight the potential impact changing technology has on the marketing activities of hospitality properties. The playing field may indeed be leveled by the impact of individual property Web sites. The Internet will provide a means of reducing reservation administrative costs and the need for middlemen who charge commissions or booking fees.