

Social Media: Marketing Strategies in the Hospitality Industry

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the role and significance of social media within the hospitality industry. As a modern communication tool, social media has empowered customers to access information and provided a powerful platform for hotels to promote their services. This paper examines effective marketing strategies for the hospitality sector, highlighting specific social media channels such as Facebook, YouTube, TripAdvisor, and Instagram. It concludes that an active and strategic presence on social media is indispensable for ensuring brand visibility, customer engagement, and business growth.

Keywords: Social Media, Marketing Strategies, Hospitality Industry, Customer Engagement, Business Growth.

Introduction

Communication, the process of exchanging information, is crucial for human understanding and knowledge dissemination. The revolutionary phase of social media has provided customers with numerous avenues to learn about hotel facilities, access feedback, and read reviews and suggestions. This helps them form informed perceptions about the services offered. Social media applications assist management in understanding the needs and demands of their valuable customers, while also enabling guests to stay updated on the latest trends and events.

Communal media is now a major platform for increasing guest footfall in the hospitality sector. It allows both businesses and customers to stay informed about the latest concepts and trends. Communication can take various forms—verbal or written, formal or informal, traditional or modern. Regardless of its form, the primary objective of communication is to transmit information from one person to another. Social media is a powerful source for disseminating information and self-promotion across the globe (Adetunji et al., 2018).

In the modern era, social media has emerged as one of the most widespread tools for advertisement, enabling sectors like hospitality to promote their business worldwide (Alves et al., 2016). With the proliferation of affordable mobile devices, computer literacy, and easy internet access, social media has become ubiquitous. "The advent of social media has established a direct connection between professionals and end consumers. It has become an essential mode of branding, publicity, and promotion" (Khan & Jan, 2015). No business in the current age can escape the influence of social media. Over the past few decades, advancements in communication and transportation technology have transformed the hospitality industry, making the integration of social media and internet technology with guest services imperative (Anderson, 2010). Most hotels now offer mobile check-in facilities, UPI

payments, Central Reservation Systems (CRS), and many other tech-driven amenities. The revolutionary use of social media has attracted millions of users, and this number continues to grow. This chapter aims to analyze how social media functions as a marketing tool in the hospitality sector.

Hospitality is one of the fastest-growing industries globally. In the past, from the 18th to the 20th century, people often traveled for religious purposes. Eventually, these religious tours evolved into a lifestyle, with people exploring the world for leisure. Revolutionary advancements in technology and transportation have made this easier. The early 21st century saw technology begin to change human life, but the last decade has completely transformed lifestyles and business methodologies. The rise of e-commerce has significantly influenced the hospitality industry through the use of social media (Curley & Noormohamed, 2014).

The Importance and Challenges of Social Media

In customer-oriented businesses like hospitality, social media has transformed booking, communication, and payment methods. While social media offers numerous advantages, it also has a darker side. Significant care must be taken when using it for promotional purposes. If used correctly, it can yield enormous benefits for any business; however, failure to do so can damage its reputation in a short span of time (Dwivedi et al., 2015).

Social media is an integral part of daily life, with millions of users active on these platforms daily. As social media applications have become essential tools, hotel brands are now sharpening their strategies to stay ahead of the competition. Today, if a hotel brand is not active on social media, it is likely to lose business and customers. Once a hotel loses its core customer base, it is challenging to regain it. Therefore, hotels employ expert social media teams to maintain their market presence (Erdogmus & Cicek, 2012).

Social media marketing platforms enhance the use of available applications to establish a product's presence online, increase sales, and promote hotel services. These platforms help businesses associate and enhance their social networking. Through social media, the industry exchanges concepts and information. Social media marketing utilizes podcasts, wikis, vlogs, virtual videos, snap sharing, bulletin boards, and promotional updates on networks like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to reach a vast targeted audience (Bashar et al., 2012).

Specific Social Media Channels

Several social media channels provide a platform for the hospitality sector to showcase their products, enhance their market reputation, and increase popularity. The following are key platforms that serve as marketing tools in the industry.

- **Facebook**

Facebook is a major channel through which most hospitality properties market themselves and build familiarity. According to an Acodex survey in the last quarter of 2025, Facebook had 3070 million active users, with India ranking highest in usage. Most hotels maintain a Facebook page where they share information about events through written posts, images, and videos. Once customers are aware of the page, they can follow it. It is the hotel staff's responsibility to inform customers about their page, and the social media team's duty to create engaging content to share with them. The creative team uses pictures of the hotel's interior and exterior, live videos, posts, vlogs, and other content to inspire the target audience to tag the property in their photos and videos, thereby increasing engagement.

Social Media Platforms	Number of Active Users(Millions)
Facebook	3070
Youtube	2530
Instagram	2000
Whatsapp	2000
Tiktok	1590
Wechat	1380
Telegram	950
Snapchat	850
Messenger	947
X	750

The data in Figure 1 shows the number of active users on various social media applications. It indicates that Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram, and Messenger are the top five platforms used by the public. Hotels promote themselves on these platforms using videos, messages, chatbots, and templates, and by sharing updates about upcoming celebrations and activities. This helps make their brand familiar to the market and encourages customers to visit.

- **YouTube**

YouTube has approximately two billion monthly active users, making it the second-largest search engine after Google. No marketing strategy can stand firm in the market without YouTube. The hospitality sector can create its own channel to connect directly with customers. Social media teams also train employees on how to encourage customers to subscribe to the hotel's YouTube channel. In the modern COVID-19 era, YouTube became a primary marketing tool, allowing the hospitality sector to offer virtual tours of their amenities and facilities. The pandemic changed the perception of hotel visits, with many guests now taking virtual tours before confirming reservations.

Figure 2: YouTube's User Growth (Source: <https://businessofapps/youtube-users>) [Image: A line graph showing steep growth from 2020 to 2024]

Years	Youtube users(bn)
2020	2.3
2021	2.51
2022	2.66
2023	2.7
2024	2.74

- **TripAdvisor**

TripAdvisor is one of the most popular channels in the hospitality sector, allowing guests to provide feedback and suggestions. It is a vital marketing strategic channel for the industry. According to its website, TripAdvisor receives 463 million users per month. Millions of users utilize this platform to give and receive positive or negative reviews, making it a tremendous tool for marketing strategy. Today, marketing heavily relies on positive reviews, as a higher number of positive reviews translates to greater profitability. Many customers use TripAdvisor to provide feedback after their visit. More reservations lead to more reviews, making it an excellent way to spread word-of-mouth without any cost.

Figure 3: Trip advisor users (2019 to2023) soureswww.businessofapps

Years	Trip advisor users(mn)
2019	225
2020	107.6
2021	185.4
2022	228.9
2023	294.4

- **Instagram**

Instagram is an extremely popular virtual platform for travelers worldwide. Most travelers use it to keep themselves updated and to promote hotel or restaurant brands. With Instagram, a hotel's social media marketing team can increase guest engagement and make it easier for guests to share their experiences and views about the property virtually, marketing the product without any expense. The marketing team helps travelers find information about the hotel's location and upcoming events. The following steps are essential for consistently increasing hotel business through social media: a. Identify your target audience. b. Provide regular updates on events or live posts. c. Maintain consistency. d. Engage with the audience. e. Simplify the process of sharing images through the app.

Figure 4: Use of Social Media to Follow Brands (% of US Users) (Source: <https://sproutsocial.com/insights/instagram-stats/>) [Image: A bar chart showing Instagram 36%, Facebook 19%, Pinterest 24%, Twitter 35%, LinkedIn 20%, YouTube 19%, Reddit 15%, Tumblr 15%, TikTok 11%, Snapchat 11%, WhatsApp 6%]

Use of social media to follow brands	Percentage of users
Instagram	36%
Twitter	35%
Pinterest	24%
Linkedin	20%
Facebook	19%
Youtube	19%
Raddit	15%
Tumblr	15%
Tiktok	11%
Snapchat	11%
Whatsapp	6%

Conclusion

This paper helps recognize the perception and significance of social media in the hospitality sector. It identifies the concept of virtual media marketing and its promotional approaches in this industry. In the modern era, doing business is not easy; all sectors, including hospitality, need to be more active on communal media and use it as a promotional instrument. Greater visibility makes a brand more powerful in the market and promotes business. Although the hospitality sector has its own websites, most need to be more active on social media applications like Meta, Twitter, Instagram, and TripAdvisor, posting informative and interesting videos and photographs. Through such activities, they can increase their business and enhance their brand value. Social media engineering is crucial for sustaining business in the market. By using social media channels, hospitality and other food and beverage outlets can connect directly with consumers and target audiences, endorse their brand more professionally, improve their status, encourage client revisits, increase customer loyalty, and boost organizational transactions.

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