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Social Customer Service and Your Hotel



Hotel Customer Service Through Social Media

In today's digital world we all communicate through **social media** to one degree or another regardless of generational differences. It has become the medium we use to exchange ideas or opinions and create or maintain relationships with not only friends and family but with every industry including, and perhaps especially, when discussing hotel customer service in the hotel industry.

For hotels, it offers a direct channel for guests to provide feedback, from compliments to requests to complaints. And, together with advances in technology, social media channels have created opportunities for hotels to provide and improve **customer service**.

The Three R's of Social Hotel Customer Service

Revenue: Hotels that deliver great **social customer service** will become more profitable than hotels that do not. It is the avenue that influences purchasing decisions and creates booking opportunities.

Reliability: Addressing complaints and resolving issues quickly shows your hotel listens and cares about guests. That spontaneous and authentic contact is what your guests and prospective guests crave. It creates a bond between your hotel and guests that creates loyal followers.

Reputation: Guests that experience a positive customer service experience are 25% more likely to become **advocates** and influencers of your hotel. But they can just as likely stop coming to your hotel and give bad reviews because of a poor experience.

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Social Hotel Customer Service Guidelines

When it comes to a social hotel customer service strategy, there is no magic route your hotel can follow to find the best social customer service practices. It all depends on your hotel's structure, processes, message and identity. But there are some guidelines that will help shape your hotel social customer service practices and serve as a reminder that responsiveness is everything.

Staff Ambassadors: Your hotel staff is first in line for interacting with your guests. Guests want to feel their issues are as important to you as it is to them. Respectfully take care of any issues and show that your hotel makes them your number one priority. To avoid confusion, ensure your staff is consistent with their handling of all issues by setting standard practices for basic issues but allow some flexibility so that staff can make decisions that make them feel they are part of the solution.

Chat Messaging: Provide a messaging service between staff and guests as a solution for handling volume requests of basic issues – like needing towels or an extra pillow. It will also assist your staff in attending all guest needs in a less stressful and efficient way.

Guest Expectations: When guests or prospective guests engage with your hotel through social media platforms, they expect a response in real time. This is your opportunity to shine. There are many live chat services available that can give you the chance to connect with your guests on a more personal level and show your hotel cares - all in real time!

Simply put, properties that take the time to include social hotel customer service as part of their social media marketing strategy will be the ones that will reap the benefits of repeat business and increasing their chances for profitability.

Guest Expectations: Hotel Customer Relations Challenge

In this digital age, use of social networks has become the new word-of-mouth communication channels amongst peers. Spreading the news about your hotel's handling of customer relations may have a new delivery method but it can still make or break your hotel's reputation – only now it is in cyber space and much more far reaching!

Whether your guests are Millennials, GenX or baby boomers, each group has different expectations from their hotel stay and want to be reached through **different social channels**. This presents a challenge for hotels to provide exceptional customer service to the different demographics of each group.

The string that binds hotels with these different groups is delivering high-quality customer service. What hotel wants to turn away bookings or future bookings? The answer is right in your hands! If guests perceive your hotel in a bad light, the ramifications of poor **customer service** will inevitably lead to a bad reputation and loss in sales. But you can turn this around by ensuring you listen to your guests needs, handle the issues – big or small – with speed, respect and graciousness.

Going above and beyond to help make your guest's experience a memorable one shows your hotel provides value to your guests so that they make the original booking and keep coming back again and again. It all comes down to hotel customer relations with your guests. No matter the age, how well you treat your guest means great reviews, attracting potential guests and positively affecting your bottom line.

Guest Expectations: Hotel Customer Relations Challenge

To be heard, one must first learn to listen

Listening to each group's needs and wants is the key to providing great customer service. Who doesn't want to feel special? Whether it's the millennial looking for the next happening eatery or the baby boomer looking for a fun activity to share with their family, carefully listening to the expectations and feed back of each group is the best way to successfully manage them.

Provide the unique guest experience

When choosing a hotel, today's guests want that special experience and the human-touch that makes them feel connected. If your hotel embraces the neighborhood, taking in every bit of the area and extending the uniqueness of your community out to guests, it would provide a personalized experience your guest will not forget.

Accommodate guest lifestyle preferences and expectations

There is a definite shift in preferences and expectations of today's hotel guest. There is a service-oriented lifestyle together with the need to be engaged and entertained. There is a desire for the human-to-human factor that makes a guest hotel stay comforting and welcoming. The saying goes home is where the heart is. Make your guests love their hotel stay by showing them your hotel is not traditional and stagnant but is warm and inviting. It is the relationship you build with your guests that will make your hotel be the "it" place to be.

Guest Expectations: Hotel Customer Relations Challenge

In the end, the best way to handle guest expectations, no matter the demographics, is ensure you provide the best quality customer service. Your hotel will become the destination point that provides the personal, authentic experience today's hotel guest expects and craves. Hotel marketers need to be mindful of this and adapt hotel marketing strategies to meet the challenge.

About Lodging Interactive

Headquartered in Parsippany, NJ, Lodging Interactive is a full-service digital marketing and social media engagement agency exclusively servicing the hospitality industry. Through its web design and search optimization division as well as its **CoMMingle Social Media Division**, Lodging Interactive provides effective Internet marketing services to hundreds of branded and independent properties as well as management companies, restaurants and spas. The company also offers fully managed Live Chat agents for hotel websites through its **LiveChatForHotels.com** division.

Lodging Interactive is an HSMAI Adrian Award winner, and has won awards from the International Academy of Visual Arts, Interactive Media Awards, Horizon Interactive Awards, Web Marketing Association, Academy of Interactive & Visual Arts, and Travel Weekly's Magellan Awards have recognized Lodging Interactive as an industry leader.

Lodging Interactive is a proud supporter of the Hotel Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI) and the company's president, DJ Vallauri, currently serves on the Board of Directors of HSMAI's New York Chapter. For more information, please contact sales@lodginginteractive.com, 877-291-4411 or visit the LodgingInteractive.com.

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- Brand e-Commerce scorecards
- Display advertising
- Email marketing
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- Guest review management responses
- Social media engagement
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- Social Voices (24/7/365)
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Thanks you!