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DIGITAL MARKETING | SINCE 2001 | SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

The Influence of Content on Hotel Bookings



Why Adding Fresh Content is Critical for Your Website's Health

When you update your website with relevant, high quality content the search engines have even more information to provide for search queries. In addition, the more you update your site the more the search engines will visit your site. When the search engines visit your website, you have more opportunity to increase your rankings in the search engine results. Search engines notice when something new is added to a website and then rearrange the site's ranking. A key point to remember when adding content is that it's the quality that matters not the quantity. Your content needs to be relevant, current and engaging if you want to impress the search engines. Adding pages with low quality content that is filled with keywords will get you nowhere fast. You may, in fact, get penalized for this.

Make Frequent Updates

Along with quality content updates, it's important to update your website frequently and consistently. When web crawlers are searching the Internet, they are looking for new web pages or updated web pages that can be indexed. When you continually have new content to be indexed, it will help with how you rank in search engine results. At Lodging Interactive, we know the importance of making frequent updates and adding fresh content, so our best practice is to add relevant content on an ongoing basis to each of our client's websites. We have seen tremendous results from this over the last year and the proof is in the numbers.

Below are metrics for content written about specific events around a hotel.

Pageviews [?] ↓	Unique Pageviews [?]	Avg. Time on Page [?]	Entrances [?]	Bounce Rate [?]
257.89% [▲]	247.06% [▲]	146.25% [▲]	5,000.00% [▲]	35.29% [▲]

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Notice the increases in pageviews, unique pageviews, and time on page. This is significant because it shows that people find the hotel content at different parts of their journey and over time, you will see a significant increase in sessions to your site.

Keyword Opportunities

As you add new content to your website, you are also creating opportunities to add keywords to your site. By optimizing with keywords built strategically into your content, you will attract more visitors based on what your customers are searching for. Again, you don't want to keyword stuff, but rather write engaging content that provides users with helpful information that just happens to have a few pertinent keywords written in. Your content pieces should also be optimized with meta titles and descriptions to help with search engine results.

Provide Valuable Information

Of course, we want our content to help us win over the search engines and boost our rankings, but let's not forget that our customers are really key in making our business successful. So, above all we want the content we add to provide valuable information that customers are looking for. Keep them in the know about what's happening at your hotel, keep special offerings current and always provide information for future planning. Yes, we want the loyalty of the search engines, but it's equally important, if not more important, to build the loyalty of your customers.

User-Generated Content (UGC) Influence on Hotel Bookings

User-generated content (UGC) means digital content created, uploaded and shared publicly online by consumers or end-users through pictures, videos, blog posts, discussion boards, product or service reviews, comments, tweets etc. UGC can initiate a conversation among unpaid contributors through popular social platforms that include the likes of Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and so many other social networks. So what does this all mean for your hotel and the possibility of encouraging bookings? Now-a-days just about everything!

Various studies have shown some compelling statistics:

- Neilson has shown that consumers look to recommendations from those they know for purchases 92% of the time.
- McKinsey has shown that word of mouth marketing generates twice as many sales as paid advertising.
- Tomoson has shown that, on social influencer marketing, ROI is \$6.50 for every dollar invested.
- **Reevo** showed that 72% of people searching out hotels would use UGC as a basis for their purchasing decisions.
- **TurnTo Networks** just released a consumer study that shows 90% of consumer purchasing decisions are based on UGC

Benefits of UGC for Hotels

In today's digital world, no one can deny the impact of social media on companies, products or services provided. People share their activities, opinions and interests through the various social networks. UGC becomes an invaluable resource for hotels where these exchanges can create booking opportunities. Its benefits can be seen through:

User-Generated Content (UGC) Influence on Hotel Bookings

Authenticity & Credibility

We have grown skeptical of traditional marketing content to make purchasing decisions because the source is the brand itself. Instead, more and more, the trend is to search out the opinion and comments from peers to make purchasing decisions. We want to hear from people like ourselves with authentic accounts about experiences.

Personalization

Hotels get to have exchanges with guests or prospective guests where they interact with each other through the many social networks. UGC is unique in that it taps into consumer trust and relationship building. This is where brands learn what resonates with their target audience. So these exchanges create a meaningful interaction and encourage other guests to submit content.

Cost benefits

The costs of traditional advertising and marketing campaigns are always a strain on hotel budgets. But the cost of content creation is included in this marketing approach. After all, the source is the user's exchanges posted publicly through social networks.

Re-purposing unique content

Users contribute new content all the time so information is always fresh. Hotels can re-purpose influencer content into blogs, web page copy etc. It helps the hotel marketing team keep content interesting and encourages users to stay engaged. It allows the hotel/guest relationship to develop beyond check-out.

User-Generated Content (UGC) Influence on Hotel Bookings

Social traffic increase

A social media influencer in the hotel industry has established credibility and has a large follower base. They don't have to be celebrities. They can be bloggers or thought leaders. In all cases, their authentic approach can have an impact on consumer behavior. It wouldn't be far fetched for consumers to be persuaded to listen to their views, appraise the information and check out your hotel site when considering a hotel booking. It would also be important to keep in mind that, in this digital age, millennials are the largest and most influential of all age groups. They are turning off traditional ads and looking to engage in real-time conversations with brand advocates for their purchasing decisions.

Building SEO value

According to Kissmetrics, 25 percent of search results for the top 20 largest brands are links to UGC. Positive guest reviews can raise your SEO ranking. Also, gaining knowledge of the most frequently used words and phrases used by your audience can help your keyword optimization research.

Audience insights and sales leads

Through UGC, hotel marketers can analyze exactly what content is being shared and helps understand what your guests or prospective guests find most engaging. This information can provide valuable insights that can help generate leads and increase sales.

In the end, it's all about people – your guests, your followers, your brand champions – and their experiences, thoughts and mentions of your hotel. If your hotel hasn't considered UGC within your **marketing strategy**, you will be missing out on the possibility of a great many booking opportunities.

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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Thank you!