

Internet marketing offers transparent options to hotels and travel agents

Gone are the days when sales people went on foot and did brochure advertising to showcase their products to clients. This way of filling hotel rooms is passé. Now it is complimented by another position in most hospitality companies, called the online revenue manager.

Clients and guests today not only search for information, offers and deals, but also buy what they had searched for. Because the product you get at the end of the day is the same, you don't have to test an airline seat or a hotel deal. You like the offer and you buy. In fact, all searching is done online and more than 75 per cent searches are done on Google.

The easiest thing to buy was a standard product which meant you could buy it from anywhere and it would be the same, so the only thing you searched for was a 'Good Deal'. The favourite deals online are travel deals and therefore buying travel online has become common for people around the world.

Today, every hotelier and travel agent has a website and wants to promote their services online, the

rush is even more urgent because teenagers, adults, senior citizens all are hooked on to their mobile phones and with the coming of mobile travel sites and hotel sites, it is easier to book anything on the go. So, if you don't have an online presence, you are certainly losing something.

How many people do you think would require a last minute room at a hotel or a car pickup for an unscheduled, just come up business trip? He's already at the airport, would he not browse his phone and find a good deal? And if you were visible, wouldn't you get the business?

Advantages of online marketing



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Well, its best to assume a serious hotelier would want to open his room and display his inventory and showcase its property where there are prospective guests. These guests are online, and the number of hours per week that these consumers

spend online is only increasing.

Top category for search over the years has been travel and people look for deals throughout the year to book their next vacation. The hotelier who's not online is nowhere to be found by these millions of holiday makers.

Second advantage to the large chains and their senior management is something that brings a smile on their faces instantly ... "measurable ROI"

The internet is one of the only marketing and advertising platforms where your money spent in most cases can be measured for its exact ROI.

For example, if you spend Rs 5000 a day on marketing your hotel online

and get from it 10 clicks and 4 conversions which equals 4 into 5000(your room rate as advertised), it means you spent an X amount and got X plus Y back. Also, its easy to measure this per hour per country by demography and this helps you control and target your marketing plans. What's more you can close it at any time you want and restart it at the click of a button.

Thirdly, hoteliers and their sales managers are always looking for travel agents and tour operators who would patronise their hotels and these very tour operators are always online checking out deals for their clients and are bound to find a visible hotel.

A travel agent or a tour operator, on the other hand, looking to promote his own unique selling point (being a special offer) needs to be online to ensure people searching for similar offers do see him.

Keywords Magic

Google has keyword tools which can easily give you ideas as to which keywords are being searched. If you find people are searching for Kerala houseboat tours a lot more in the month of August, this would mean you could float offers of Kerala houseboat tours and people would find them.

Tour operators, large or small, love inbound traffic. There are Europeans and Canadians and all nationalities searching for India and the tours and various holiday ideas at different times of the year. The internet and marketing on it can help you identify the times and offer deals around those times and then change the deals and offers instantly at the click of a button for another season or to cater to a different type of vacationer.

The advantages of sound internet marketing are huge and growing every day, but surely a proper marketing campaign which starts with a website that represents who you are is vital, going on to perfect SEO (search engine optimisation) which is to make your site easy to find by the search engines (Google, MSN, Yahoo) and further marketing through other social media channels like FaceBook, StumbledUpon, 4square and others.

(The author is Avijit Arya, chief mogul, Internet Moguls and also a Google certified professional.)