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Internet Booking Strategies: With Reference to OTA Vs. Direct Booking

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ABSTRACT

In this era of increasing internet bookings, hotels must maintain track of the online travel agencies (OTAs) and the offers they provide. Because there is a danger of uncertainty with OTAs, hotels must be aware of all elements of them, particularly those connected to value and cost, as well as all conceivable distribution channels. If there is a connection or set of criteria that favours an OTA while attempting to hurt the hotel's earnings, such regulations should be changed, and an emphasis should be placed on increasing direct reservations.The paper highlights some techniques & strategies related to OTA and Direct Booking.

Keywords: OTA, marketing, consumers, strategies

Capture More Direct Bookings

Although OTAs can help hotels obtain consumers in times like today, when travel is limited to a large extent due to the pandemic, there are occasions when interactions with OTAs do not result in a successful arrangement for the hotels. When hotels form partnerships with OTAs with substantial "customer traffic," their reach expands significantly. When striking a contract with these hotels, the OTAs have their own pre-conditions. They, for example, charge a fee for each booking made via them, while also imposing stipulations such as last-room-available requirements. Moving on to the condition of the final room guarantee, the hotel loses control over the ultimate inventory selection.

Visitors Want

It is critical to design the hotel's website in an attention-getting manner in order to increase consumer reservations. The most essential aim here is to convert website traffic from potential guests to bookings in as little time as possible. It is critical to comprehend the needs of prospects and customers who are looking for a hotel website. One of the most important criteria is the reason for their search, as well as the dates they want to stay, the goal of their search, and the type of experience they want to have by booking the hotel.

Previous clients can be encouraged to book through the hotel's website by offering connections to their emails, which can be kept in a database. Today's technology has aided marketers in a variety of advertising strategies. When looking for a holiday destination, for example, users may see adverts from online travel agencies (OTAs) offering a variety of lodging options. In such circumstances, hotels might assist increase reservations by advertising their own websites through the personalised services supplied by technology. It is believed that with these advertising options, there is a probability of a specific percent return rate on website views, which can boost the number of direct reservations made.

Enhance Guest Experience

Increasing and improving direct reservations requires attracting people to the hotel's website. However, if consumers are led to the hotel website and find it inconvenient to look for information there, all of the effort put into it will be for naught. Potential visitors go to the hotel website to gather the information they need to make a reservation, but they become frustrated browsing through it if the layout isn't user-friendly. The hotel website should be able to convey the environment and atmosphere that guests will encounter when they arrive at the facility. A difficult booking experience might alter their perception of a pleasant stay at the hotel and, as a result, generate a poor impression of the establishment.

Guests want the hotel to emphasise its unique selling characteristics, as well as information about nearby tourist sites that is prominently displayed on the website. Although hotel websites may not receive as many visitors as OTA websites, they should be designed in such a way that they can present their hotel to the world in the best possible light.

Customised Information for Guests

Guests are concerned about the health and sanitary amenities provided by the hotels during the COVID phase. The norms and regulations for properly handling and preventing COVID dangers must be rigorously observed in the hotel grounds, and visitors should be provided assurance about the same. The hotel website should explicitly state the protocols followed by hotel members, as well as any certifications that may be available. Other tactics, such as any additional safeguards indicated by the hotels, emphasis on prior visitors, such as giving them welcome back special packages, and other special offers targeted at new guests considering bookings, may all help to increase the amount of direct bookings. Due to the high demand for some services, OTAs charge an additional fee to their clients when they use these services.

Direct booking options allow customers to save money on their stay. There are also more incentives that attract new clients, such as staycation packages that include other activities while adhering to COVID guidelines. The website's specialties should be presented in an appealing manner. Incorporating user-generated material from various social media platforms will foster a good attitude toward the hotel and aid in building trust and credibility. Before making a reservation online, the majority of people seek for reviews. In such circumstances, a hotel website that provides the information might aid users in making a selection. Furthermore, it is critical that a hotel's website be extremely informational for individuals from all over the world. The website should provide confidence regarding the service grade for individuals hailing. There are some tech-savvy consumers who book using websites, and in these circumstances

OTAs Value

While employing OTAs to increase reservations necessitates a significant financial investment, it is worth noting that not all OTAs are harmful. They do assist in getting potential visitors to the hotel website for direct reservations who would not have found it otherwise. It is critical for hotels to successfully control their distribution expenses. The hotels may bargain with OTAs and receive better discounts if they have the actual cost of the visitors they have recruited via the usage of OTAs. Once these tactics have been developed, they may be used to make a variety of immediate and long-term judgements on the value of third-party channels. The investments made in OTAs will be used on a variety of platforms in the future. Handling OTAs using strategies that will benefit hotels in the future, such as imposing conditions, should be applied.

Conclusion

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the hospitality sector has adjusted its marketing strategy. The safety and sanitary standards maintained on the premises are the major focus of customers seeking a hotel stay. At this time, hoteliers must reassure their visitors that the criteria are being followed and provide a positive service experience.

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