

Assignment: Part One: Project proposal

Completed by: Khaleda Ahmed-Tareq

Student Number: 2017486

Module: Hotel Placement Research Project

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Lecturer's Name: Laurence Blake

One of the notable transformations that have occurred in the world is the significant rise in the level of interconnectivity among individuals residing in diverse regions of the planet. As a result of this phenomenon, a recent trend has surfaced in which numerous social media platforms are promoting a culture of increased interconnection. The utilisation of these platforms has demonstrated occasional effectiveness in distributing personal perspectives to a vast network of interconnected individuals.

The implementation of this concept has proven to be efficacious in commercial operations, particularly for expeditious execution of promotional endeavours. This report is centred on the Marriott hotel, which offers a range of hospitality services, and the consequential effect on sales resulting from the implementation of this approach.

AIM: To examine the influence of social media on the sales function of the hospitality sector, with a particular emphasis on Marriott Hotel.

OBJECTIVES:

- To evaluate the benefits of utilising Social Media Techniques within the Sales Department.
- To develop effective tactics aimed at enticing a specific group of corporate travellers.
- To determine the issues related to the execution of this promotional approach.
- To propose and advise on diverse strategies aimed at enhancing the number of customers for their services.

Factors that contribute to the selection of the research project

The hospitality industry has been notably affected by social media platforms, as they have transformed the manner in which enterprises interact with their business and generate revenue. Social media is a potent instrument in the hospitality sector, enabling businesses to expand their reach, establish brand recognition, and impact consumer buying behaviour. In addition, social media platforms provide a forum for patrons to exchange their personal experiences, evaluations, and endorsements, thereby significantly influencing the sales operations of hospitality enterprises (Sigala, p257, 2018).

Online reviews have changed how people choose hospitality services. Travellers rely on TripAdvisor, Yelp, and Booking.com for recommendations. These platforms allow consumers to voice their ideas, grade their experiences, and offer feedback, which greatly influences hotel, restaurant, and other hospitality sales. To optimise sales, hospitality organisations must understand how internet reviews affect client decision-making (Xiang et al., 2017).

Facebook, Twitter, and TripAdvisor are prominent hotel marketing and consumer involvement mediums. These platforms let hotels display their offerings, engage with prospective visitors, and encourage direct reservations. Hotels may increase income, brand awareness, and client acquisition by being active on social media. To maximise sales and allocate resources, hotel managers must understand how social media marketing affects important performance factors like RevPAR (Nusair et al., p410-428, 2018).

The process of selecting a research topic in the hospitality industry involves consideration of multiple factors, including the communication mixes employed by firms to attract and convert diverse types of travellers into consumers.

However, any strategy that is used as part of the promotional mix comes with a number of drawbacks and requires a significant amount of time. As a consequence, it is very important to implement a method that may shorten the amount of time required and deliver immediate implications and related outcomes. Because of this, social media is the most effective platform that can be utilised to promote the services and products that are offered by Marriott Hotel.

Evaluation and Criticism

According to Agnihotri et al (p63, p3-13, 2016) findings, the employment of digital technology has brought about a significant transformation in the promotional strategies of firms. The adoption of social media has been facilitated by the replacement of manual strategies with automation. This benefits a multitude of businesses in the hospitality industry. As individuals focus on societal patterns and utilise multiple social networking platforms, they perceive it as a prospect to augment revenue by acquiring fresh clientele. The platform facilitates connectivity among a vast number of individuals across the globe, thereby simplifying the process of achieving global recognition. The implementation of this approach results in a decrease in the utilisation of promotional strategies and more efficient use of time, ultimately leading to improved practical outcomes.

According to Pizam et al. (p1-10, 2016), the implementation of such approaches to enhance sales necessitates the employment of skilled professionals, thereby resulting in increased costs. These competent individuals require adequate compensation. The increase in process complexity can be attributed to the endeavour to save time.

Summary of Proposed Research Project

Background

In order to enhance hotel revenue, it is essential to draw the attention of various types of travellers that include business, leisure, and repeat visitors. The process of selecting a hotel is influenced by a variety of internal and external factors. The imperative task of updating all marketing strategies necessitates the establishment of brand awareness and the acquisition of worldwide recognition among potential clientele. Therefore, social media presents a cost-effective and time-efficient means of attracting them.

Methodology

Research Method: Qualitative research has been chosen as the method to explore the influence of social media platforms on attracting business travellers. Qualitative research allows for a deep understanding of individuals' experiences, perceptions, and behaviours. It helps uncover the subjective aspects of social media influence, such as the motivations, preferences, and decision-making processes of business travellers. Creswell (p254, 2013) highlights the value of qualitative research in understanding complex social phenomena and gaining in-depth insights from participants' perspectives.

Research Design: An inductive design technique will be employed to develop methods to attract business travellers through social media platforms. Inductive reasoning involves collecting specific observations or data and deriving broader theories or patterns from them. By examining various strategies used by organisations to attract business travellers on social media platforms, can identify commonalities and develop generalisable insights. This approach aligns with the exploratory nature of the research and facilitates the generation of new ideas and theories. Bryman (p40 & p70, 2016) discusses the inductive approach as a suitable method for exploratory research to develop theories based on empirical observations.

Research Philosophy: The interpretive school of thought will guide the interpretation of findings and offer conclusions in this research. Interpretivism emphasises understanding social phenomena through subjective interpretation and focuses on the meanings and experiences of individuals. By adopting an interpretivist perspective, acknowledges the subjective nature of social media's influence on attracting business travellers and aims to capture their lived experiences. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) highlight the interpretive paradigm as an approach that recognises the role of interpretation and meaning-making in social research.

Collecting the Data: Primary data will be gathered using a questionnaire. The questionnaire is a structured data collection tool that allows the researcher to gather specific information from participants efficiently. It provides a standardised approach to collecting data and can be easily administered to a relatively large number of respondents. The questionnaire can include questions about business travellers' social media usage, their preferences and behaviours, and their experiences with different platforms. Babbie (p497, 2016) discusses the use of questionnaires as a primary data collection method in social research.

Sampling: The sample size will consist of up to thirty responders. The determination of sample size depends on various factors, including the research goals, the research context, and the desired level of data saturation or diversity of participants. With qualitative research, the emphasis is often on depth rather than breadth, and smaller sample sizes can still provide rich insights. Braun and Clarke (p589-597, 2019) suggest that sample sizes of around 20-30 participants are often sufficient for thematic analysis, depending on the complexity of the research question and the data collected.

Data Analysis: According to Braun and Clarke (p589-597, 2019), Thematic analysis will be used to analyse the collected data. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data. It involves a systematic process of coding and categorizing data to identify key themes.

A suitable course of action.

The established timeline for each activity in order to ensure timely completion of the study, as incomplete tasks can compromise the efficacy of the research. The subsequent document outlines the research proposal formulated for inquiry.

Conducting the proposed research inquiry utilising a questionnaire as the primary tool.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Gender:

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

1) Are you in favour of using digital technology into corporate operations and why?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

2) Is the hotel brand responsible for managing its social media accounts?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3) How did you get familiar with the idea of Social Media techniques?

4) What percentage of the promotional strategies employed by hotels is attributed to the utilisation of this particular technique?

- ☐ 100%
- ☐ 75%
- ☐ 50%
- ☐ 25%
- ☐ 10%

5) What is the impact of Social Media usage on sales?

6) What are the visible benefits that can be observed following the utilisation of social media platforms for promotional purposes?

7) What are the potential challenges or issues that may arise following the implementation of this particular methodology?

8) What is the percentage increase in total sales resulting from the promotional campaign conducted through this medium?

9) Are you happy with the outcome that has been obtained from this methodology?

10) What is the influence of marketing tools on enhancing customer satisfaction in the context of hospitality management?

Evaluation techniques for research.

Formative evaluation is a research method that aims to understand a subject in-depth. It involves collecting qualitative data through interviews, focus groups, observations, and document analysis. These methods provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Regular feedback loops and expert reviews are crucial for refining the research approach and validating findings. By employing these techniques, you can evaluate findings and conclusions effectively.

Ethical considerations

The project proposal should address ethical issues by including measures such as obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, protecting vulnerable populations, managing conflicts of interest, upholding research integrity, obtaining ethical review and approval, monitoring adverse events, emphasizing beneficence and non-maleficence, promoting openness and transparency, and adhering to relevant regulations and guidelines.

Conclusion

Overall, researching social media's influence on the hospitality sector's sales function can provide valuable insights that enable businesses to make data-driven decisions, enhance their competitive edge, and achieve measurable improvements in brand performance and sales outcomes.

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