Hints for creating a succesfull Hotel Marketing Plan

You want to realise business strategies and market your hotel more effective? So here we go with some piece of advice for your hotel marketing plan.

Why would I need a Hotel Marketing Plan?

No matter if you run a small single hotel, a medium sized one or a large Hotel company, whether newly founded or well-tried – you – as a hotelier – have to face daily challenges as renting rooms, satisfying guest demands and achieve business goals. As those business goals should not come into being randomly or just by gut feelings, a marketing plan should be the basis of your corporate agitation. Every single step and thought of your marketing strategy will be written down and be explained right here.

Be sure your Hotel Marketing Plan does not grow into a weighty tome of hundreds of pages, but instead being constructively focussed on the most important aspects. There is no point in investing hours and hours of work in a plan just to disregard it in the end. In order to achieve your sighted business goals, the Hotel Marketing Plan should be used in day-to-day operations. Though, there are several things to pay attention to when composing it. Therefore, full concentration and sufficient time is required here. Moreover, it should be updated regularly – like once a year – and match the general business strategy.

This brief article is ought to give a rough understanding how to create a Hotel Marketing Plan and eventually serve you as a tool to sustain your position within the harshly competitive hotel business.

Preconditions for a Hotel Marketing Plan

In order to determine precise marketing goals, you should already have formulated a clear business strategy. For doing so, it is important to observe your hotel from a bird's-eye view and to ask yourself following questions:

- Who are our guests / our target audiences?
- Why should guests come to our place of all hotels? Which advantages do we offer to our customers?
- Who are our competitors?
- What are we specialized in? How are we differentiating ourself from our competitors? In which aspects are we better?
- What are our products and services – and for which of them did we receive positive or negative feedback?
- What are weaknesses of our hotel?
- What is our philosophy / our vision?

On those questions you should have convincing answers at hand. Subsequently, you can begin drafting precise goals of your marketing strategy defining concrete demands to be achieved over a specific period. Those goals must formulated in a way that they are verifiable and controllable. Maybe you want to increase direct bookings from your website by 5% or you want to enforce your presence within social networks, you can later on check whether you hit the line. Do not forget to define and include budgets for marketing measures into your calculation. In the end it is all about making those worth for you and your hotel.

Create specific marketing measures

You have done an important first step by doing a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) – analysis as well as defining a business strategy. By now, you are getting ready to actually start working on your Hotel Marketing Plan. That includes developing certain measures for the following categories – the so-called four P's.

- Product
- Price
- Promotion
- Place

It is highly recommended to do some sort of brainstorming with some appropriate employees from the different sectors of your hotel. Hear everyones opinion, let them speak and be thirsty for new ideas. Afterwards, you can do – on your own or with the team – a cost-benefit analysis for the particular ideas. Those measures that show great promise for your budget will be included into your Hotel Marketing Plan. Concrete examples frequently used could be:

- Company logo / business cards
- Direct mailing / Newsletter
- Presence in social networks
- Telemarketing
- Online Avertisement /SEA

Concrete measures must be formulated precisely and achievable within a certain timeframe. Do not hesitate to be ambitious here but keep it down-to-earth. Oftentimes it needs multiple small steps in order to achieve one bigger goal. Always keep in mind your target audience and set up a logical agenda that is coherent to your business strategy. Hand out the Hotel Marketing Plan to all your employees giving them a feeling of being part of it and having contributed to its development.

In most cases, good teamwork does not only lead to fruitful outcomes and interesting ideas. At the same time, it might help to overcome burdens between different working areas and to create synergy between those. Your staff will learn more about the work of their colleagues. By doing so they will also be more likely to understand how and why to integrate into your general business strategy.

Performance review

Your Hotel Marketing Plan should be a guide taking you into the future. This is why you should constantly challenge the goals determined within. In the fast moving hotel business, a correct analysis including its related goals for today can be outdated and inefficient by tomorrow. Not only internal changes, also shifts in the social, political and economical environment can have great and influential effects on a hotel and its marketing efforts.

This does not require you to hire economical and political experts, but to pay attention towards external events and eventually adapt certain measures.

Performance review offers valuable clues about effectiveness and profitability of your business strategies and marketing efforts. Somewhere between constant optimization and adustment of your strategies on the one hand, and necessary patience to let your ideas come into being on the other hand, you might find the secret of an effective Hotel Marketing Plan. Controll your success on a regularly level by looking at numbers and stats as well as by organize team meetings. It is the only way to ensure that you will achieve the goals as set in your Hotel Marketing Plan.

Final words

A hotel marketing plan supports you and your hotel in different ways. Not only it helps to gain new guests and turn one time guests into repeating customers. It also helps to embed unclear and indefinite business goals in concrete frameworks and eventually to implement them by well thought out measures.

As a first step, it is important to develop and formulate a general business strategy being essential for your hotel to position itself properly. In that course, clear business objectives should come into being that you and some handpicked coworkers can deduce certain marketing measures from.

From now on, things get more elaborated and difficult as you have to translate your – to this point still purely theoretical – Hotel Marketing Plan into practical use. From here you need to be patient as well as vigilant on how your strategies will fit day in, day out work processes. Ideally, you want to create an action plan for and with your employees to describe how exactly you want your ideas to be applied.

Having managed to successfully implement the Hotel Marketing Plan into daily workflows you must not forget to carefully observe the impact of your measures. Not until your strategies cause real improvment, your employees work in concert to realize objectives and profitability ending up to be proven, you can consider the implementation of your Hotel Marketing Plan completed succesfully. Up to that point be critical, do not hesitate to challenge formulated goals and adapt them to altered circumstances. This is the only way for you safeguarding – no matter if you run a small single hotel, a medium sized one or a large Hotel company – to have done everything in your power for tapping the full potential of your hotel.

Further reading

Malcolm McDonald, *Marketing Planning: Understanding marketing plans and strategies*

Maarit Karppinen, *Strategic Marketing Plan for a Hotel*

Philip Kotler, *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*

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