

The Curious Case of Online Reviews in Hotel Bookings

There's a whole different world of online reviews and their implications, and they affect the hotel industry in both good and bad ways.

MADRID, SPAIN, August 18, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Internet boom resulted in many good things, and one of them was online reviews.

Online reviews gave customers a window to see through the opaqueness of inexperience. They allowed them to learn from the encounters and ordeals of (typically) strangers online and decide whether they want the same things. On the flip side, online reviews revamped how businesses interact with their clients and ultimately better guest experience.

But things aren't as black and white as they seem. There's a whole different world of online reviews and their implications, and they affect the hotel industry in multiple ways.

Online Reviews Influence Customers

Before booking a service or stay, guests like to go through online reviews by other customers. It gives them a perceived assurance of quality service before they experience it first-hand. Moreover, it helps them not book an experience that could turn out to be a regrettable mistake. But how much does an online review influence their overall decision?

An Expedia study found that customers would value guest ratings over a brand about [72%](#) of the time. This means any online review, whether good or bad, can easily make or break the image of a hotel/brand and make a potential guest more or less likely to proceed with the booking.

Another study found that 70.9% of travelers believed online content influences their hotel choice.

Hence, it may be safe to assume that online reviews are a significant factor in the final decision of a customer.

Reviewer's Dilemma

A business's potential customer may be reading online reviews and consuming content like

review videos and podcasts about it. Reading reviews and watching these videos and such is easy. But how natural is it for an individual to make an effort to write a positive or negative review?

Just as one would make of it, [a study revealed](#) that only 40% of travelers would leave reviews when they experienced good services, whereas about 48% would leave a review after experiencing bad services. Does it mean there is a higher possibility of finding a negative online review than a positive one? Also, does it mean customers are more likely to express bad feelings than good ones?

The percentage of reviewers is considerably lower than that of those who read these reviews. This means not every guest or customer leaves a review of their experience, and the reviews may not represent a collective average view of all the guests.

Well, this also means there's a need to be more careful not to allow customers the opportunity to report a bad experience. Even if they do, it would be the smartest to offer service recovery options to compensate and ensure they are satisfied with it. Customers will reciprocate with the same feelings they leave a property with.

Fake and Paid Reviews

One cannot deny the existence of fake and paid reviews. They are a big thing in the market today. They put the customers in a difficult spot because both positive and negative reviews can be and usually are bought. Many businesses buy good reviews for themselves and bad ones for their rivals. Whether it is ethical to do so is a different story altogether, but the point is the customers can't figure out if the reviews are fake.

Many businesses buy both positive and negative reviews for their own hotel to present a more genuine picture to the customers. One may consider it a reasonable option since 52% of people surveyed would never book a hotel with zero reviews.

How to Deal with Online Reviews?

For customers, online reviews are a great way to discern the quality of experience, but they are not the only or last thing they consider. Sure, they look if the reviews are consistently good or bad or if there are none. At this point, a huge portion of the game is either won or lost but still not over.

Respond to the Reviews

One cannot prevent customers from leaving reviews for their hotel. Responding to reviews can positively impact a business's reputation with consumers. Furthermore, it demonstrates to negative reviewers that the hotel is committed to resolving their concerns and winning back their patronage.

Ask for Feedback at Checkout and Encourage Customers to Leave Reviews

Customers feel heard when asked to leave feedback at the checkout. A customer with a bad experience will appreciate being apologized to, while a happy customer should be encouraged or incentivized to leave an honest review about their experience. Customers who have a good experience at a hotel may not otherwise feel motivated enough to do so.

Provide Satisfactory Service Recovery in Case of a Complaint

There may be times when a distressed customer raises a complaint. The staff should be competent to handle such situations so they don't go out of hand. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) should be used to handle guest grievances appropriately, and no customer should leave the property unhappy. Remember, no one can stop an unhappy customer from leaving a negative review. Satisfactory service recovery could prevent or at least mellow it.

Improve Customer Touchpoints

See how potential customers interact with the business's website, social media handles, and telephone lines. These are the first bases of engagement and should ideally attract customers. Whether it is the website's unique appearance and friendly user experience, catchy photos, videos, and written content on social media, or the professional mannerisms of the telephone operators, one needs to ensure everything is correct.

Conduct Regular [Mystery Audits](#)

With consistent poor reviews and ratings, the goal should be pinpointing areas where products and services are lacking. If the data from reviews and ratings are not helpful enough, consider conducting a mystery audit.

Mystery audits help analyze precisely where a business fails to provide quality guest experience and satisfaction. Thereby allowing the opportunity to improve the guest experience over time and in the long run.

Conclusion

Ensure actual representation of your hotel through online reviews by acting on negative feedback and encouraging customers to leave positive reviews.

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