

Surfacing Social Media as a Platform in Marketing Selected Tourism Establishments in Santa Rosa, Laguna

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ABSTRACT

Social media has improved the way many companies connect with and target their demographics for the travel and hospitality sector. Specifically, the growth of the internet and the increased popularity of social networks has changed tourism and hospitality marketing. Speaking from this perspective, this study conducted an inquiry on the role of social media in selected tourism establishments in the City of Santa Rosa, Laguna. The primary concern of this study was to determine how tourism establishments use social media to attract tourist arrival; determine how the management responds to client's feedback on social media; and identify the challenges encountered by tourism establishments in their usage of social media as a marketing tool. The researchers have chosen three tourism-related establishments (restaurant, hotel, and travel agency) in Sta Rosa, Laguna. In order to achieve their aims, this study used a qualitative type of research-descriptive analysis method. As a result, the three tourism establishments found the usage of social media as a marketing tool, very effective and convenient. Moreover, all of the three establishments have the same way of responding to customer feedbacks online and claimed that they almost did not have any major challenges experienced upon their usage of social media as a marketing tool.

Key words: Social media, tourism establishments, marketing, Santa Rosa, Laguna

INTRODUCTION

The travel industry includes the transient development of individuals to goals outside spots where they typically live and work. It additionally includes the exercises of individuals, alluded to as travelers or guests, amid their visit to these goals and the offices and administrations belittled amid their remain. It is additionally helpful socially, politically, socially, and instructively (Bahamas Ministry of Tourism, 2019).

Social media is a personal computer-based innovation that encourages the sharing of thoughts and data and the structure of virtual systems and networks. By plan, online networking is web based and offers clients simple electronic correspondence of individual data and other substance, for example, recordings and photographs. Clients connect with internet-based life by means of PCs, tablets, or smart phones by online programming or web application, regularly using it for informing. Online life started as an instrument that individuals used to associate with loved ones; however, was later received by organizations that needed to exploit a well-known new specialized strategy to connect with clients. The intensity of internet-based life is the capacity to interface and offer data with anybody on Earth (or large numbers of individuals) as long as they likewise utilize web-based life (Dollarhide, 2019).

Bizfluent has provided three major significance of marketing in tourism industry. One of these is the increase in customer awareness. One reason why these goals are so prevalent is that they are vigorously advanced in terms of media. Another is that it helps in the growth of the local economy—the travel industry showcasing ads to the development of neighborhood and national economies around the world. Indeed, one-fifth of every single worldwide employment made over the previous decade have been inside the movement area. About 10 percent of all employments are upheld by this industry. The more individuals visit a city or nation, the more cash they spend. This develops the neighborhood economy and pulls in speculators. New inns and excursion resorts open their entryways, prompting the making of new employments. As the nearby framework and administrations improve, the quantity of visitor's increments significantly more. What is more, ultimately, showcasing in the travel industry promotes local brands. Numerous little urban communities and towns are home to world-class facilities. Advertisers advance these

spots on the web and disconnected to drive brand mindfulness and pull in guests. They likewise ensure that data on eateries, lodgings, and different settings is effectively open and state-of-the-art (Picincu, 2018).

According to Rampton (2017), social media is a ground-breaking channel for drawing in and associating with current clients. It enables you to demonstrate you are progressively close to home side, rapidly address client concerns, and demonstrate that you are a specialist in your field. Be that as it may, web-based life can likewise be a key driver of new prompts for your business. Moreover, as these prospects become clients, online life enables you to sustain those new connections, prompting more prominent associations, and in the end, transformations (Rampton, 2017)

Review of literature

Georgiou (2016) stated that businesses are progressively utilizing online life and advanced showcasing to interface with potential clients. Be that as it may, with internet-based life winding up increasingly coordinated into our regular day-to-day existences, utilizing it to hold your current clients is additionally an imperative practice. Drawn in and glad clients are incredible resources—they commonly move toward becoming recurrent clients and will likewise help spread the great word about your business, which is especially significant given the expanded availability of social time. Internet-based life can hold clients by reacting to audits, do not simply give surveys a chance to sit torpid on the web, dependably try to react. That implies reacting deferentially and obligingly to negative surveys, just as expressing gratitude toward people for constructive notices. Individuals read surveys, in truth, they search them out. For some clients, the audits that an organization jumps via web-based networking media are a central factor in whether they will utilize a given item.

The dubious component here is in those negative surveys. Be careful about getting into open fights with miserable clients in an open discussion—you quite often lose. When reacting to a negative survey, dependably keep it positive, remorseful, and non-fierce. To do that, try not to react right away. In the event that you get a negative survey, take as much time as needed before releasing an answer. A couple of hours will enable your very own feelings to cool and your judicious personality to kick in. Offer the client an answer in the event that you can, maybe a refund or a free month of membership. Offer some kind of reparation freely.

When you satisfy miserable clients, and others see that those watchers will be significantly more ready to take a risk on you. Besides, a client who was once troubled, yet turned out to be increasingly happy with your organization, will, by and large, have an expanded feeling of reliability due to your endeavors (Georgiou, 2016).

Conceptual framework

The study focused on showing how to attract customers through effective social media marketing, respond to customers on social media, and overcome challenges encountered by selected tourism establishments. It chose to be examined and we can see that associations spending via web-based networking media keep on taking off; however, estimating its effect remains a test for organizations. With everything taken into account, long range interpersonal communication destinations encourage dynamic correspondence among organizations and clients and goad connections among clients. This study also looked

for ways on how tourism businesses like hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, and recreational or theme parks market their names and businesses using social web as a tool.



Figure 1. Determine the social media marketing of selected tourism establishments

Objectives of the study

This study aimed to cover social media as a platform in marketing selected tourism establishments. More specifically, to determine how selected tourism establishments in Sta. Rosa, Laguna use social media to attract tourist arrival; to determine how the management of selected tourist establishments respond to clients' feedback as social media; and to identify the challenges encountered by selected tourism management in their usage of social media as a marketing tool.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the descriptive method of research. The researchers prepared the interview guide that was used to gather the information needed in the study. This descriptive survey method of research is a process of analyzing, gathering, and classifying prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, trends, and cause and effect relationships. The organized data were subjected to interpretation.

The researchers chose three tourism-related establishments (restaurant, hotel, and travel agency) in the city of Santa Rosa, Laguna. Santa Rosa is situated along the south hall of Luzon or around 40 kilometers south of Manila in the principal locale of the province of Laguna. It is a key and perfect spot for nearby and remote business people because of its vicinity to Metro Manila. It lies 50 kilometers northwest of Santa Cruz, the capital town of the Province of Laguna. It is connected to Metro Manila and other southern territories by the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX), the Manila South Road, and the Philippine National Railroad (south line). From the SLEX trade, the city of Santa Rosa can be accessed through a national street prompting the adjoining region of Silang, Cavite. Water transport to the close-by waterfront town is likewise accessible.

The researchers have chosen the authorized marketing representatives of the three tourism establishments (restaurant, hotel, and travel agency) in Santa Rosa for interview. We have chosen the marketing personnel in charge in the tourism establishments for they are the ones knowledgeable of the marketing events in the specific company they are handling. They are the ones in charge for advancing the travel industry and concocting visitor improvement crusades with the point of producing and expanding income.

To appropriately measure the variables of the study, an interview guide was used. The interview guide was used to gather information from key informants which are the authorized marketing representatives of the three tourism establishments (restaurant, hotel, and travel agency). The interviewee or key informants were the source of the primary data for this study. Since the researchers used pure qualitative research, no statistical treatment was used. The researchers utilized descriptive analysis.

Descriptive research is research used to “describe” a circumstance, subject, conduct, or marvel. It is utilized to respond to inquiries of who, what, when, where, and how connected with a specific research question or issue. Elucidating ponders are frequently portrayed as concentrates that are worried about discovering “what is.” It endeavors to accumulate quantifiable data that can be utilized to factually investigate an intended interest group or a specific subject. Depiction is utilized to watch and portray an exploration subject or issue without impacting or controlling the factors in any capacity. Henceforth, these investigations are extremely correlational or observational, and not genuinely trial. This kind of research is decisive in nature, as opposed to exploratory. Consequently, spellbinding examination does not endeavor to answer “why” and is not utilized to find deductions, make forecasts, or build causal connections (Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching, n. d.)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

How selected tourism establishments use social media to attract tourist arrival

Restaurant

According to the branch manager, the owner chose Facebook and Instagram as platforms for their market. She said that it is the easiest way to reach out people when it comes to marketing. Social media is a convenient way to attract for everybody because of using cell phones or gadgets. They have also different sites not only in Facebook and Instagram, but they have their own website and also, there is Zomato. The restaurant has its own department that handles their social media accounts because they are the ones who are qualified for that position. They make their product appealing in a creative way and have communication skills to their target market.

Wishpond Technologies Ltd. (2019) stated that adding online life to your advertising blend can immensely build mindfulness about your eatery, produce inspired commitment with your sustenance, and get you more clients in your entryway. One of the initial phases in effective promoting is to realize who you are speaking with. This is especially valid in internet-based life.

The owner of the restaurant is the one who can handle their social media accounts. She told us that lately, they had a promo in celebration of the restaurant’s 10th year of operation. The branch manager stated that this kind of celebration can attract customers to avail it or to visit their restaurant. For example, customers surfing the internet can see the promo, if they scroll up and down social media (news feed), they can see their promo because once they have followed the restaurant’s Facebook page, they can see their updates and posts. Using social media websites can boost sales and attract new customers by announcing sales and giveaways and by advertising.

Fatbit Chef (n. d.) stated that it is okay to run bargains and promotion codes via web-based networking media. Recently acquainted; however, demonstrated a decent method to advance items via web-based networking media is giving ceaseless bargains and promotion codes. Give unique arrangements to clients via web-based networking media consistent with the goal that they stay connected consistently. You can likewise complete a touch of conceptualizing on how you can customize the entire idea of offering limits and promotion codes to make your clients feel extraordinary.

The restaurant actually acquaints with a celebrity because her boss or the owner is the celebrity’s chef. Aside from a restaurant, their boss has catering business and is a known chef for stars. The branch manager stated that one reason why their business is well known and has a lot of market is because the owner became a guest in the noontime show for the particular celebrity. It became a form of marketing

strategy by promoting the owner's restaurant in television and it gave them an effective way to appeal to their target market.

According to Wicks (2019), TV and radio are conventional roads that are still broadly utilized to communicate advertising contacts in an extensive gathering of people inside a restricted timeframe. TV additionally conveys legitimacy and authenticity to an item as should be obvious how the item functions. Nevertheless, messages on TV have a shorter life expectancy compared to printed messages. Also, promoting through TV and radio is costlier compared to different types of conventional showcasing.

For the restaurant, social media is more convenient than traditional ways of advertising because with social media, you do not have to pay huge amounts like for TV or radio advertisements. Currently, social media can be used anytime. When they use hashtags to recognize the restaurant and to become trending, it becomes part of the marketing strategy. Hashtags are not laissez-faire types of thing which are not just trends that need to be adopted. They are a means of communicating and expanding your business on social media. Wishpond Technologies Ltd. (2019) indicated that hashtags are colossal in Instagram. They are predominant and significant. Utilizing hashtags is to expand mindfulness about both your Instagram profile and your eatery, it is important to incorporate applicable slanting hashtags. When you are running a specific advertising effort—a challenge, make a label only for that advancement. This lets your devotees, and other individuals, connect with your battle by also utilizing your hashtag in their posts. Instagram is a site of photographs. Utilize this chance to post flavorful photographs of your menu. Take photographs of your menu above and beyond—get your clients to transfer their most loved things, to help construct your menu of pictures on the platform.

Traditional forms can still be useful tools like the flyers and posters to attract new customers effectively that can have much more of a positive impact on a company. A simple design can be all that they need, and the end result is a flexible, portable piece of printed advertising that can be used to gain more customers.

Hotel

Jones (2018) says most hotels are subject to verbal exchange and great surveys from faithful visitors, which is the thing that makes internet-based life a characteristic advertising and marking device. The utilization of online networking stages has turned out to be across the board and explorers reliably utilize web-based life to express delight or disappointment about their encounters. Regardless of whether it is utilized purposefully or unintentionally, the pioneers inside the cordiality business cannot overlook the effect of the online life worldview on their organizations. The manager states that their hotel is a business type of hotel and not a leisure hotel. Their main clients are corporates—they are engineers and expats that go to their hotel, so they use social media for more local residences and balikbayans. She mentioned that they choose them as target market because they want to boost the weekend market, their weekday occupancy is already high because of the corporates, but during weekends, most of them go back to Makati to Manila because they do not have further plans or endeavors in the area. This is different from leisure hotels that have high occupancy during weekends. The hotel used social media to attract those in Manila or Makati to come to Santa Rosa and to stay in the hotel; they are then able to have some occupancy during weekends because Santa Rosa has developed attractions like Nuvali. Social media really can help interact with people who want to stay in a hotel, especially those who want prolonged staycations and reserve online. They also have promos with Enchanted Kingdom which can be seen in their Facebook page since they have a partnership with the park. Many people are interested with it and the promo gets high responses during weekends. They usually use social media to attract people who are far away from Santa Rosa; to interact with those who will stay in the hotel because it is an easy way to communicate with them.

Travel agency

According to Travel Technology & Solutions (2015), many travel agencies spend a ton of cash on promoting and marketing themselves. Just the same, you can utilize online networking to advertise yourself

legitimately in a shoddy and efficient way. The movement business is an administration arranged industry and everything takes a shot at how fulfilled your customers are. Consequently, by offering your customers with interesting encounters and exhibiting their occasions via web-based networking media, you can really change your business at no additional expense to yourself. Stephanie Diehl, the proprietor of Travel Designed, makes reference that her methodology is to utilize web-based social networking to impart the correct sort of data to her gathering of people. She utilizes online networking “to remain top-of-mind” among her clients and has faith in posting one post via web-based networking media consistently. Her posts for the most part, include questions, photographs, data, or travel exhortation. The sales/marketing staff of their travel agency is more focused on traditional forms rather than social media. One of the most common traditional marketing techniques that still matter to them is face-to-face interaction. This really works well and they even do “door-to-door” activities to market their travel agency. The face-to-face traditional form is more connective and interactive with their customers. Flyers and brochures were also mentioned which are handouts distributed when they visit some schools. These are still the most widely preferred methods for special discounts and offerings in their business. They do not underestimate the power of handouts to bring their business new growth opportunities. They do not usually use social media but they are trying to be connected in trends nowadays. The researchers, however, did an observation of their Facebook page and found that they post updates regarding marketing promotions, tour packages, and other contact information; thus, contradicting the statements of their representative travel agency.

Challenges encountered by selected tourism establishments in their usage of social media as marketing tool

Kasturi and Vardhan (2014) stated that the term social has different definitions. All the more conspicuously, it alludes to a normal for living creatures identified with their association. It generally alludes to the association of one kind of living creature with other living creatures for their joined concurrence, independent of whether the connection is purposeful or unexpected (Mathur, 2012). From the opposite end, media alludes to be the principle methods for mass correspondence. All things considered, these words draw out another word called web-based life. Internet-based life has been characterized in separated ways by different social researchers. The befitting definition that best suits the present subject is internet-based programming and interfaces that enable people to associate with each other, trading insights regarding their lives, for example, true to life information, proficient data, individual photographs, and expert considerations. In the contemporary world, web-based social networking has not just settled its place in the field of mass correspondence, yet additionally presented risks similarly to ordinary broad communications.

Restaurant

Perges (2018) stated that web-based social networking has a major job in changing the manner in which we experience life—from straightforward correspondence to changing ways of life and eatery showcasing. Eateries have turned into an incredible prey for cell phone exercises, the assistance of advanced promoting apparatuses and the accompanying outcomes are made conceivable.

The branch manager stated that most challenges that they have encountered upon their usage of social media are mostly the negative feedbacks or rants from customers that have experienced their service. She also added some experiences that they had not just online but also the feedbacks that they have experienced personally.

According to Review Pro (n. d.), to restrict the harm negative audits can have on your notoriety, make a strong activity intended to manage these surveys. Ordinarily negative surveys require activity at an operational dimension, so it has a framework for offering this data to the supervisory crew.

Hotel

Based on Fyall, et al. (2019), the marketing landscape has changed drastically as of late, particularly for the travel industry and cordiality experts. Advertising for these businesses is presently a multi-

dimensional, synergistic endeavor driven by innovative change and the developing interest for credible co-made encounters. Showcasing for tourism and hospitality gives understudies a contemporary, available, and helpful asset as they get ready to experience the complexities and difficulties of the travel industry and accommodation promoting all inclusively. An unmistakable verbalization of the evolving scene, a far reaching prologue to the three supporting subjects of joint effort, innovation, and encounters, and an abundant supply of universal case material furnish understudies with a charming and absorbable asset that is both scholastically thorough and practice-arranged, helping them get ready for everyday issues in the dynamic universe of showcasing. These contemporary testing and profoundly connected content are vital assets for all understudies of the travel industry and accommodation degree programs.

The marketing manager stated that so far, no one has an issue using social media and they cannot say a customer wants to destroy their business but there are honest reviews based on the customers' experience. Nevertheless, in service industry, you cannot please everyone. People have different preferences on products and services. Doing so means understanding and anticipating what the customer needs and then knowing how to meet and exceed those needs. She indicated how they respond to negative reviews, how they convert them into positives, and how they experience the review. They give them attention do not use the word-of-mouth, that is as early as possible, they reach out to them because taking care of the customer is the heart of the hospitality business. Heaton (2014) stated that a reality of the online world that individuals with various premiums and conclusions will sort out themselves among networks; however, there are some online media sites like Facebook who appear to take into account everybody, most online systems have a certain "type" of client. In this manner, it is essential to comprehend which news sources mirror your inn's objective market the best.

The marketing manager indicated that in terms of a customer's bad response or review, you need to give attention. It is important that the hotel ensures there are appropriate responses to that incident and that outsiders acknowledge the hotel as handling the situation well. It also helps the mistakes to improve the workplace and at the same time, when you had challenges, you have to be more cautious of your actions. Additionally, become more careful, perhaps the guest really experiences some lapses from us but it might not be the worst that can happen in their hotel.

Travel agency

Travel Technology & Solutions (2015) mentions that the movement business depends a great deal on verbal encounters. Online networking essentially gives individuals a stage to voice their feeling and tune in to others simply like them from everywhere throughout the world. In this way, when a voyager voices his conclusion concerning a movement operator on mainstream stages like Twitter, Facebook, and Google+, he figures out how to get several other individuals familiar with the movement specialist being referred to. This goes about as a noteworthy wellspring of marking for the specialist and makes an immense effect on brand mindfulness. Actually, practically 80 percent of voyagers have expressed that they trusted the suggestions made by their companions and contacts via web-based networking media. Jean Newman Glock, leader of JNG Worldwide, referenced that her whole plan of action spins around utilizing internet-based life as a noteworthy promoting instrument to construct leads by sharing her energy for movement just as her movement mastery with her group of onlookers.

The sales/marketing staff stated that their travel agency has challenges but their social media channels do not get issues. As you can see, their Facebook page has nothing much, just updates. They usually conduct traditional marketing using word-of-mouth because social media is just a support for them to be recognized or to have more customers. Eckstein (2019) stated that social media commitment builds steadfastness and produces informal communications. Individuals love positive connections with brands via web-based networking media. There is likewise a huge amount of information that recommends that noting objections via web-based networking media expands client backing and decreases stir. For instance, Jay Baer's exploration found that noting an objection via web-based networking media can build client promotion by as much 25 percent. In addition, online networking encounters are, by plan, both open and

simple to share. This makes an exacerbating effect on positive encounters, contrasted with state, an email trade or telephone call. You can gain straightforwardly from clients and prospects. We utilize online life to gain from our clients and network about how we can improve their experience. Having this immediate line to clients empowers us to fabricate connections, create compassion, and form a superior item for our clients.

According to the sales/marketing staff, social media has a huge factor but they are not used to use Facebook even though it helps attract customers. He indicated that social media accounts may have impostors—people who try to tell others false information about the travel agency. Other people call them scammers. He specified this because negative reviews or comments result to the diminishing trust of people. Get Cyber Safe (2018) stated that the tricks you will run over frequently during person-to-person communication destinations are identified with data fraud. Clients give a lot of data about themselves when they create their profiles which makes interpersonal organizations so alluring to con artists who are hoping to get another person's data for illicit purposes. Phishing is likewise something to know during long range interpersonal communication locales. Pay special mind to messages posted on dividers or in newsfeeds that appear as though they are from organizations you trust (frequently ones you perceive or a financial establishment)—a test or review that can finish up charging you or tainting your PC with an infection, a fraud acting like one of your companions to get you to send cash since they are stuck in an unfortunate situation. The goal is to endeavor to trick you into giving data, similar to your username and secret word so they can access your own data.

The sales/marketing staff says that everyone uses cell phones because it is the perfect way to stay connected with others and it provides users with a sense of security. Having a cell phone can allow people to quickly connect with social media sites like Facebook. He also said that they will not let their business out of trend. Their pages also have followers and they see the travel agency's updates. While they not yet have a website, their Facebook page helps them have more customers. Nations (2018) stated that Facebook is easy to understand and open to everybody. Indeed, even the least specialized disapproved of individuals can join and start posting on Facebook. Despite the fact that it began as an approach to stay in contact or reconnect with missing companions, it quickly turned into the dear of organizations that had the capacity to intently focus on a group of people and convey promotions straightforwardly to the general population well on the way to need their items or administrations. Facebook makes it easy to share photographs, instant messages, recordings, status posts, and sentiments on Facebook. The site is engaging and an ordinary everyday stop for some clients. Not at all like some informal community destinations, Facebook does not permit grown-up substance. At the point when clients transgress and are accounted for, they are prohibited from the site. Facebook gives an adjustable arrangement of security controls, so clients can shield their data from getting to outsiders.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Both the restaurant and the hotel find the usage of social media as a marketing tool very effective and convenient. It served as their marketing and communication tool for their business. The travel agency, on the other hand, in terms of marketing, prefers the usage of traditional form of marketing like giving out brochures and flyers, door-to-door visits to clients, and resolving issues personally. It means that the use and benefits of social media as marketing platform depends on the nature of business. All of the three establishments have the same way of responding to customer feedbacks online. In handling feedbacks, they use the same approach wherein for positive feedbacks, they thank and acknowledge the guests; for negative feedbacks, they apologize and make an immediate corrective action for it. All three establishments have not experienced challenges as regards usage of social media as a marketing tool. Although it is unavoidable that some conflicts or minor issues may arise, they are able to resolve them immediately. This means that if businesses do not really use social media as their main platform and are not solely dependent on it as their main tool, less challenges are encountered.

Although all of the three establishments are in the same industry, they still differ in some ways. They must analyze and examine carefully how they can utilize social media, where it will suit best in their specific business in order for them to utilize the positive effects it can bring to their business. The travel agency, which claims to use social media as a marketing tool less compared to the two other establishments, must create more positive brand image not only offline but also on their social media platform for them to remain competitive in the tourism industry. Establishments must use social media as support to their marketing platforms in order to maintain having less challenges. In their usage of social media as a marketing tool, they must maintain not being solely dependent on it; they should focus on the benefit that it can provide to their business.

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