



Innovative Forecasting & Demand Growth Strategies for

Fueling Hotel Bookings



Introduction

A strong demand growth strategy can be complex but that doesn't mean building one has to be complicated. Forecasting is an often misunderstood and underutilized powerhouse of information hotels can use to maximize bookings. Knowing how and when to use it is half the battle. Once demand forecasting has been mastered it can then easily be used to communicate with marketing to drive effective marketing practices with confidence.

In this guide we'll walk you through what demand forecasting is, how to use it, and the ins and outs of filling overnight and meeting rooms through more effective marketing when demand is low.



Know & Understand Your Forecasted Demand

The first step in creating a revenue management strategy is to forecast future demand. The value of a hotel room perishes, or is lost, for any given night it is not booked.

Even if the goal is not full occupancy, there is a real need to understand upcoming demand in order to determine what prices various customers will be willing to pay on a given night. For example, a big event in the local area may create higher demand, which means customers will be willing to pay more for a room. But in lower-demand periods, it may be necessary to lower rates to remain competitive and raise occupancy. A good forecast allows managers to set a detailed strategy that takes all these fluctuations into account.

There are four main types of forecasts that revenue managers use: demand forecasts, strategic forecasts, revenue forecasts, and operational forecasts. The demand forecast informs the other three types of forecasts.

Demand forecasting is one of the cornerstones of revenue management. It is critical for revenue managers to understand upcoming demand in order to project occupancy, revenue, and operational needs. Critically, demand forecasting predicts how many rooms would be booked on a given day if there were no constraints; this is often referred to as unconstrained demand. Constrained demand caps demand at on-hand room inventory.

So, for example, a hotel with 350 rooms would show a demand of 350 rooms, and not more. In a hotel organization, there are some departments where this type of forecast is beneficial. The operations team needs to staff housekeeping based on total inventory, and the facilities team needs to create a budget. For revenue management purposes, however, it is important to use an unconstrained demand forecast – i.e., one that provides insight into the market opportunity available to a hotel on any given stay-night.



Unconstrained demand starts with what has already been booked and then considers the pace of booking to determine, at the current price, how many rooms would be purchased on any given day if unlimited rooms were available.

For example, if hotel occupancy is 350 rooms and the first day's forecast is for 360 rooms, and the next day's booking pace is moving towards booking 375 rooms, in each case there is an excess of demand over supply. This information is critical to revenue managers because it means that the hotel has a pricing opportunity.

Once you're familiar with the main types of forecasting you'll need to start collecting the right data. Detailed strategies rely on these facts and figures to produce more accurate demand forecasting. Making sense of data is critical for any effective demand growth plan.



Understanding the Data

A hotel's demand forecast is only as good as the data on which it relies. Relevant information must be available and tracked day by day for a full year or more to create a strong forecast. The most important data points to include in a demand forecast are

A minimum of one calendar year is needed to see an annual pattern. Two or more years of historical data is better. The more information available, the better managers will understand the demand and booking patterns for their specific property. Of course, historical data is not enough.

Revenue managers must look at booking data on an ongoing basis: monthly, weekly, or even daily, depending on the size of the property and the complexity of the business mix. As the forecast is updated based on new data, revenue managers can refine their strategies to make the best decisions regarding rates, availability, and restrictions. It may be necessary to update a hotel's current revenue management system in order to capture all of the desired information. At the very least, an evaluation of the current system will identify any gaps and provide the opportunity to add manual processes to collect missing data.

Booking Dates		Room Rates	Daily Revenue	
Room Nights	Extended Stays	Arrival and Departure Dates	RevPAR	ADR
Arrivals	Departures	Booking Pace or Lead Time	Transient Rooms	Cancellations
Group Rooms	Comp Set Availability	Length-of-Stay Patterns	No Shows	Geographical Data
Rate Changes	Demand Generators	"On the books" Bookings	Tracking Weather Events	Denials/Regrets
Walk-Ins	Sell-Out Frequency	Tracking Past Marketing Drivers	Geographical Data	Supply Changes

Using Segmentation

Forecasts should be segmented the same way you segment customers. Historical data for each segment should be extracted separately so that managers can develop forecasts for each line of business, and, at a minimum, break out data for group and transient business. Analyze each line of business before overlapping or combining them. If there are areas where these lines of business can be further segmented, and if these subgroups show profit growth potential, prepare separate forecasts for them as well so that pricing strategies to target them can be developed.

Incorporate Website Analytics

Once data has been extracted from revenue management software, it is important to not stop there. There is a substantial amount of useful information to be found in a hotel's website analytics. Website analytics provide insight into consumer behavior, including:



Monitor Events

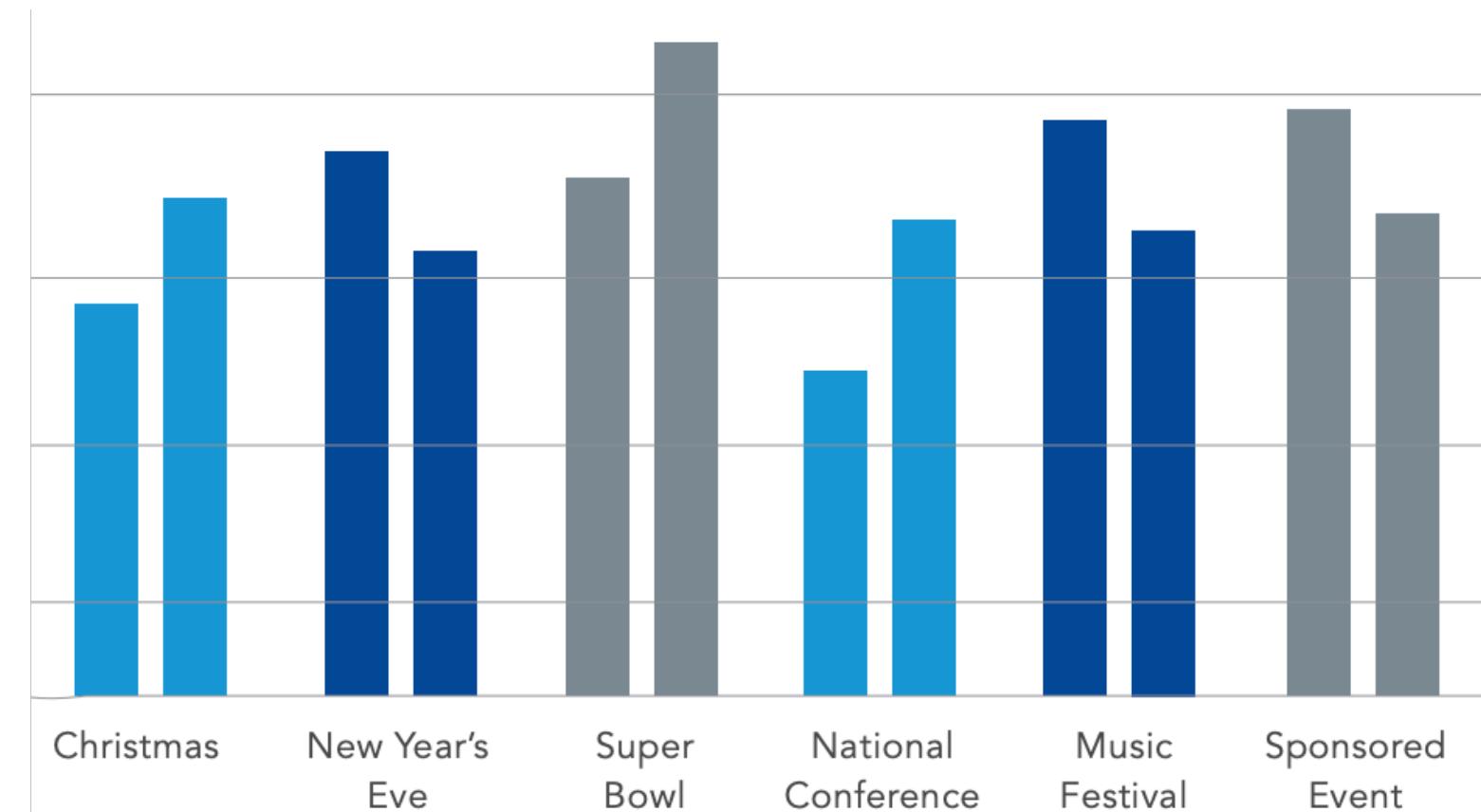
Monitoring events is a key factor impacting the accuracy of a hotel's forecasts. Major holidays such as Christmas or New Year's Eve are rarely overlooked. However, it is important to add other events that are specific to the city or property. Will the city host the Super Bowl this year? Look out for national conferences, major music festivals, or even parties or gatherings sponsored by the hotel. Building relationships with the city's visitor and convention bureau is a good idea.

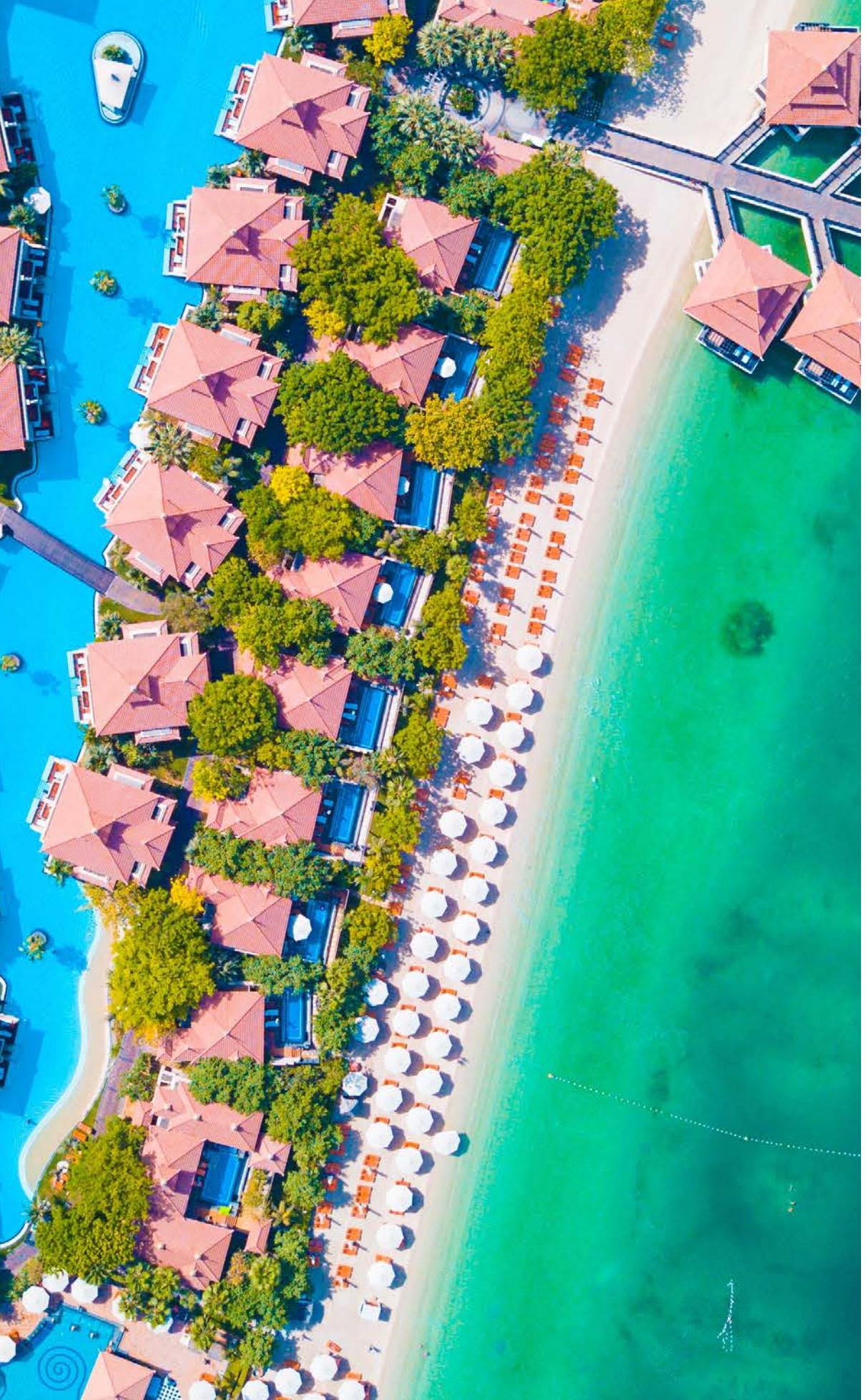
Always check their schedule before making forecasts. Open lines of communication to learn about events that may not be highly publicized. The point of monitoring events is to gain an understanding of how they will affect the business. Gauging how far in advance guests (groups or individuals) are booking rooms around these events will provide a much more accurate demand picture.

Research the Competition

Important insights for forecasting can be derived from analyzing key competitors in the market. Competitors of comparable size and similar pricing provide valuable information to be used to create competitive sets.

Competitors in the market that have a good revenue management strategy will illustrate fluctuations in demand and pricing, even if they operate at a different price point. Once competitors to follow are identified, revenue managers can track their pricing across numerous channels, including their websites, the OTAs, and other distribution channels.





Understand the Impact of Discounting

As accurate as a forecast may be, it cannot predict the unexpected. Leaving room in the forecast for the unpredictable gives greater room to pivot. For example, if a competitor decides to launch a sale in order to create demand for a short period of time, the forecast can be used to determine whether or not management should counter with a similar discount. And with proper customer segmentation, the forecast will also help determine if, when, and to whom those discounts should be applied.

These key methods of collecting and understanding data create a strong foundation for any demand growth strategy. In addition to using these tips, there is one emerging trend worth diving into with a bit more detail. And that trend is forecasting for group business.

Forecasting Group Business

Group business can substantially influence hotel profits, affecting not only transient business but ancillary spend. Revenue management science has traditionally concentrated on yielding transient business, not putting any real focus on groups. But effective yielding must include analysis of all consumer behavior and future demand. When you don't consider both transient and group business in your revenue management strategy, you can't truly solve the problem of optimizing your entire property and maximizing profits.

Both the transient and group segments essentially "compete" for a fixed inventory of sleeping rooms. But beyond this, groups also utilize function space, making RM decisions for groups much more complex. The booking windows for transient and groups create challenges as well, with groups typically booking earlier in the process and transient booking later. Groups can produce constraints on available sleeping rooms, providing opportunities for hotels to capture a higher rate from transient customers or other groups. Problems may arise, however, if a hotel books too many rooms at a negotiated rate, displacing higher-value customers later on in the booking window.

Relying on traditional methods such as transient displacement analysis alone won't help you optimize your bottom line, because that type of analysis only accounts for what you need in group revenue to break even with displaced transient bookings. Transient displacement analysis also doesn't consider the possibility that groups can – and will – displace other groups. Further complicating this issue is the fact that the majority of RM solutions are designed exclusively for transient business, therefore they lack the sophistication and agility required for group forecasting.



The Solution

An accurate group forecasting solution with well-crafted segmentation can resolve these issues, and help a hotel achieve an optimal business mix. With an effective group forecasting tool, you can evaluate a proposed group against forecasted transient business as well as other forecasted groups that have not yet booked. A group forecast helps you better understand what inventory you have left for transient segments. You can optimize your transient forecasts against capacity that is already adjusted for anticipated group bookings. And you can proactively price your transient business for bookings that may come far in advance. Moreover, transient and best available rate (BAR) pricing that reflects your group forecast also helps your sales team negotiate better rates from groups.

Another benefit of group forecasting is that you're able to predict whether the expected demand from a request for proposal (RFP) will actually occur. Because group business won't necessarily use all the rooms in their block, a good group RM system can handle those fluctuations in group demand, dynamically updating rates across market segments as needed.

By including group forecasting in your RM strategy, you'll find the best strategic mix for your hotel across both transient and group segments. And you'll optimize availability and pricing for guestrooms and meeting rooms. State-of-the-art group

RM software underpins a solid RM system that not only factors in transient business displacement, but empowers you to maximize your group business potential.

By now we've discovered why demand forecasting is important for revenue management, the basics of how to use it, and some expert advice for solving one of the practice's most common stumbling blocks. Once you have these fundamentals in place, it's time to start increasing your venues' booking rates, especially when you've forecasted a time period of low demand. Use demand forecasting to better inform and collaborate with your marketing team and supercharge your growth strategy.



Filling Rooms & Spaces with Better Marketing

When marketing works with revenue management to understand your demand and when events are happening, you'll be able to identify when it's necessary to heighten your marketing practices and understand which channels provide you the most profit so you can focus your marketing efforts there.

When you know it's time to kick marketing into gear, here are a few steps you can take to drive the demand you need to see through social media and paid advertising, your website, and word of mouth. And also which marketing channels provide you the most profit so you can focus your efforts there.

Focus on your social media channels and all the opportunities they present for your venue marketing discoverability and planning process. Your social channels are one of the first opportunities to really grow your reach and influence with strangers who may not already be connected to you personally, or someone in your referral network.

Here's how marketing teams can take advantage of driving awareness using social media channels nine ways - from using smarter hashtags to trying video.



Driving Awareness Through Social Media

The top three platforms are Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, in that order and with Facebook quite a bit ahead. In the past year, Instagram has grown a lot (it overtook Twitter). YouTube is a rising star as well, especially with the ever-evolving hunger for video (it's apparently the second most used search engine after Google!).

The basic rules are still the same as they have been for a while: you should be using social media to build relationships and provide value, for every post about your venue and what you're selling there should be three or four industry-relevant non-marketing posts and don't hesitate to check out your competition for inspiration. Beyond that, your venue will be rewarded for using social media as a two-way communication channel (in other words, be responsive!), by being consistent with posts, using hashtags, and including calls to action.

Content can and should be creative, and types of content are limited only by your imagination. Some examples of what to share include but are not limited to: photos, videos, infographics, announcements, blogs, articles, countdowns to big events or news, testimonials, photo or caption contests, surveys, polls, quotes (preferably with capturing visuals to accompany them), funny moments, post-event highlights, FAQ answers, memes, gifs, and social media takeovers.

Whatever you do, don't forget analytics in your venue's social media strategy: every platform offers them, as do the various tools that allow you to manage social media platforms. In other words, you have no excuses not to follow the numbers to track your progress, what works, and what still needs tweaking. With that covered, let's take a closer look at some of the top platforms for event professionals.



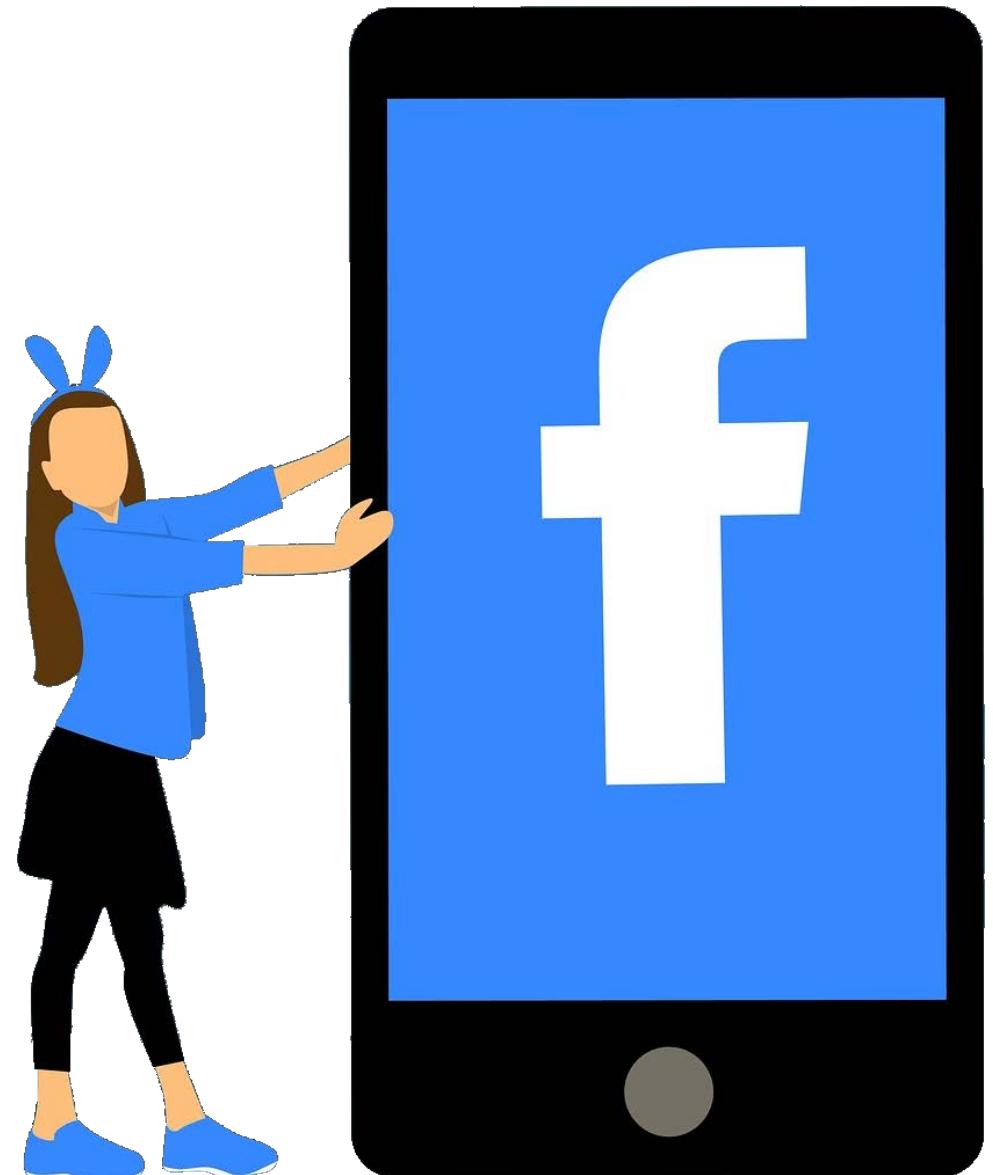
Developing a Presence on Facebook

With 1.49 billion daily active users on Facebook, it's perhaps no surprise that it is ranked as the most important social platform for marketers. This translates to 79% of Americans and 22% of the world's total population using Facebook!

The platform is primarily used for personal purposes; individuals connecting to family and friends. That's why Facebook updated their algorithm earlier this year, making it harder for business posts to organically reach their target audience. As a result, adapting content is more important than ever if you want your content to be seen.

The amount of personal data connected to each profile makes Facebook a mine of information and ideal for building long-term relationships. If someone is engaging with your posts, they will see them on their newsfeed. Similarly, posts that generate likes and comments – by creatively encouraging them rather than outright asking for them, are your ticket to visibility.

As a platform whose mission is community-building, Facebook has a remarkable number of groups built around common interests. If your product or service speaks to any one of these groups, or if you can create content to foster discussion and engagement while leveraging these intermediaries, you have an opportunity to reach potential customers through them.



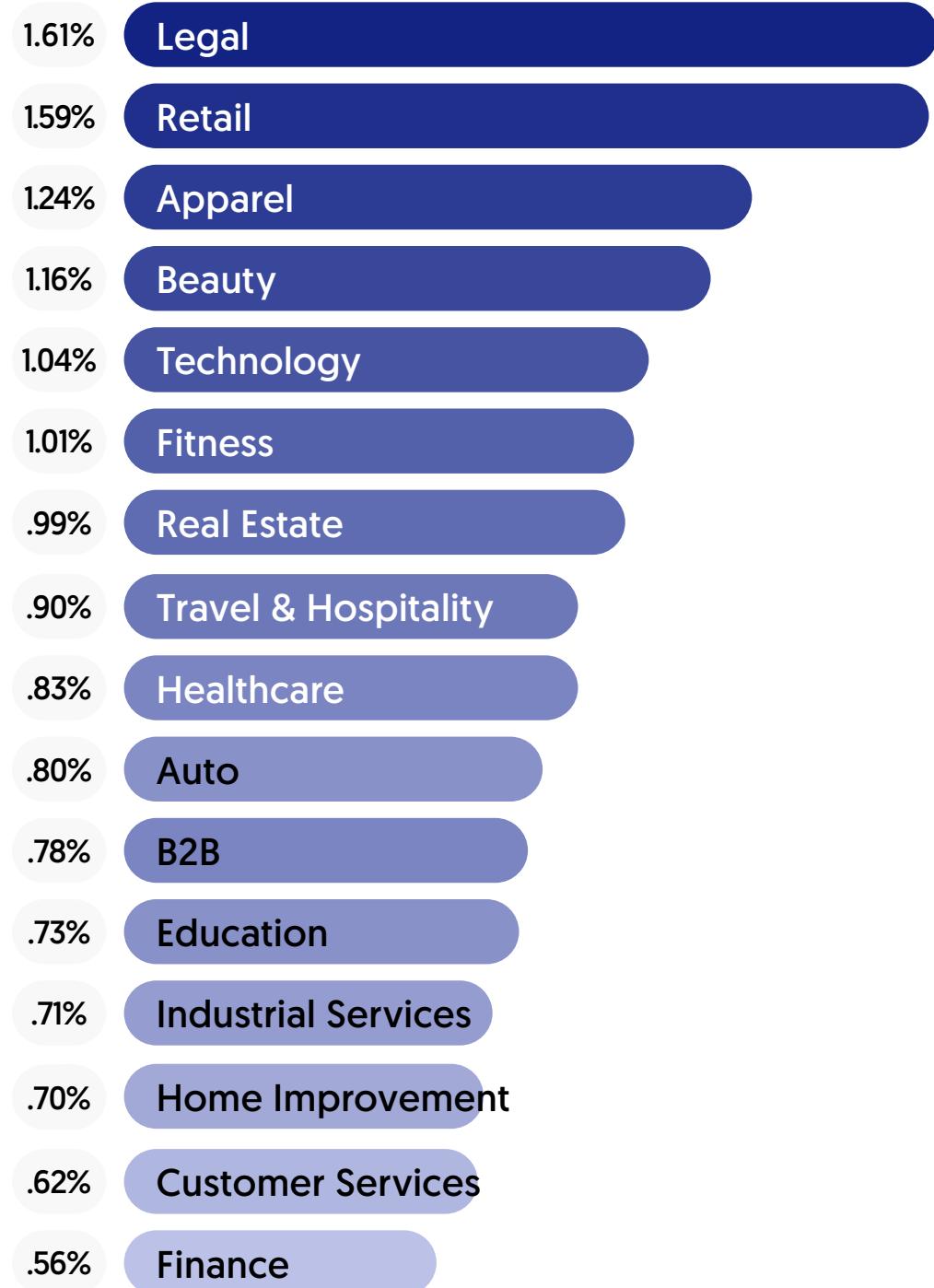
Facebook Live is also a wonderful way to connect with your target audience, as it leverages video content – and everyone knows video is king – and sends notifications to anyone who likes or follows you. Consider a monthly tour of your venue, a tutorial – perhaps with a chef in the kitchen, or doing a behind-the-scenes interview. Use your Facebook Insights Page to see when your followers are online to get the timing right and make sure you stay “live” for at least 10 minutes to optimize reach.

The Roger Smith Hotel in New York City uses social media, including Facebook, as an opportunity to turn their guests into their best ambassadors. By become co-content creators, guests play a hands-on role in growing the network and influence of the hotel. That's one of the reasons the Roger Smith has been recognized as one of the most innovative hotels – and brands – in the world.

If neither of those two tactics appeals to you, you can always use targeted ads for advertising or re-marketing. These offer a way to target multiple demographics at once.

Facebook Advertising Benchmarks*

Average click-through rate by industry:



Creating a Presence on Twitter

Although Twitter has slowed down growth-wise (see the plateau graph above), it's still one of the top three platforms to be on. With almost 350 million users and 500 million Tweets posted per day*, the platform is perfect for quick and easy updates which can be shared daily or even multiple times a day. Twitter is also ideal for retweeting and resharing content produced by others, and as a result is used by many as a great source of industry news. Visuals attract more engagement, and a little-known perk of using an image in your Tweets is that you can tag people without it counting towards the character count.

Embedding a Twitter feed into your venue's website lets visitors know that you're active even if the overall content does not shift all that frequently. For live events, Twitter can easily be featured through a "Twitter Live Wall" on a big screen, which has been demonstrated to encourage engagement of event attendees. In other words, Twitter has the potential to boost engagement.

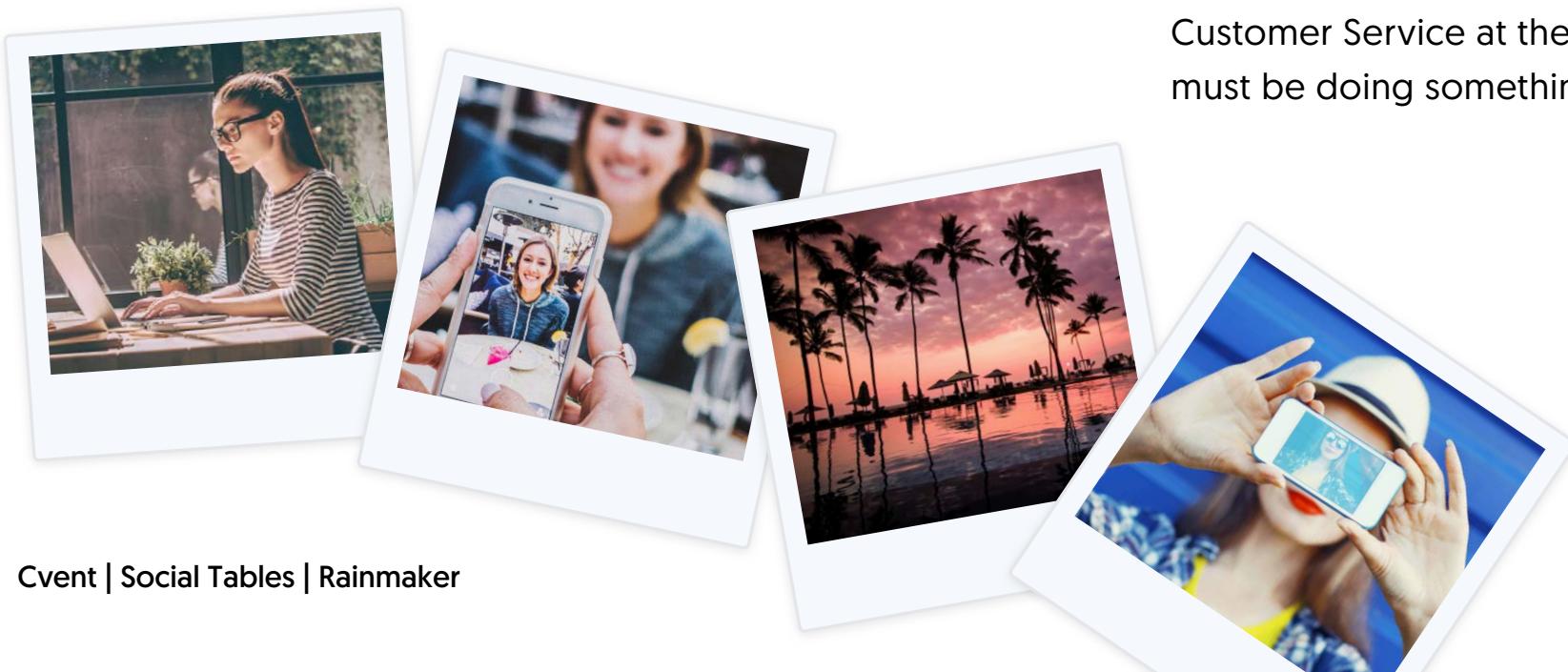
The Hyatt Regency in Chicago hosts frequent events and uses Twitter to engage attendees and overnight guests. Live Twitter walls are customized to draw conference participants into conversations and comments, while guests benefit from improved and highly responsive concierge services via Twitter – addressing both issues and questions about the city in record time.



Getting the Most from Instagram

This visual platform is becoming bigger and bigger, with over 95 million posts a day and 400 million Instagram Stories a day on average – and counting. Its appeal is that people buy from brands they know and trust, and the combination of a visual with a caption and hashtags makes this platform ideal to build that kind of relationship. In contrast to Facebook, Instagram wants to bring users closer to businesses. In fact, in 2017 already 80% of users willingly connected to a brand on the platform.

A relatively new feature of Instagram is that you can now follow specific profiles or choose a hashtag to add to your newsfeed. This broadens the opportunities for your venue to become known to event planners and potential clients. In terms of visuals, Instagram loves polished content such as your venue the day of a big event, as well as details, and behind the scenes images.



That's where you can best promote your venue with Instagram Stories, compilations of images and video only available for 24 hours. In a Story, you can add drawings, emojis, a poll with a binary response option, and even tag users. Instagram stories are the only place where, as a business, you can link to an external website. As a bonus, you can select a few stories to highlight in your profile, letting followers or potential followers discover your Story collection at their leisure. (Note: This is not the same as Instagram Live, which is only available while the video is being streamed.)

The QEII Center in London has a Story featured on its profile that showcases what the venue looked like during London Fashion Week. They tag the designer whose clothes are featured in their Story, for some win-win visibility. (QEII won Venue of The Year at the AEO awards 2018, Most Versatile Venue at the London Venue Awards 2018, and Best Venue Customer Service at the London Venue Awards 2017. They must be doing something right!)

Using Social Media Strategies

When it comes to social media in general, the simplest thing any event venue could do immediately is make sure they've claimed all the appropriate usernames and social media handles for their venue on the most common social media channels. Take time to fill out the text portions of each of these profiles fully, and create custom graphics that fit within the (very specific) profile photo areas, headers and any other branded content fields.

Next, set up your map point. It is critically important to make sure your map point and pin on the largest search engines is accurate, current and reflects the actual public entrance location of your venue. It's also important to make sure that the directions being provided on the largest mapping programs takes guests the most logical way possible. These issues can sometimes take weeks or months to correct, so it's ideal to know about them as soon as possible.

Similarly, it's important to make sure the map, address and location information for your venue is entered correctly on all the social media channels that support it. Oftentimes social channels are linked between a variety of tools so this may mean that you'll need to set up other sites that offer "check in" status, etc.

Now that you have the basics, make use of your photographs. They say that "a picture is worth a thousand

words," but for a venue, an amazing shot could be worth millions in actual sales dollars. Create an image library to incorporate into your social media strategy and add it to your bank of existing venue (text) copy. When photographers visit your venue, ask them if you'd be allowed to use any of their shots for promotional purposes with attribution. Make this process easier by saving image files with the photographer's name included, and also keep sample social media post copy handy.

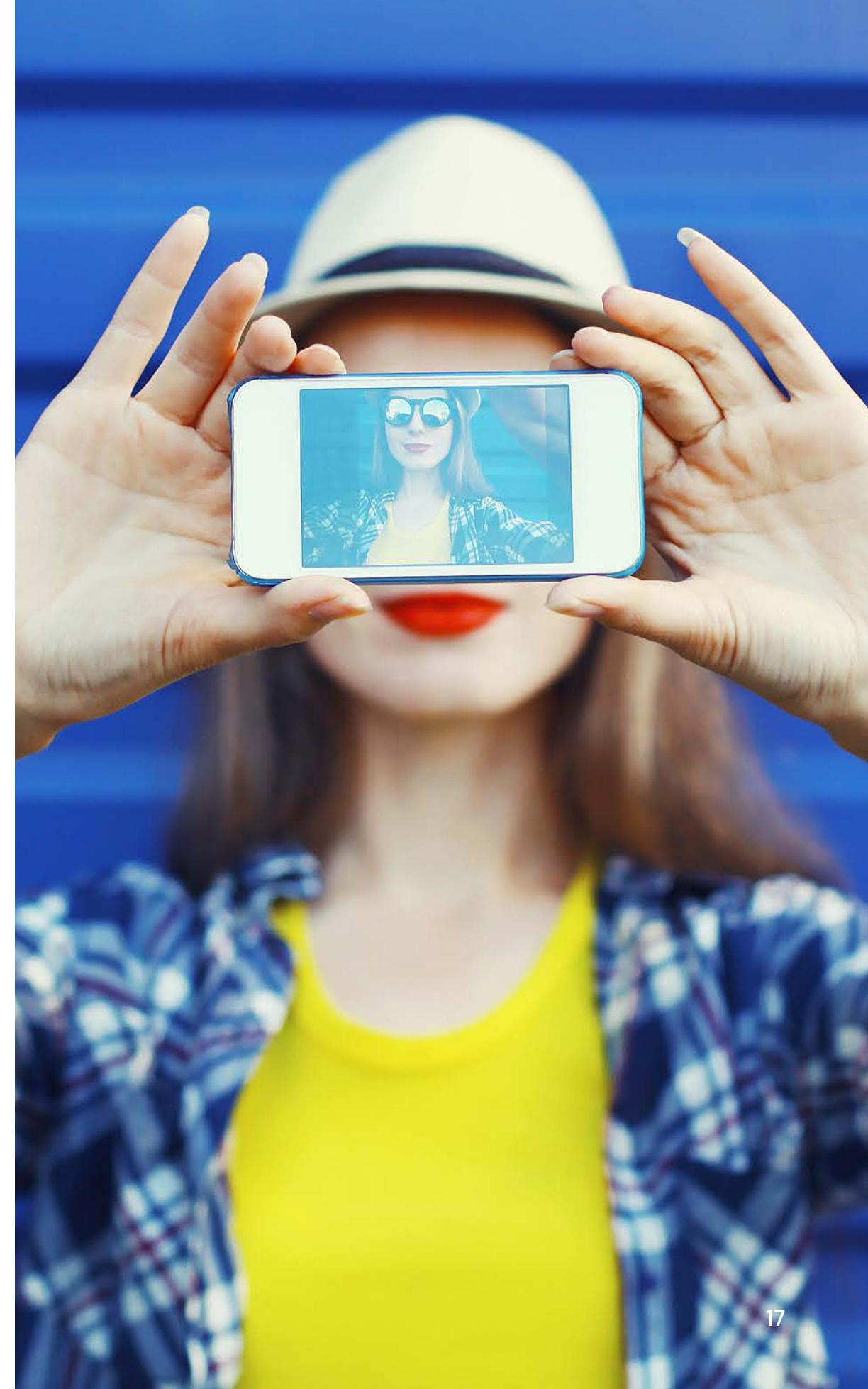
Make tagging your venue easier on all social media channels. Avoid extraneous characters such as dashes or atypical spellings that will make it harder for people to predict your username on that channel, and make sure you take the time to go back in and request a custom URL if it's available. For example, avoid the-venue-name-co and instead opt for something like @thevenuenameco. If the name is too frustrating, people will skip that step and you'll miss out on getting in front of more people.

Because you'll be setting up similar information on so many social channels, it only makes sense to use the most consistent text possible. Get in the habit of drafting standardized chunks of text (venue copy) to be used in a variety of places. Oftentimes you'll be asked to provide both a brief (100 words) and a more lengthy description of your venue, team and facilities.

Not only should you produce your own content, you should also spend time engaging with followers. Engagement helps your profile perform better, and gives some love back to those that care about the same topics you do. Trying to decide how much time to spend on each channel? For a start, go where your customers are most frequently. Be seen on channels your clients actually use, and don't try to force them to come and find you somewhere else.

Also, consider running a contest on one or more of your social media channels to increase engagement, followers or drive new people to your website. Social media contests can be as simple or as complex as you'd like and you can decide the length, prize value and promotional tactics that are right for your own venue marketing goals. Just keep in mind that you'll want to brush up on what words (free, like, win, contest, purchase, etc.) might be engagement limiting triggers for various channels when you run the contest, and that you don't violate any sweepstakes laws in your area.

Don't forget about video content! It's estimated that video content is being produced and consumed faster today than ever before. With more than 1B users on YouTube and more than 45% of Facebook and YouTube users watching more than one (1) hour of video per week, event venues would benefit from incorporating more video into their discoverability plans this year. With the addition of Instagram stories, we can see that the integration between Facebook and Instagram will continue to become more refined, and





likely more marketable (read: advertising dependent) for brands. Befriend the videographers in your area and request access to real event footage if it is available. If you haven't already, consider adding a YouTube channel (the second most frequented social media site in the world) to your venue marketing mix.

Next up, diversify and grow through paid advertising. The best way to test advertising on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google, Youtube, and Quora is to start small and with a limited budget. This way you can test a variety of combinations of text, images, audiences and conversion goals to see what works. With just a little dribble of money over a matter of days, you'll have a better idea about what's working and what's not before you commit more serious dollars. Just don't make the mistake of testing too many variables at once with a variety of ads or you won't be able to isolate which factors drove different outcomes.

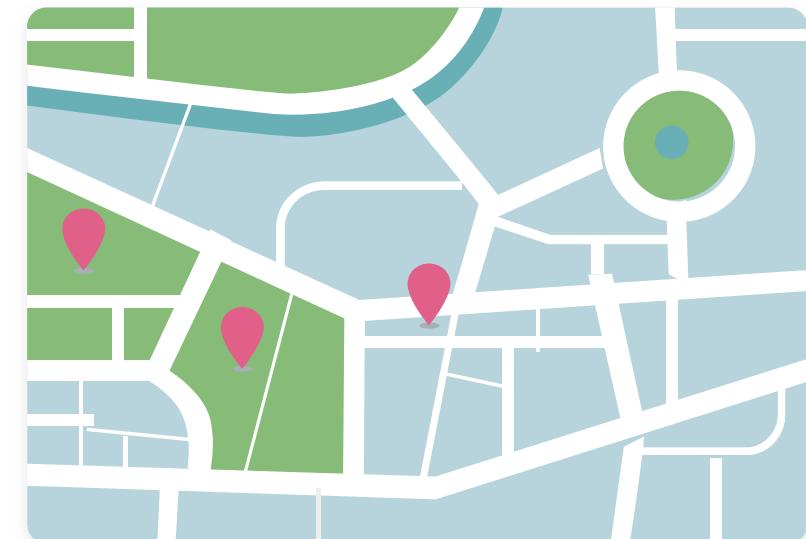
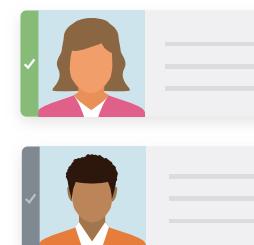
After social media and paid advertising, your website is a huge opportunity for driving more awareness and interest from the nearly 4 billion visitors across the world wide web. There are a few steps you can take to ensure it's optimized continually to attract more traffic, and convert it. Paying close attention to technical seo optimization can set you up for traffic wins that compound over time for huge impact. Let's explore how marketing teams can improve their websites with eight easy-to-implement techniques from setting up Google Analytics to updating SERPs.

Improving Website Discoverability

One of the first things every event venue should have in place is accurate Google Analytics tracking for their website with an official Google Analytics account and tracking code. This will help venue owners and venue marketers ensure that efforts invested in international, national, state and local activities can be considered equitably. The two important metrics for venues are likely referral source and medium. These help you see (at a glance) what's driving interest your way. Similar tracking capabilities are available from Bing, Facebook and Pinterest and are also worth incorporating into your website's code.

It's also important to Connect the dots: Sales Leads + Social + Web. While it would be ideal to have all of these tools come with their own magic genie to help you decipher the results, it doesn't quite work that way. While there are any number of third-party social media apps that might help you get a tweet out here, and a post there, connecting the dots between all these results and your own actual sales leads and revenue becomes trickier.

One way to increase a little clarity is to carefully track lead generation feedback on web forms and with in-person conversations. The other way is through campaign tracking. This tool allows you to create a number of custom codes and referral sources for any page so you can see which performs best. This is a great way to learn more about both the people



visiting your site who are completing a sales process, and also those who are not.

One of the easiest things any venue owner or manager could do (even this afternoon) and have some luck increasing venue discoverability is taking a careful review of the first 10+ results of SERPs (Search Engine Results Pages) for search terms you'd like to rank for. Reviewing what's already discoverable about your venue will help you identify any outdated information or holes, and it will also help you find some new opportunities. (Don't forget to do the same with a quick image search as well.) This is a useful practice at least once per quarter, or per year.

Just as important as seeing what's out in the great world wide web pointing back at your venue, is seeing what your venue is sharing with that digital world too. Check your own website frequently for any missing or broken links, outdated photos or missing page information such as titles, subtitles,

meta descriptions, alt text on images and similar bits and pieces that make it easier for web crawlers to accurately predict what your pages are about. Also be certain you know the right keyword phrases that you're working to incorporate on specific pages. If you see a page is no longer performing accurately in Google Analytics, try and determine why.

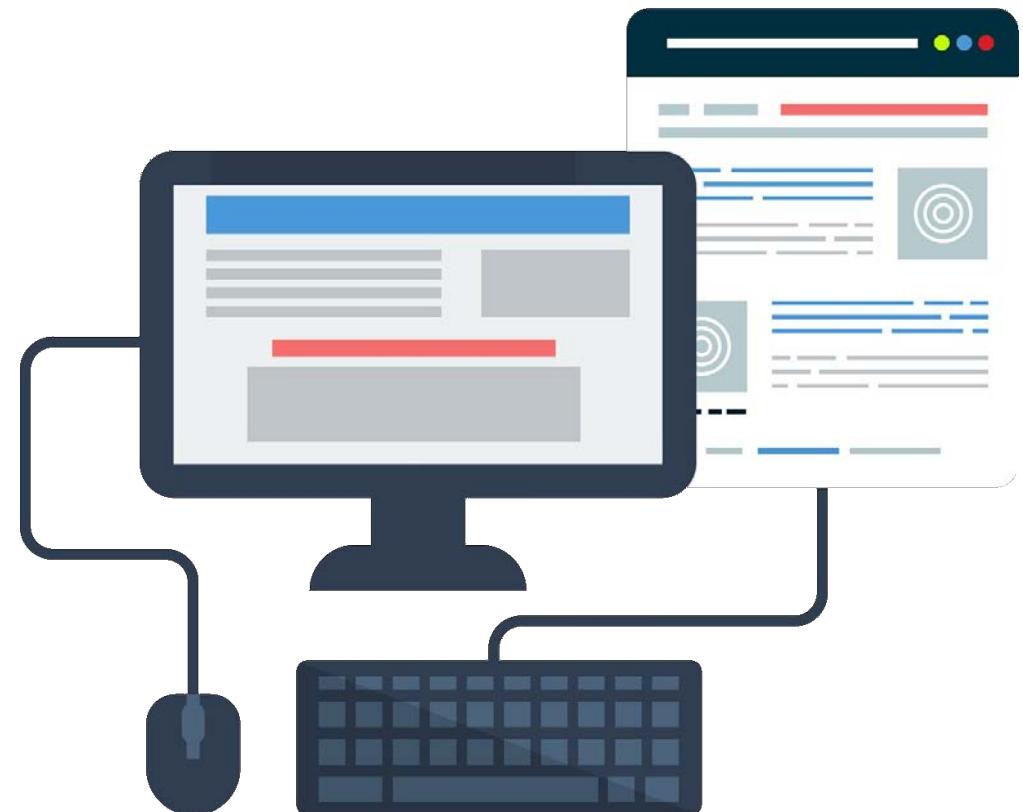
Another way to generate awareness is to make sure you take every advantage of niche event venue directories. Having complete and accurate information on a variety of venue search sites makes it easier for search engines to determine what your event venue website is about in your city and dramatically increases your venue discoverability with new event planners across the globe. These sites also offer you a chance to increase your customer reviews and promote other special offers or amenities you may have. It's literally like opening the door to an entire new audience with very minimal work.

And as we expand to a more global marketplace, being able to provide a more accurate virtual experience to anyone, regardless of their location, becomes a more important venue discoverability factor. If they can't see it with their own eyes, we need to offer the next best option. Consider adding a lead capture tool to do just that.

Plus, make sure you're mindful of your mobile experience. It's become increasingly important to make sure you have a web presence that is mobile-friendly and easy to navigate with

minimal real estate. While this aspect is certainly important, don't overlook the importance of keeping these other data points handy for web visitors and event attendees too.

Also, be sure to surface multiple ways to get in touch. Publish a number that is able to receive both phone calls and texts. Make sure your address is easy to find on your website, all your social channels, all search engines, all venue directories and on all your staff signature blocks. Make sure you have a standard email address you publicize so you do not miss a single lead. Now that your website is in great shape, it's time to put the processes in place to get all those customers you've found excited about sharing how much they love your venue.



Fueling Word of Mouth

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Pro Tip:

You should also seek to make more meaningful connections with your repeat buyers by asking the right questions. In service to your referrals, consider asking them these three important questions:

- What are you working on professionally I can help you achieve?
- What are you focusing on personally in case I have an idea?
- When you look back on the year, if you had one word to describe it, what do you hope it would be?

And finally, tackle a trade group leadership role. There are quite a few industry-related trade organizations and associations and there may be several in your area. Get to know the committee requirements first, and then determine if you're able to commit to a path of leadership over the next few board election cycles.

Having a leadership role in a local trade association allows your name, title and venue affiliation to be publicized in a number of places, thus increasing your discoverability more than you could on your own.

Driving Leads with Innovative Marketing Ideas

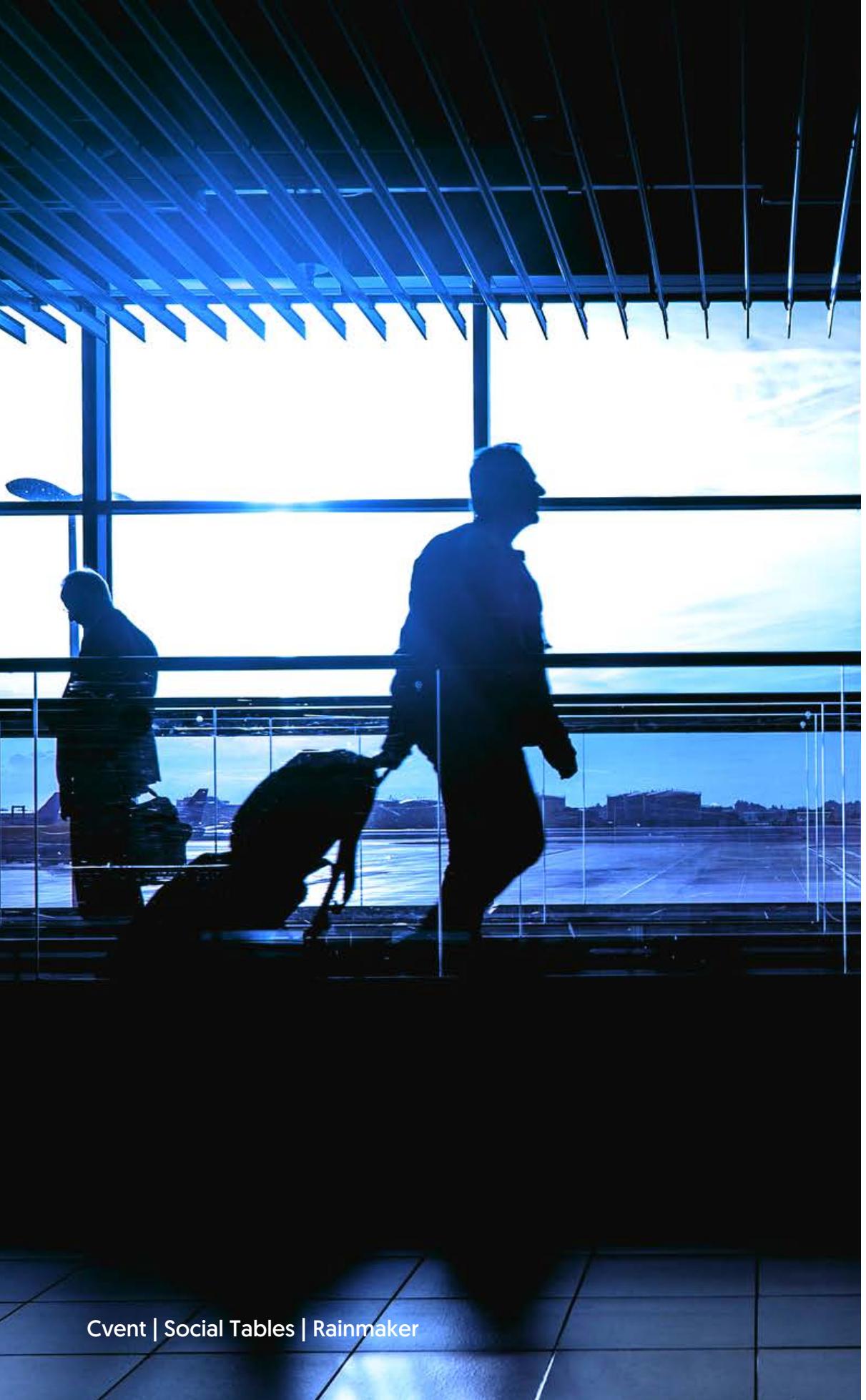
Even with all the amenities and services a hotel may provide, marketing teams need to be on their toes when it comes to staying in front of its target audience. Here are a few innovative marketing ideas for hotels to develop a competitive edge.

Having visual content representing your hotel can truly create a marvelous first impression. A virtual tour actually requires less money and planning than an actual video but it generates a long-lasting impression. Visual graphics are always intriguing and captures planners' attention.

This way, your potential planner customers can choose what they want to see, take a virtual walk through your hotel, and picture their event in your space. It's a less intrusive way to see what you're offering. Big hotels like Hotel de Paris, Marina Del Ray, and Monte-Carlo are already using this great hotel marketing tool.

A press release can also be a useful communication medium for announcing major happenings at your hotel. This could be new or notable events, services, partnerships, or developments. It's an easy way to market your property, grow the reach of your brand, create buzz, or a newsworthy way to get onto customers' radars.





Another technique is to create an experience for traveling corporate customers. Business travelers seek memorable local experiences rather than an ‘escape’ while they are on their business trip. This might also be where the term bleisure comes from, the combination of adding in a bit of leisure time to a business trip. Business travelers look forward to hotels that can not only provide them with conference rooms, sporting activities, social happy hours, spa services, and other good amenities. But they also want to be acquainted with a taste of local culture, great food, and eye-catching views.

Because air travel is one of the most common modes of communications these day, airlines can be a great partner. Partnering with your local airline and asking them to include fliers or advertisements in the magazines provided during air travel can help you get in front of a lot of targeted potential customers.

Creating content that stands out is another useful technique. Travelers look to online travel guides before visiting a destination. If your content appears as the first result on a search engine while they’re browsing, they’ll probably consider booking at your hotel too.

You can even launch a monthly magazine/newsletter or post hotel blogs regarding your hotel services. Providing reviews and testimonials of the services that make your property stand out will create a genuine image of your hotel in the mind of readers.

Developing customized add-ons can be beneficial. Why do customers stay at your hotel? Is it the luxury amenities or the fact that it's the best hotel to stay when there's a convention in town? Or, is does your property double as the center for nightlife? Weave in these customized add-ons when customers go to book. Can customers get a coveted reservation at the best restaurant in the city? Or how about tickets to the biggest concert happening around the corner from the hotel?

Hotel marketers can leverage these add-ons in online hotel advertising, social media content, or email marketing efforts to show what customers gain access to when booking with your hotel.

Try endorsing an employee ambassador. Sometimes the best marketing ideas for hotels come from within.

Social Media and content-sharing are great ways to give an inside view of an organization. Choosing an in-house ambassador such as one of your loyal employees can help you reach our audience. These employees will use their personal account to reach people and acknowledge them with unique insights or take them behind the scenes of various departments. These positive brand messages on social media will help create an image that is well-known and respected.

You could also consider launching a hotel app. In order to approach tech-savvy customers, you can develop an app for your hotel services. This app will provide your prospects with an easy approach to book rooms or any service in your hotel. You can also provide them with an option of accumulating points every time they book a room/service at your hotel and then they can enjoy special services or discounts with the points they earn.

Now that your marketing team has a whole toolkit of original marketing ideas you'll be prepared to improve demand growth as needed.



Conclusion

Mastering the art of demand forecasting has a lot of benefits. From maximizing revenue opportunities to creating powerful marketing plans, forecasting has become the lifeblood of hotel demand growth strategies. Forecasting allows you to understand data in a way that shows you what is your most optimal business mix and your most profitable channels. To capitalize on this you must learn and understand your data. You need to know where to find it, how to collect it, and when to use it to your advantage.

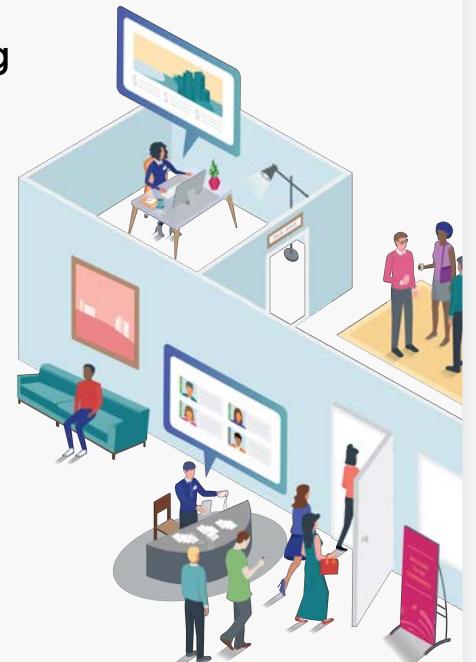
With all these elements in place, you and your marketing team will be better equipped to serve your demand growth strategy with any number of traditional or off the beaten path ideas. For example, you might want to attend a live event or conference to further promote your hotel rooms and spaces.

Fostering open communication between marketing and revenue management is important to continue the conversation and understand needs for demand as it shifts, and what marketing is doing to grow demand. Setting up systems for this type of ongoing communication could be the key to your success this year. Whatever you choose, you're now better equipped to make decisions backed by real data and proven strategies.

Looking for more hotel marketing tips?

These are the most useful conferences to learn the latest, most effective hotel marketing strategies.

1. **Cvent Connect**
7.8-7.11 | Las Vegas, Nevada
2. **HSMAI's Digital Marketing Strategy Conference**
3. **The National Hotel Marketing Conference**
4. **Digital Travel Summit**
5. **Skift Global Forum**
6. **Eye for Travel Summit**
7. **Hubspot: INBOUND**





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