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AxisRooms eBook on Hotel Marketing Strategy

A Guest Centric Guide



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Every crisis calls for new measures and the current Covid-19 pandemic is no exception. Countries around the world, though, have overcome the previous phases of the health catastrophe, people aren't very confident about resuming travel as yet. The eagerness to travel, however, is still intact, leading to the gradual rise in opportunities for hoteliers. All this has accelerated certain trends and behaviours and if, as a hotelier, you're looking to make the most of the moment, the time is now for hotels to up the ante to match these.

This guide will discuss those strategies which will come in handy for hoteliers like you in adjusting your online marketing and distribution to attract and retain guests while ensuring that every guest has an experience that delights them and pushes them to become regular patrons.





What is a Hotel Marketing Strategy?

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As accommodation providers, attracting the right guests, selling the maximum number of rooms and achieving profits, leading to growth in every sector, is probably all you aspire for. But, it can all go terribly wrong without the right tactical plan in place. A **hotel marketing strategy** is the road map that allows you to not just achieve these goals but much more - identifying guests who can bring you the highest value, communicating with them effectively to build the right perceptions and relationships, as well as picking the right channels to reach them.

When the nitty-gritties are defined, there is less room for ambiguity and wastage of money and resources. Your marketing strategy should spell out for you clearly the steps you need to take and why they're so essential. It must also throw some light on the kind of expenditure to expect and how it would all be utilized. The marketing machinery works towards accomplishing goals by employing

time and money at the right places, in the right moments. By ruling out any chances of digressing, a marketing plan aligns actions to goals and makes it easier to achieve growth.





Define Your Goals

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Purpose-led actions tend to bring desired results, as compared to activities carried out without established objectives. Defining goals for marketing activities gives them a clear direction and improves the chances of success. Hotel marketing goals may vary a great deal. From reaching a larger number of people to heighten brand awareness in the market, to achieving better online reviews to construct a positive reputation in the industry, goals could be diverse in range and specific to a business' needs.



If you haven't yet listed down the goals you'd like your business to achieve, let us take you through a few which you could consider. These can be developed based on your hotel's performance in the past year and the KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) you use to arrive at your next step. Keeping revenue as the ultimate objective, there are specific things you could do to reach where you want your business to be:

- **Improving the rate of occupancy to drive more revenue**
- **Enhancing the ADR and RevPAR figures to achieve revenue growth**
- **Operating profitably by reducing costs, and impacting the GOPPAR positively**

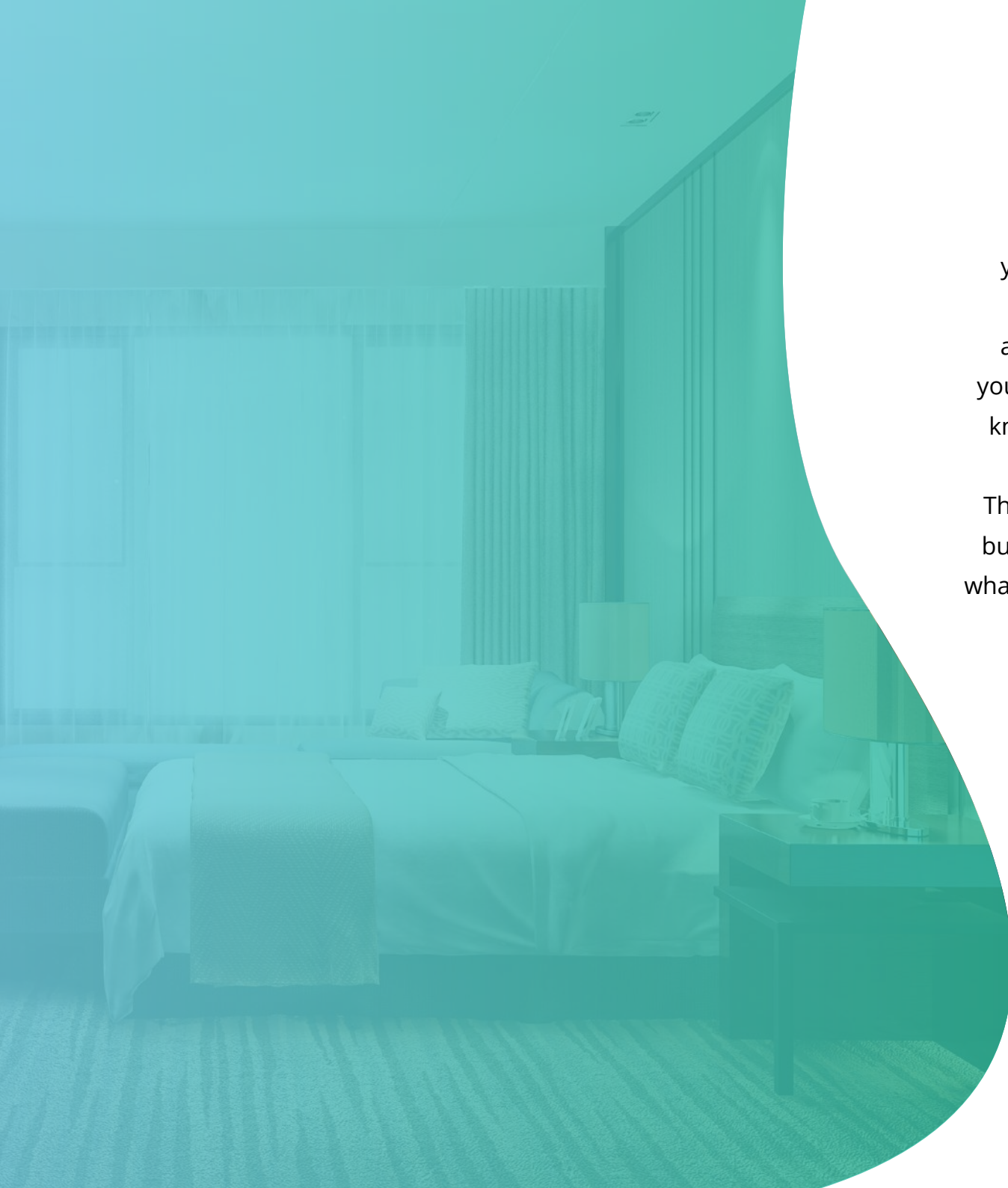
When marketers have a lucid understanding of how you intend to grow your hotel business, their efforts can be more result-oriented and strategies can be formed with the same



in mind. **But, have you ever wondered how many goals are too many?**

Setting goals for your business might seem easy, as if pointing at the most obvious. But, experts in the field suggest that being a little cautious helps. It requires practice, constant refinement, focus and a risk-taking heart, that is also aware of the right

moment to pull the brakes. Apart from questions on how to set goals that are achievable, yet challenging; and whether they need an update every quarter, month or week, small businesses may have a lot of things that need attention, but can all of them be focused on altogether? That may not be the sanest thing to do.



It is imperative that you spend time in evaluating your current position in the marketplace to establish achievable marketing goals. Without being realistic about goals, setting lofty limits can be detrimental to your business, especially in its early days. Likewise, not knowing about one's true potential and going easy on goals could lead to missing out on growth potential. Therefore, it could be really useful to understand your business' level of growth to date. Commit to delivering what your business is resourced to achieve and then try to meet goals, taking only a few steps at a time.

A background image showing a group of people in a meeting. A woman with curly hair is smiling and looking at a man who is looking at a tablet. Another man is visible in the background. The image is overlaid with a dark blue gradient.

Define Your Target Audience

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Target Audience

A **target audience** refers to a specific set of people who are likely to be more interested in your product or service and can be grouped together on the basis of characteristics like age, gender, income, location, interests etc. It, therefore, makes business sense to target them through marketing activities.

For a hotelier, the right guest could be one whose expectations or desired experience closely resembles what the hotel is designed or equipped to offer. When those two factors match, there are higher chances of a positive guest experience and post-stay review.

Focusing on an audience that aligns with the offerings of a hotel is especially useful when the need arises to communicate stories that have the potential to compel interest. Every claim must of course be supported by materials that evoke trust, such

as good quality photos, videos, guest reviews etc.

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Listed below are some common guest personas your hotel could come across. Identifying which of these your hotel should target is important to thrive in a competitive market. You may find some of these arriving at your hotel often, and some you'll discover when you indulge yourself in data, which is now easily available through software like property management systems, channel managers etc.

Business Traveler

Their sole mission is work and a location's sights do not interest them much. Would like information coming their way about the best restaurants and cafes nearby where they could conduct their meetings.

Bleisure Traveler

Their main focus is on work too, but try to find time for leisure activities as well. They often try to make use of their travels as opportunities for mini-vacations. Posts about the 'in-room office' services offered by hotels interest them.

Green Traveler

They are eco-conscious travellers. They are sustainability-minded and are careful about the carbon footprint that their travels have on the planet. They incline towards hotels/accommodations which practice sustainability and make a conscious effort towards maintaining a healthy ecology.

Gen-Z Travelers

These are mostly gap-year students who are on a break from university and wish to explore the world on a limited budget. These are a growing category of travellers that hotels must take note of.

Digital Nomads

These people often telecommute to work, rather than travel to physical workspaces. Due to the nature of their work, great wi-fi is their most essential need.

Another way of getting an insight into the kind of guests that your hotel could best cater is to review your hotel's occupancy over the months gone by and identify any common traveller type/s, who also left you feedback your hotel can be proud of. Working with OTAs for bookings can help a lot in this case as well-known ones offer a quick understanding of trends that can be derived from the reviews your hotel garners.



Define Your Value Proposition

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Your hotel's value proposition is simply **the value you promise to deliver to your audience if they choose to stay with you.**

It can be presented as a business or marketing statement which summarizes why they should choose your property over those of your competitor's. But, empty claims never work. Your value proposition must be upheld by the amenities on offer, ways in which your staff would serve, special preparations such as precautionary measures taken to tackle the Covid-led concerns and even the online reviews by guests who've been to your property before.

Your marketing messages should ideally be built on the value proposition you define for your business and all communication materials must carry information that substantiates it. For example, photos are a powerful tool to put across your message and generate interest, especially when used on platforms specific to your hotel such as your website, OTA channels, metasearch engines, social media etc. They are great at giving your audience a feel of your property and what experience they could expect.

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Define Your Channels of Communication

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Apart from bringing suppliers and buyers together on a common platform, channels provide an effective way to ensure that products and services reach their intended audience. However, every channel has its own potential of creating sales, which must therefore be taken into account when preparing the marketing plan. Considering the resources available and the budget on hand, your plan must be able to accommodate the channels that could work best for your business.

Hotel marketing channels are essentially those places where you can reach and influence your target market. Commonly used channels include emails, OTA and metasearch engine listings, Google hotel ads, social media etc. But, it could be daunting to zero down on a few, given the fact that there is so much variety. Yet, there is a way to sift through and find the ones which may be most beneficial to your hotel business. Here's how:

Whatever may be your hotel distribution strategy, some channels are non-negotiable. These are the ones that can work for your business even when you're on the tightest budget, and still reach a wide audience to bring you bookings. These have an undeniably massive marketing power and a global user base.

Hotel Website

- Direct channel for commission-free online bookings
- Effective in building influence over target audiences through photos, reviews and other communication materials.
- Easy to adopt mobility through mobile devices and incorporate convenience through booking engines

Online Travel Agents

- Easy access to audiences worldwide
- Enables optimization of listing to match target consumers
Uses photos to give travellers a clear idea of what to expect
- Helps improve occupancy, especially by utilizing events, seasons etc
- Offers travel packages to ensure longer bookings and reduced cancellations.

Metasearch Engine and Paid Advertising

- Useful in attracting potential guests and driving direct booking
- Aggregates results on other OTAs to give travellers a better idea of the rates available across the board
- Retargeting strategies push website visitors to return for bookings by dropping reminders through online ads.

GDS (Global Distribution System)

- Most popular B2B platform in the hospitality industry
- Opens several opportunities for bookings through travel agencies, tour operators and the likes and cuts dependency on OTAs.

Social Media

- Great to reach travellers who research online before planning their travel.
- Offering experiences worth sharing online helps create a buzz with the help of guests.
- Hashtags can be relied on to create brand awareness and to bank on popularity.

A few other channels, which are considered marketing multipliers, though not secondary in any way, may require careful thought as they call for additional budget, knowledge and resources to utilize them effectively. These are:

Public Relations

- Local and regional media outlets could come in handy to create awareness about your hotel's offerings
- Keep an eye out for moments that may interest your audience and publish them in popular spaces.

Email Marketing

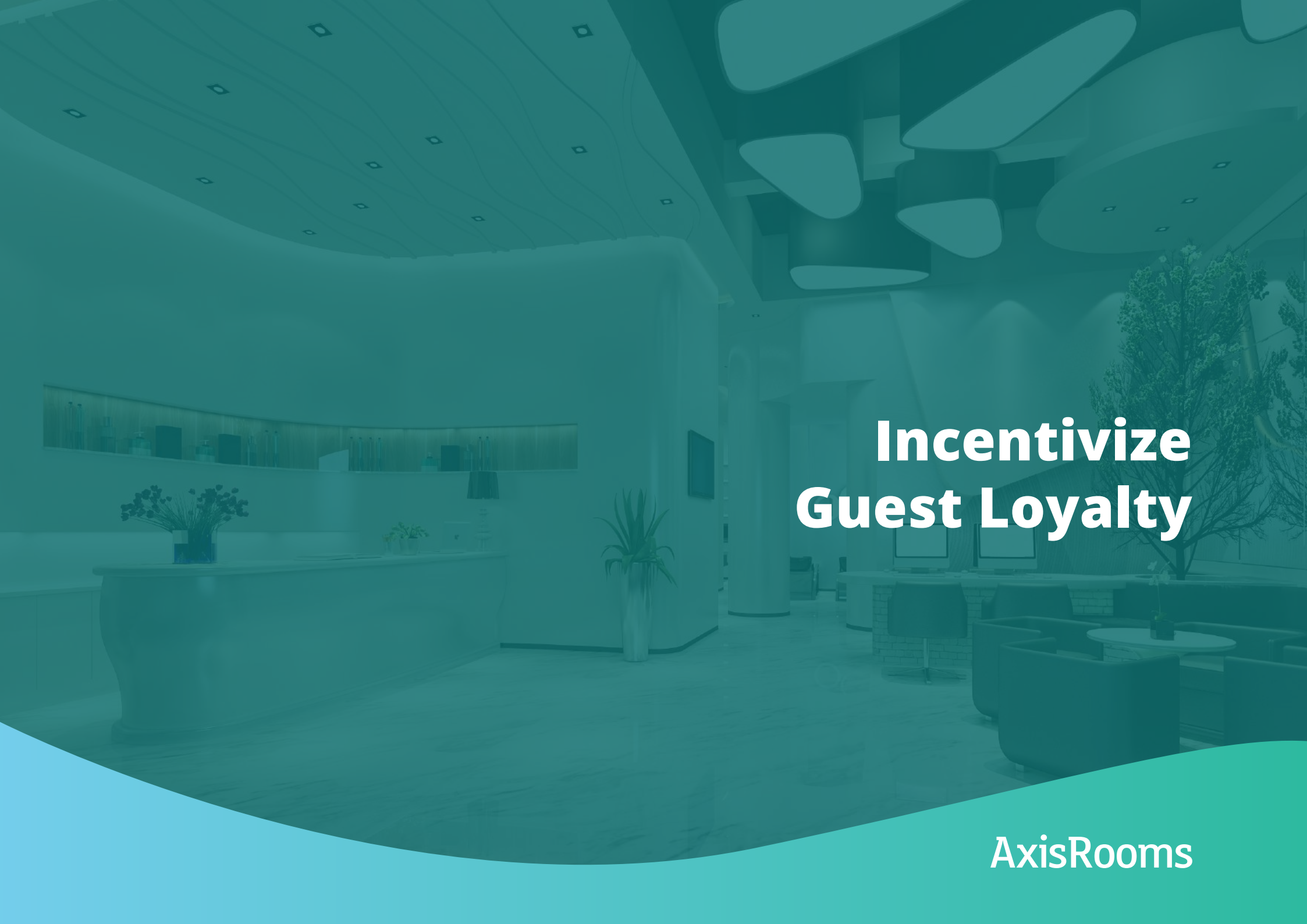
- Stay in constant touch with previous guests and regular patrons through personalized messages.
- Offer all the news and information, at regular intervals, to your guests that'll keep you on top of their minds and build confidence.
- Entice guests to book with you again by tapping into information about them to craft offers/promotions that would please them

Search Engine Optimization

- Consistent traffic to your website can be generated through paid advertising, leveraging keyword research etc.

Content Marketing

- Devoting time and effort in creating written content like blog posts, news articles etc which can be optimized with keywords helps improve website traction.



Incentivize Guest Loyalty

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Relationships lie at the heart of business transactions. This is why it is important to nurture each one of them to have lasting connections that bring you more revenue. But, nurturing business relationships requires genuine effort. As a hotelier, you have to make sure that guests continue to derive value and satisfaction from your accommodation and services. In what ways can you keep the satisfaction levels high and reward your guests for their loyalty?

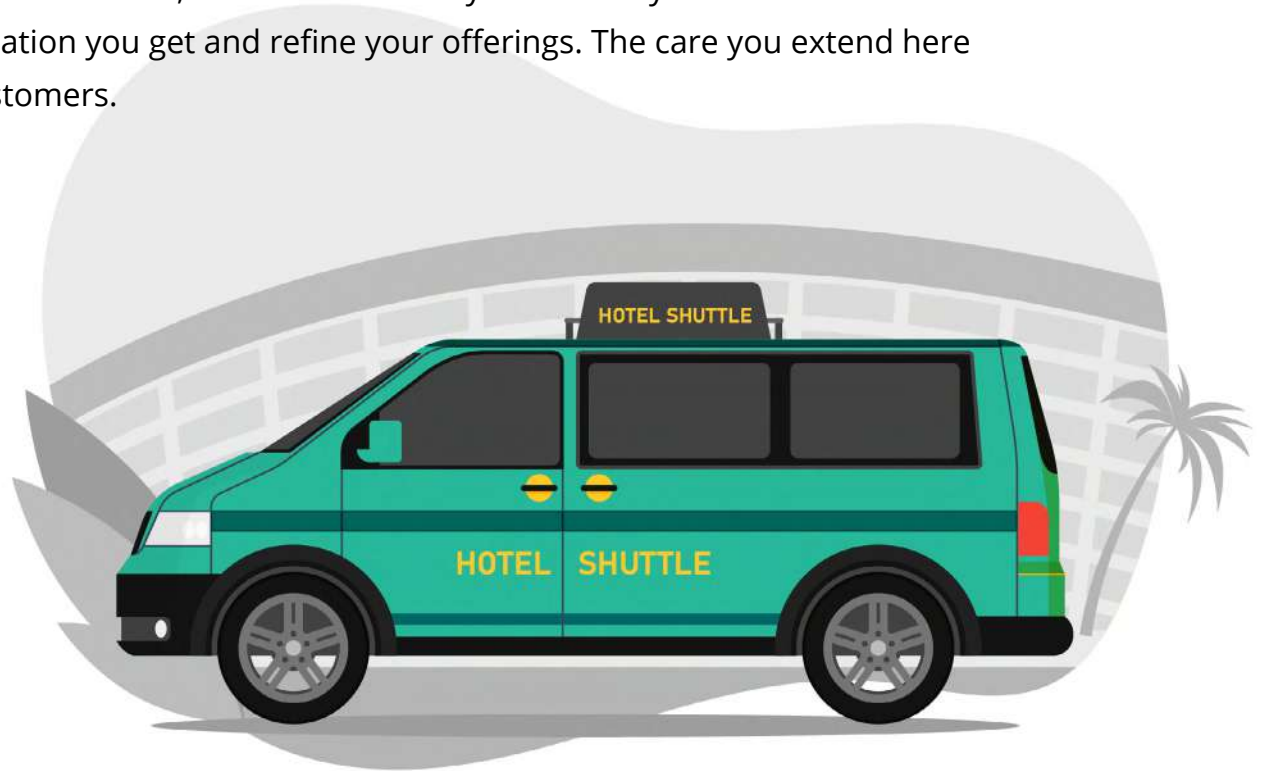


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Create Valuable Hotel Perks

Small thoughtful gestures can leave lasting impressions. Therefore, make it a point to add to your guest's experience by indulging them in things that would make their stay memorable. It could be a free shuttle service to nearby attractions, a goodie bag handed over upon arrival or maybe even a free meal - It would be enough to make your mark on your guest's mind.

To help you provide the highest value to your guests each time, make use of surveys and train your staff to record feedback from your guests. Pay heed to the information you get and refine your offerings. The care you extend here will return to you in the form of loyal long-term customers.



Introduce a Reward Points System

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Everybody likes to be rewarded for their accomplishments and your hotel's consumer base is no different. By initiating a point system, you can incentivise your guests on making repeat visits as well as get several opportunities to turn them into loyal customers through the value you provide.

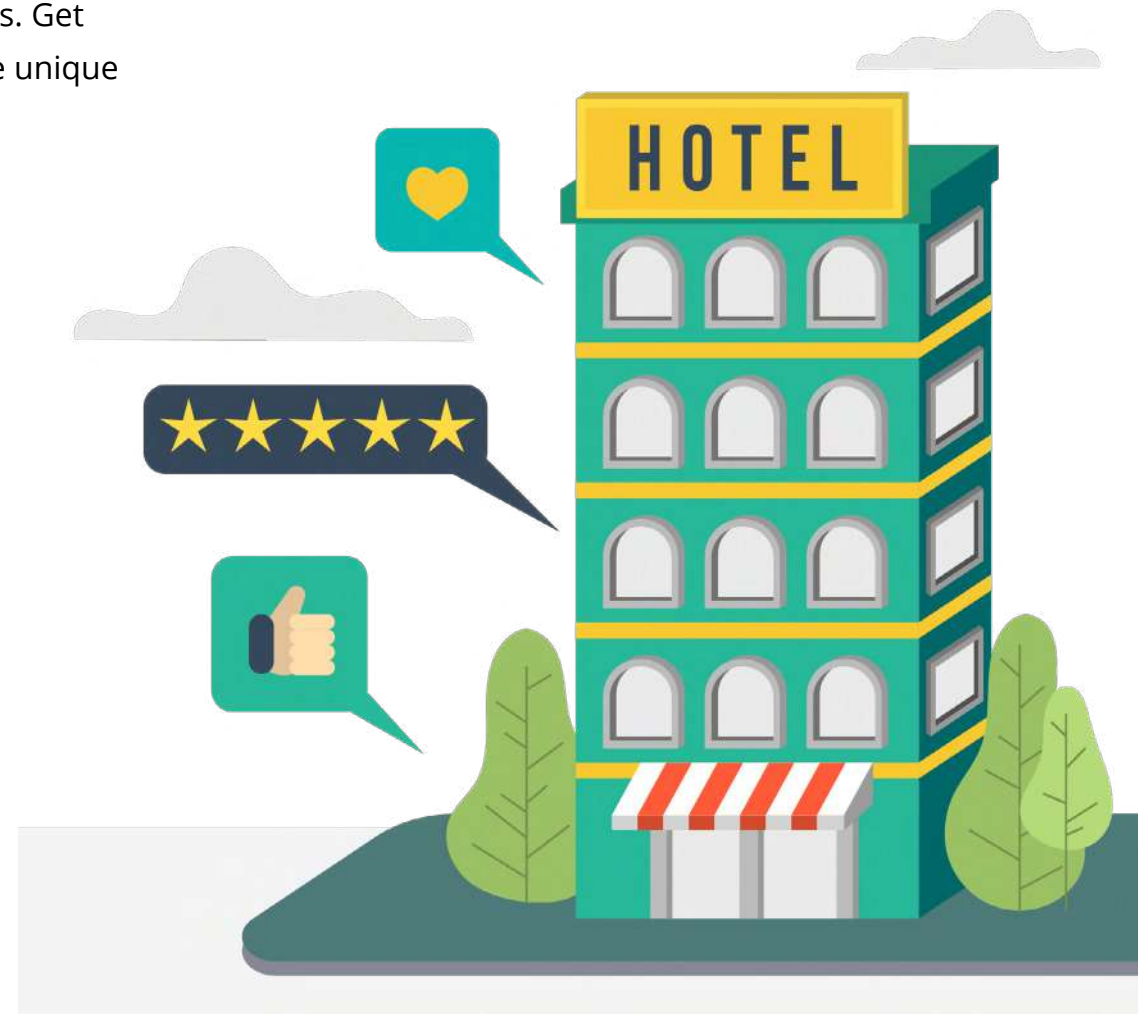
A tiered point system that rewards guests at every milestone and encourages them to keep pushing the limits could earn your hotel a lot of revenue in the long run. Most travellers try to utilize promo codes/discount coupons etc whenever they have the opportunity to while planning a trip. It is natural for them to want to capitalize on it when there is a deep level of engagement.



Deliver a Novel Experience

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The first step here is to identify what those factors are that set your hotel apart from the rest in the market. Once you know what your value differentiator is, communicate that not only to your loyal customers but to those who haven't yet considered your hotel's loyalty programs. Get creative at marketing your property and do not hesitate to let the unique quality shine through.



AxisRooms is a hospitality technology company that provides a range of award-winning products. AxisRooms Channel Management solution helps hotels manage multiple channels and increase their visibility online at the best return on investment; while its Revenue Management tool helps maximize revenue for hotels.

To know more about these amazing products and to get a free demo, please write to us at sales@axisrooms.com or reach us on **+91 9880330001**.



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