

DRIVING BOOKINGS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA




Being present on social media sites is a given. Each platform has its own characteristics, driving and targeting various consumer segments. **Serge Chamelian**, managing partner of h-hotelier, explains how hotels can better engage customers on the most commonly used platforms

f Channel purpose: Based on research, Facebook has never been considered a booking channel; being more of marketing and sales platform.

Presence: A hotel's main goal on Facebook is to optimize its presence and build an audience; engaging them to convert into bookings.


Action: To do this, hotels need to consider paid advertising options. Also, for direct booking the hotel has two options: develop a booking widget or a booking engine on its page. Research suggests that both options, however, don't seem to drive many bookings. Facebook is working hard to change this by offering performance measure tools.

 **Channel purpose:** Twitter provides quick blasts of information, which are primarily social and used mainly for engagement. The chief goal is to connect.

Presence: This channel provides free advertising and definitely increases hotel Internet exposure. It is important, however, not to make posts primarily sales related.


Action: An automated schedule needs to be implemented, to be able to keep up

with "tweeting". Hotels also need to be attentive—watching, reading and regularly responding, in order to learn more about their followers, who could eventually convert into guests. Tweets that utilize video drive may double the engagement.

 **Channel purpose:** It is important to understand that the content of this channel is lifestyle-based and immensely popular with women.

Presence: This channel is a great way to visually showcase everything that makes your hotel brand unique; marketing everything that's great about your restaurants, bars, culinary talent and the food you serve.

Action: This platform is a must for positively impacting the hotel search engine optimization (SEO) efforts.

 **Channel purpose:** Optimization of the TripAdvisor page is all about increasing visibility and communication, thus it's important to have an online review management strategy in place.

Presence: A detailed description of your hotel's business needs to be written, highlighting the key features that distinguish

it from its competition. A key element is to learn the industry's most relevant keywords (use the Google Keyword Tool or a similar service) and make sure to include some of them in your text.

Action: Customer feedback needs to be listened to and responded to whenever necessary. By being both search-engine-friendly and visitor-friendly in equal measure, hotels are well positioned to convert TripAdvisor users into customers.

Furthermore, since most hotels are active on social media, a new position—known as Content Manager—was created to provide hotels with a dedicated person responsible for managing the company's presence on social media sites.

“50 percent of hotel companies have a booking engine or widget on their Facebook page. 45 percent of companies receive less than one percent of total bookings through those widgets”
