Quick response codes

Serge Chamelian , managing partner of hospitality services firm h-hotelier, shows what modern day tools are necessary to stay competitive in the current market

Is the hospitality sector in the Middle East in crisis?

Over the last five years, the hotel and travel industry has concentrated its attention on social media to promote brands and stay competitive in the market to meet the needs of modern wired travelers. The latter rely on the Internet for their travel research and want a fast multimedia and interactive experience including advice from other travelers.

Moreover, a recent phenomenon in promoting customer engagement has been witnessed in the hotel and travel industry: Quick Response code, known as QR codes. This novelty is represented in a two-dimensional barcodes-like, which is scanned using a smart mobile device.

QR codes allow hotels to communicate in an innovative way with current and prospective customers. Thus, it is crucial for

"green way to document customer activity"

hotels to acquire a QR code and engage in social platforms while maintaining a relevant, useful and recent content for customers.

Quick Response codes

QR codes are a 2D matrix barcode consisting of black modules arranged in a square pattern on a white background. The codes can be read easily by scanning any smart mobile device. Their popularity stems mainly from their large storage capacity, the diversification of the types of data, and their fast readability.

QR codes' key function is to break the barrier between the offline and online media by connecting with people in the offline world and bring them to the online world. We have started seeing QR codes almost everywhere, most recently in hotels, restaurants, on menus or bottles. They provide customers an added value through their revolutionized concept of taking customers to a web page or a social media

platform to access all types of information about the company.

For instance, hotels have adopted QR codes on the cards of their rooms, as announcements in elevators, on message boards at the concierge desk or in the lobby to engage customers with suggestions/recommendations on where to dine or what to do during their stay and to allow customers to gain incentives for future visits.

QR codes can be used in several ways by hotels:

• For entertainment whereby customers participate in a social networking game and acquire incentives, benefits and discounts offered by hotels. The aim of this new marketing technique is to maintain loyalty to the brand and increase prospective customers.
• As a promotional tool for dining options whereby customers scan the QR code and become aware of savings and discounts available for dining.
• For security whereby customers are given a code upon their check-in. This code is scanned to unlock their room door, to pay for food, and buy items within the hotel.
• As a green way to document the activity of customers in the hotel.
• As a marketing tool to gain new customers and maintain loyalty when incentives are added to the QR codes.

The most common QR practices for hoteliers:

• Customer reviews on the hotel's website or any third party intermediary website. Hotels place QR codes in strategic places and create a mobile review page to allow customers to share their experiences and leave reviews.
• Print materials such as brochures, magazine ads, billboards, and newspaper ads etc. Hotels provide a discount only to customers who have scanned the QR code on their print materials (QR code related to the hotel's room or restaurant reservation).
• Map of the property by leaving QR codes that link to a property map to show customers where they are, what's close to them and how they can get to where they are going. This will allow them to make their way through all the best parts of the property.
• As a link between QR codes and Facebook as a social media platform started to see the light. Indeed, a Belgian company created Likify, or spotlike, a service that allows marketers to add QR codes to products and signs, and then link those QR codes to a Facebook fan page like button. For instance, when someone scans the QR code with a smart mobile, it activates a like on the company's Facebook fan page. Experience this innovation with the QR code on this page.

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