

85% of Hoteliers Just Don't 'Get It' - By Madigan Pratt

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A Market Metrics Research study found that 90% of hotel managers believe online reviews are very important. Not a surprising figure. But what is surprising is the number of hotel managers that aren't doing anything about it.

Okay, so the research study didn't actually come out and say it, but anyone reading the recent Market Metrics' Research on user generated content (aka TripAdvisor) could easily draw that conclusion. For several years Market Metrics has been tracking the rising popularity of user generated reviews. Here are a few of the key findings from their most recent study:

90% of hotel managers think online reviews are very important

81% visit review sites at least weekly (TripAdvisor, Expedia, Hotels.com, etc.) TripAdvisor is believed to have the biggest influence on guests

70% of hotel managers are familiar with TripAdvisor's Popularity Index that ranks hotels by city, and 90% of which believe the index is important and follow it regularly

Now here's the number that I find astonishing:

Only 15% of hotels have policies or guidelines for how to manage user-generated reviews. In other words 85% just don't 'get it!'

How can this be? 90% of hoteliers think online reviews are important yet 85% are doing nothing about it?

Are they allowing their hospitality marketing professionals to spend money on advertising and promotion while doing nothing about TripAdvisor? Think about this - Market Metrics' research indicates that all the money hotels spend on advertising and promotion is less effective than online reviews.

Need more? As far back as 2007 (ancient history by Internet standards) Nielsen Internet survey concluded, 'Despite the ever expanding array of advertising platforms and sources, consumers around the world place their highest levels of trust in other consumers.'

Now I have seen plenty of articles offering ideas hospitality marketing professionals can use to develop a TripAdvisor strategy. The majority of the ideas are helpful, but the truth is each hotel needs to tailor their own strategy. It has to reflect their particular market situation, and match the available manpower and expertise.

What do you think? Safe travels - Madigan Pratt

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