

Food & Drink Management

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The Top Five Link Building Strategies for Hospitality Managers

Marketing and promoting online has become an organic process – less to do with technical systems and more to do with the people that see it. As a hospitality manager, you are no different: you need people to link to your hotel or restaurant website or blog to create more awareness about your offer and its brand, according to Lodging Interactive.

But how do you do it? How can you create a buzz online that attracts other websites to link to yours and creating what is usually referred to as a “viral” marketing campaign? Below are five recommended ways that you can increase the link building strategically through the people visiting your site.

- **Link out to other sites**

This seems like it wouldn't work, but it actually is quite effective: link to other sites. Bloggers, like anyone else, prefer to deal with givers rather than takers. Nobody wants to do any kind of business with somebody who will waste their time and give no benefit in return.

If you want other people to link to you, extend your hand out first and link to theirs. Bloggers and other site administrators can see who is doing this, and it can start a discussion and lead to more links to your site on theirs.

So, how do you do it? Engage them. Don't just put the link up there and ask for one back. Join their conversations with a great headline and something substantial; make it worth their while to read what you have to say. As long as your addition to the conversation has some substance, you can create enough of a rapport to start receiving links back.

- **Make a guest appearance somewhere else**

Talk to bloggers and see if you can write a post for their blog as a guest writer for a day. Suggest a killer topic that their audience would be receptive to. Many bloggers today enjoy having guest bloggers appear on their site. Seek out destination blogs and contribute information about what is happening around town, and near to your hotel.

What do you get in return? Exposure, and depending on the blog, there could be lots of it. The more people you reach out to and touch, the greater chance you have of them turning into

guests. If you can do it in a relevant way, link to your hotel in the body of the post somewhere. If that's off-limits or can't be done effectively, it is a must that you put it in your byline at the end of the post that states who you are and what you do. Try to plan it around a promotion your hotel is having, and you can advertise that promotion in a quick but effective way in your byline.

- **Write for some article directories.**

If you are serious about promoting your hotel through link building, then submitting some articles to directories that will list them is not a bad way to go. Submit articles and link them together. If it's good enough content, it could be listed and linked to hundred of other web pages. Write original content that is not on your hotel's web site, and keep doing it until the results are what you are looking for. If you're lucky enough to have a concierge at your hotel, let the concierge become a "destination expert" for you and post their articles on related blog sites.

- **Network through email**

Email networking is starting to take a back seat to other means of social media connectivity, but it is still certainly valuable. Don't beg; offer value. It's the same with any other way you reach out to others in the blogging community. You need to figure out what's in it for them. Think about what ways you can help them, and offer it to them.

Bloggers are a notoriously friendly community. They love to share link love with their friends. Be social and connect with others. Get their attention and create some interest. If you give first, they will most likely be willing to give later.

- **Take advantage of social media sites**

It can be quick and extremely effective. Social media is one of the top ways to build links to your website. Quality traffic can come in droves from places like Digg or Delicious.

The first key to taking advantage is your headline. Submitting your post to a social media aggregator will ensure that people will see your headline, so you have to make it sell the value of the post. Do well enough in this area, and people will be drawn to your web site like a magnet.

The second key is to understand your audience. Those who frequent Digg and those who frequent Reddit are two different types of audiences. Gear your headline to these audiences after studying the hottest headlines on these sites. Tweak your content for the right audience, just like any other method of marketing.

If you have the opportunity, write a good description or summary of your post for sites like Digg. Sometimes they will use the opening paragraph or few sentences from your post, and if your first

few sentences don't cover all the great things about your post, you may want to write a special summary for viewers to read.

Why build links? Because link building is one of the most effective ways of marketing whatever you want. Gear your content to your business's local events or content that your audience wants to read about. As long as you get noticed and make friends, you can easily draw in hundreds, if not thousands, of potential customers through this type of marketing. That's a marketer's dream, and it won't cost you much money, if any.

Web 2.0 is here to stay, and link building is one of the best strategies to take advantage of it.

To explain the source of this advice, Lodging Interactive is an Internet Marketing Services provider to the hospitality, spa and restaurant industries. The company provides a portfolio of such services to hundreds of hotels, resorts, timeshares, spas and restaurants. Clients included branded hotels from nearly every major brand as well as prestigious, landmark independent hotels.

Links:

Lodging Interactive: www.LodgingInteractive.com

(Word Count: 1060)