

How to Use Local Events to Drive Qualified Traffic to your Hotel Website

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As a hotel, one of the most difficult aspects of marketing is finding your target audience. A hotel can satisfy the needs of many different demographics, and simply marketing to the general public is not as effective as marketing to specific groups of people.

Your chances of success increase dramatically if your marketing is specific to a certain group or groups of people. This means that your marketing, and specifically your hotel's website, needs to be as focused as possible to deliver the most potential guests to contact your hotel.

For example, if you design your website to please everyone in the market, most people will ignore it. Why? Trying to please everyone means you will probably please no one. It is impossible to speak to every demographic of a market. As a result, any effort to do so can result in a largely generic and therefore easily forgettable website.

Now, if you decide to gear your website specifically to families, then you will probably get a large quantity of families to check in to your hotel. This is because the marketing is speaking directly to the families. As a result, it highlights a hotel's strong family-friendly amenities, like a kiddie pool, game room, and in-room video game system. Some of the market will ignore the website, but you will get a stronger response from the families, because you are appealing to their needs and desires.

But as a hotel, you do not want to limit yourself just to families for business. You want to attract as many different demographics as possible to fill your hotel. But how can it be done without coming across as generic and forgettable? This is why using local events to your advantage is a great way to target different demographics at different times. It allows you to shift gears regularly in your marketing and please everyone in the market, just at different times of the year.

For example, imagine that your city is hosting the Super Bowl this year. Around that time, you would want to market your hotel as a great place for football fans to stay. You can gear the marketing and the special rate packages for groups of mostly male fans. Three weeks later, a popular teenage pop singer will be having a big concert in your area. Now, you'll want to shift gears and market to the adolescent girl crowd, along with their parents. You want to make sure the marketing focuses on how safe and family-friendly the hotel is - fun for the kids, but practical for the parents. These are two completely different marketing schemes, but by focusing on those already coming to the event, you can drastically increase your business and profits.

Why? Because the events are already doing the work for you. They are bringing the people into your area. As a hotel, it is not your responsibility to attract people into the city. That's what the events are designed to do. You only have the responsibility to serve those who already are coming in to stay for the event. All you need to do is convince them that you have the perfect place to stay for their particular event. A great way to do this is by having a page, or pages, of your website dedicated to featuring the upcoming local events. There are even services available, such as Hotel Calendars (www.hotelcalendars.com), which can establish and maintain a regular schedule of events, allowing you to create packages and targeted marketing for these events and linked to the events themselves on the calendar of your website.

Having a calendar of events on your website accomplishes several things that make it successful in pulling in more business:

- 1. It shows focus on customer satisfaction.** If a football fan sees that you are offering a special package geared specifically for them, you are showing that you care about making them happy, and that the weekend will be about making sure they are enjoying themselves. This vastly increases the chances of them staying with you. Displaying care for a specific group makes your hotel much more appealing to them.
- 2. It drives targeted traffic to your website.** When someone goes to a search engine to look up information on an event, your listing of the event on your website will rank your site higher on the results list. If that person needs a hotel, there's a good chance they will click on your site and look at your information. Now you have a much better chance of converting that click into a sale if you focus that page to packages that will appeal to them.
- 3. It focuses your marketing campaigns.** Not only will the calendar draw them in, but it will provide an organized way for you to see who you need to shift your focus on throughout the year. If your marketing is organized properly, then you will not need to study and wonder who you should appeal to next. Simply look at your calendar and plan accordingly. Shifting your focus and planning ahead can be as easy as creating a special rate package or deal that would appeal to the incoming crowd at that time. Simple little tweaks can make a big difference in overall profits.

By using a calendar on your hotel's website, you will keep yourself tuned in to the local happenings around town, which will mean you know who will need a place to stay more often. Marketing success depends on your knowledge of the audience, and those who come in from out of town to see one of your local events is indeed your audience. Use the event's popularity to your advantage. Publicize your hotel as a solution to the audience that will be coming in for the event. Target them, and you will bring in many more guests and boost your profits.

For more information about the Hotel Calendars service, visit www.hotelcalendars.com.

About Lodging Interactive

Lodging Interactive is a leading provider of Internet Marketing Services to the hospitality, spa and restaurant industries. The company provides a portfolio of effective Internet Marketing 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.

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Lodging Interactive is a proud member of the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA), The California Hotel Association, and a supporter of the Hotel Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMIAI). For more information contact Richard Walsh, Vice President of Business Development at rjwalsh@lodginginteractive.com or at 877-291-4411. The company's website is located at www.LodgingInteractive.com.

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