



Applied Information Technology

BLEH 3

Digital marketing in hospitality

What is digital marketing?

- ▶ Use of digital channels to promote products/services
- ▶ Includes: websites, social media, search engines, email, mobile apps
- ▶ Data-driven and interactive compared to traditional marketing



Why digital marketing matters in hospitality

- ▶ Guests increasingly use digital platforms to research & book
- ▶ High competition → visibility is key
- ▶ Enhances customer engagement & loyalty
- ▶ Cost-effective compared to traditional media



Evolution from traditional to digital

- ▶ Traditional: billboards, print ads, travel agents
- ▶ Digital: search engines, Online Travel Agencies /OTAs (e.g., Booking.com, Expedia), social media
- ▶ Shift from one-way communication → interactive engagement



Key digital marketing channels

- ▶ **Owned media:** websites, blogs, social pages
- ▶ **Paid media:** Google Ads, social media ads
- ▶ **Earned media:** customer reviews, social shares, PR



Role of the customer journey

- ▶ Awareness → Consideration → Booking → Experience → Post-stay review
- ▶ Digital touchpoints exist at each stage
- ▶ Example: Google search, Instagram ad, TripAdvisor review, loyalty email



Case study: Marriott Hotels

- ▶ Strong presence on Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn
- ▶ Uses influencer marketing & storytelling
- ▶ Mobile-friendly website and booking app



Tools commonly used in hospitality digital marketing

- ▶ **Google analytics** (track website traffic & bookings)
- ▶ **Canva** (design social media posts)
- ▶ **Hootsuite/Buffer** (schedule posts)
- ▶ **TripAdvisor & Yelp** (manage reviews)
- ▶ **Booking.com / Expedia dashboards** (track OTA performance)



Opportunities & benefits

- ▶ Global reach with minimal cost
- ▶ Personalization of offers (e.g., birthday discounts)
- ▶ 24/7 availability (online bookings)
- ▶ Data-driven insights for decision-making



Challenges in hospitality digital marketing

- ▶ High competition online
- ▶ Negative reviews spread fast
- ▶ Constantly changing algorithms & trends
- ▶ Need for digital skills among staff



Discussion question

- ▶ **“Think about the last time you consumed a hospitality product (hotel, flight, or restaurant). Which digital tools influenced your decision?”**
 - ▶ Was it Google Maps reviews, Instagram ads, or word-of-mouth on WhatsApp?
 - ▶ Was the digital marketing option effective in guiding your decision making?
 - ▶ What advantage? did you enjoy through this channel?
 - ▶ What disadvantages did you experience?

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Digital marketing channels in hospitality

Overview

- ▶ Social media marketing
- ▶ Search engine marketing (SEO & SEM)
- ▶ Email marketing
- ▶ Influencer marketing & partnerships
- ▶ Case studies from hospitality



Social media marketing - Importance

- ▶ Social media is a top discovery platform for travel inspiration
- ▶ Hospitality relies heavily on visual storytelling
- ▶ Platforms: Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn
- ▶ Customers expect real-time interaction

Social media - Best practices

- ▶ Use high-quality photos and videos
- ▶ Share guest stories and user-generated content
- ▶ Maintain consistent posting schedules
- ▶ Engage with followers (reply to comments, messages)
- ▶ Use hashtags strategically (#TravelTuesday, #LuxuryHotel)
- ▶ Don't demean others or the location in the name of fun
- ▶ While controversy attracts following, stay within your moral range

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) & SEO

- ▶ SEO: Optimizing hotel/restaurant websites to appear higher in Google searches
- ▶ SEM: Paid advertising on Google (Google Ads, pay-per-click campaigns)
- ▶ Why important: Travelers often search online before booking

SEO best practices for hospitality

- ▶ Optimize for keywords: “best hotel in Kampala”
- ▶ Keep website mobile-friendly
- ▶ Add local SEO (Google Maps, TripAdvisor)
- ▶ Use blogs to share travel tips, guides
- ▶ Ensure fast website loading speed

Email marketing

- ▶ Used for customer retention & repeat bookings
- ▶ Personalized offers, loyalty rewards, event promotions
- ▶ Newsletters with travel tips, updates, seasonal deals
- ▶ Examples: Booking reminders, birthday discounts



Influencer marketing & partnerships

- ▶ Hospitality businesses collaborate with travel bloggers, YouTubers, Instagram influencers
- ▶ Influencers provide authentic reviews & visual exposure
- ▶ Partnerships with airlines, tour operators, event planners
- ▶ Helps extend brand reach to new audiences

Case example - Influencer collaboration

- ▶ **Case:** Hilton Hotels & Influencers
- ▶ Hilton invited travel influencers to stay at properties for free
- ▶ Influencers created authentic videos of their stays
- ▶ Increased Hilton's online bookings and brand awareness



Choosing the right channel

- ▶ Match channel to business goals:
 - ▶ Social media → awareness & engagement
 - ▶ SEO/SEM → direct bookings
 - ▶ Email → loyalty & retention
 - ▶ Influencers → exposure & brand image
- ▶ Budget and resources influence choice



Summary

- ▶ Social media drives inspiration & interaction
- ▶ SEO & SEM capture customers actively searching
- ▶ Email builds loyalty & repeat visits
- ▶ Influencers extend brand visibility
- ▶ *Discussion:* Which channel do you think is most effective for hospitality businesses today? Which channel do you think would work best for a new hotel or restaurant in your city?

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Digital tools and metrics in hospitality marketing

Lesson objectives

- ▶ Understand the importance of digital tools in hospitality marketing
- ▶ Explore key tools: social media, email, SEO, PPC, OTAs
- ▶ Learn essential metrics for measuring performance
- ▶ Apply metrics to real hospitality case examples



Why tools and metrics matter

- ▶ “What gets measured gets managed”
- ▶ Tools make marketing **efficient** and **scalable**
- ▶ Metrics show if strategies are **working**
- ▶ Hospitality is **data-driven**: bookings, reviews, clicks, conversions



Social media management tools

- ▶ Examples:
- ▶ **Hootsuite, Buffer, Sprout social** - schedule and manage posts
- ▶ Analytics on engagement, reach, impressions
- ▶ Real-time customer interaction tracking
- ▶ **Hospitality example:**
A hotel uses Hootsuite to schedule Instagram posts about weekend offers.
Engagement metrics guide what type of photos perform best.

Email marketing tools

- ▶ Examples:
- ▶ **Mailchimp, Constant Contact, SendinBlue**
- ▶ Features: segmentation, automation, templates
- ▶ Metrics: open rates, click-through rates, conversion
- ▶ **Hospitality example:**
A restaurant uses Mailchimp to send a monthly newsletter with menu updates.
Tracks open rates to see what topics excite guests.

SEO tools

- ▶ Examples:
- ▶ **Google Search Console, SEMrush, Moz**
- ▶ Helps optimize hotel/restaurant websites for visibility
- ▶ Metrics: keyword rankings, organic traffic, bounce rate
- ▶ **Hospitality example:**
A lodge uses SEO tools to rank higher for “eco-lodge in Uganda.” Tracks organic traffic growth after updating website keywords.

Paid advertising tools (PPC)

- ▶ Examples:
- ▶ **Google Ads, Facebook Ads Manager**
- ▶ Hotels use pay-per-click (PPC) for quick visibility
- ▶ Metrics: impressions, CTR (Click Through Rate), CPC (Cost per Click), ROI
- ▶ **Hospitality example:**
A hotel launches a Google Ads campaign for “luxury hotel near Entebbe.”
Tracks CTR and cost per booking to assess effectiveness.

Online Travel Agencies (OTAs)

- ▶ Examples:
- ▶ **Booking.com, Expedia, TripAdvisor, Airbnb**
- ▶ Tools: dashboards for reservations, reviews, promotions
- ▶ Metrics: conversion rates, review scores, cancellation rates



Key hospitality metrics

- ▶ Website traffic (visitors, bounce rate, time on site)
- ▶ Conversion rates (bookings, reservations, purchases)
- ▶ Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC)
- ▶ Return on Investment (ROI)
- ▶ Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)
- ▶ Review scores and sentiment

Linking tools to metrics

- ▶ Social Media → Engagement, Reach
- ▶ Email → Open Rate, CTR, Conversion
- ▶ SEO → Rankings, Organic Traffic
- ▶ PPC → CPC, CTR, ROI
- ▶ OTAs → Conversion Rates, Reviews

Case example

- ▶ Hotel Case: Lakeview Resort
- ▶ Tool: Google Ads campaign for weekend getaways
- ▶ Metrics: 10,000 impressions, 500 clicks, 50 bookings
- ▶ CTR = 5% | Conversion Rate = 10% | ROI = High
- ▶ Key insight:
Tracking metrics showed the campaign was profitable, so the hotel expanded it.

Summary

- ▶ Digital tools increase efficiency in hospitality marketing
- ▶ Each tool has specific metrics tied to performance
- ▶ Metrics guide strategic decisions on campaigns
- ▶ Hospitality managers must balance costs, tools, and outcomes

