

An Investigation of Hotels' Facebook Page Promotion

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Abstract

Web 2.0 technologies have had a large impact on tourism industry. While the Web 2.0 applications in online tourism market seem promising, limited prior studies have investigated Facebook page promotional and communications strategies. This research explores hotels' Facebook page content. Utilising top resort hotels in Macau as a case, the research successfully categorised hotels' Facebook wall posts into four dimensions: "Social Interaction", "Hotel Information", "Event Activities" and "Entertainments". Findings indicated that Internet users are more likely to make comments on the sub-categories of "Hotel News", "Competition Events" and "Music Concerts", and share information pertinent to "Exhibition Events" and "Hotel News".

Keywords: Web 2.0, Hotel Facebook Page, Hotel Marketing, Macau Resorts Hotels

1 Background and Introduction

The global Internet usage has increased significantly with 566.4% increase from the year 2000 to 2012 (Internet World Stats, 2012). Kim and Kim (2004) stated that online transaction intentions and completeness of information are the two main factors influencing travellers' online satisfaction. Due to Internet users' preferences for the Internet, hotel marketers have diversified their strategies to online marketing on the Internet as a significant sales and primary distribution channel (Cantalops & Santos, 2008). Advanced online Web 2.0 platforms empower online users to interact and communicate, which appear in different types of applications including wikis, blogs, social networking, folksonomies, podcasting and content hosting services (Chaves, Gomes & Pedron, 2011; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Currently, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are the top three popular online platforms that marketers are using for promotions and are willing to continue directing investments (State of Social Media Marketing Report [SSMMR], 2012). Facebook has 1.11 billion users till March of year 2013 (Yahoo News, 2013), which has undeniably become a tool for marketers to build "brand awareness" among online users (SSMMR, 2012). Along with the increasing popularity of promotions on Facebook, many prior studies have investigated Web 2.0 applications in tourism industry, but main efforts are made in generalizing the impact of Web 2.0 in tourism industry (Milano, Baggio & Piattelli,

2011; Schegg, Liebrich, Scaglione & Ahmad, 2008; Noti, 2013), Web 2.0 applications in travel marketing (Dippelreiter, Grün, Pöttler, Seidel, Berger, Dittenbach & Pesenhofer, 2008; Constantinides & Fountain, 2008), tourists reviews and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Racherla, Connolly & Christodoulidou, 2013; Bingley, Burgess, Sellitto, Cox & Buultjens, 2010), analysing specific social media websites and consumer activities (Tuominen, 2011; Murray, 2009; Lo, Mckercher, Lo, Cheung & Law, 2011; Elizabeth & Bushelow, 2012). A dearth of studies has investigated the promotional and marketing communications strategies on Facebook page (Leung, Schuckert & Yeung, 2013). This research makes an attempt to do a content analysis on hotels' Facebook page, with a primary aim to determine hotels promotional strategies in terms of Facebook Page wall posts; contents are then further categorised into insightful dimensions. The study has two key objectives: (1) to categorise hotels' wall posts/ promotions on fan pages into dimensions; (2) to identify the popular fan page posts/promotions.

2 Methodology

The research makes an effort to explore Macau's top resort hotels' activities on their Facebook pages as a case. Resort hotels provide comprehensive information and latest activities, as mentioned in Costa, Glinia, Goudas and Antoniou (2004)'s study that leisure, fitness and sport activities, as well as live entertainment, are the content of recreational services, attributed by European resort hotels as hotel animation. Facebook pages open up new opportunities for hotel marketers to gather potential Internet users into groups, broadcast activities to the fans as well as collect Internet users' perceptions on these activities by Facebook's functions of "Like", "Comment" and "Share". Bushelow (2012) stated that Facebook pages allow a brand to create an online community of brand users through the social networking site. In order to provide an exploratory study on analysing hotels' Facebook page, a content analysis technique was adapted to analyse four top resort hotels in Macau, which were selected from TripAdvisor's recommended "Top Macau's Resorts" (<http://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotels-g664891-Macau-Hotels.html>). Content of Facebook pages were collected from 25th to 30th of August 2013 by the authors. In addition, only the content of year 2012 was recorded, in order to observe the hotel activities within one full year. The posts and their numbers of likes, shares and comments were recorded in a spread sheet. Based on the content of the posts, the collected data was further categorised into different groups.

3 Findings

The paper makes an attempt to categorise the content of hotel posts on Facebook page. Table 1 categorised the posts into four dimensions: namely "Social Interaction",

“Hotel Information”, “Event activities” and “Entertainments” respectively, which were further categorised into different subcategories.

The study investigated the Internet users’ perceptions about the content of Facebook pages by tracking the number of “Likes”, “Shares” and “Comments” of each post. Details of the selected hotels are displayed in Table 2. The data implied that the number of posts are generally not consistent with the number of received “Likes”, such as The Westin Resort Macau had similar number of posts with other resorts hotels but received smallest number of “Likes” from Facebook fans, this finding suggested that the number of “Likes” may be affected by the content of posts.

Table 1. Five dimensions of Facebook page content

Dimensions	Descriptions	Subcategories
Social Interaction	Social Interaction can be defined as two or more people taking one another into account in building up their actions (Bernard, Cohen and Zelditch, 1972). In this study, the Social interaction refers to the online social related activities of hotels posted on their fan pages.	-Festival Blessing -Celebrity News -Posts unrelated to the Hotel (Weather report, local event)
Hotel Information	Hotel information involves all the hotel promotional activities in its fan page.	-Hotel News -Beauty/Spa Promotions -Dining Promotions -Event Reminder
Event Activities	Event activities categorised all kinds of events which organised by hotels and posted on fan page.	-Hospitality Education -Competition Events -Exhibition Events
Entertainments	Martin (1982-1983) stated that entertainment includes theatrical or operatic performances, concerts, vaudevilles, circus, carnival and side shows, athletic contests exhibitions, contests, displays, and games.	-Music Concerts -Film Update News -Festival Celebrations -Music Show / Sports in Bars / Annual Events -Voting activities -Photo posting activities (without rewards)

Hotel information was the most frequent posts on Facebook pages, followed by Entertainments, Event Activities and Social Interactions. From consumer perspective, the findings intimated that Internet users are more willing to click “Likes” rather than “Comments” and “Shares”. In terms of Social Interaction, Internet users gave more “Likes” and “Shares” to festival blessing but with less “Comments”. Celebrity News received the most “Likes” and “Comments” in this category. The dimension of Hotel Information was categorised into four sub-categories in which “hotel news” has the most posts and received the most numbers of “Likes”, “Shares” and “Comments”,

which is followed by “Dining Promotions”, “Event Reminders”, and “Beauty/Spa Promotions”. “Competition Events” has the highest number of posts with the largest numbers of “Likes” and “Comments” in Event activities. On the other hand, “Exhibition Events” contains relatively smaller number of posts which received less “Likes” and “Comments” compare with “Competition Events”. However, it received the largest number of “Shares” among the three sub-categories. In the dimension of Entertainments, “Music Shows / Game Night in Bars / Annual Events” has the most posts which received the largest number of “Likes” and “Comments”, “Music Concert” was the second sub-category which has smaller number of posts but the largest number of “Shares”.

The findings showed that “Competition Events”, “Exhibition Events”, “Music show /Game Night in Bars / Annual Events”, “Music Concert”, “Festival Celebrations”, “Hotel News” and “Festival Blessing” received more than 9000 “Likes” than other sub-categories. It suggested that Internet users might be more likely to receive related posts. Additionally, “Hotel News”, “Competition Events” and “Music Concert” received over 1000 “Comments”, which implied that hotel fans were more likely to make comments on these posts. Internet users more likely to share the information related to “Exhibition Events” and “Hotel News”; these sub-categories received more than 2000 “Shares”.

Table 2. An Analysis of Hotels Facebook Page Content and Internet users’ Perceptions

Dimensions	Number of posts	Likes	Comments	Shares
Social Interaction	25	17653	315	455
1.Festival Blessing	10	9122	95	455
2.Celebrity news	3	5645	175	0
3.Posts unrelated to the Hotel (Weather report, local event)	12	2886	45	0
Hotel Information	128	55838	1686	3463
1.Hotel News	74	47620	1372	3163
2.Beauty Spa Promotion	1	38	1	0
3.Dining Promotions	38	5534	200	300
4.Event Reminding	15	2646	113	0
Event activities	60	29638	1583	3150
1.Hospitality education	2	1	0	0
2.Competition Events	40	18106	1259	876
3.Exhibition Events	18	11531	324	2274
Entertainments	121	57648	2560	2851
1.Music show /Game night in bars /Annual Events	43	18335	380	807
2.Music Concerts	29	12373	1582	716
3. Photo posting activities (without rewards)	16	2002	38	0
4.Festival Celebrations	15	15411	282	760
5.Film update News	12	6914	143	568

4 Conclusion and Implications

The research investigated the content of resort hotels' Facebook pages posted in year 2012. The content of hotel wall posts were successfully categorised into four dimensions "Social Interaction", "Hotel Information", "Event Activities" and "Entertainments". "Hotel information" and "Entertainments" were posted more frequently than other two dimensions. The findings further proved that the number of posts with no impact on receiving engagement activities from Internet users such as gathering more "Likes", "Shares" and "Comments". Internet users may focus on the content of the posts, the findings implied that Internet users like the posts about "Competition Events", "Exhibition Events", "Music Shows / Game Night in Bars / Annual Events", "Music Concert", "Festival Celebrations", "Hotel News" and "Festival Blessing". The research recommends that hotel marketers can focus on posting related information to draw fans' attention. The finding indicated that Internet users are more likely to make comments on the categories of "Hotel News", "Competition Events" and "Music Concerts", and shares "Exhibition Events" and "Hotel News" information. Hotel marketers may consider adjust posting strategy to give attention to the mentioned information to further encourage Internet users' comments and sharing. This is still an initial research focus on investigating hotel Facebook page promotion. It has only analysed four resorts hotels in Macau, and the Facebook page promotion in other regions should be investigated for future work.

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