

The Role of Instagram in Promoting Hotel Room Sales

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ABSTRACT	ARTICLE INFO
<p>This study examines the role of Instagram as a marketing tool in promoting room sales at Davienna Boutique Hotel, Batam. Located strategically near Singapore and Malaysia, the hotel utilizes Instagram to reach a broader audience, enhance brand awareness, and drive bookings. Using a qualitative research approach, the study analyzed the hotel's Instagram account and conducted semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders. The findings underscores Instagram's potential as an effective tool for driving hotel bookings, providing valuable insights for the hospitality industry in the digital age. Future studies could explore the impact of specific Instagram features and the role of influencer marketing in enhancing hotel performance.</p> <p>© 2021 Kantor Jurnal dan Publikasi UPI</p>	<p>Article History: <i>Submitted/Received 23 October 2024</i> <i>First Revised 29 November 2024</i> <i>Accepted 30 November 2024</i> <i>First Available online 30 November 2024</i> <i>Publication Date 30 November 2024</i></p> <hr/> <p>Keyword: <i>Authentic Happiness</i> <i>Destination Image</i> <i>Experiential Value</i> <i>Tourism Industry</i></p>

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has emerged as one of the most significant drivers of economic growth, playing a vital role in national and regional development. Globally, the tourism industry is undergoing rapid transformations driven by evolving consumer preferences, technological advancements, and shifts in marketing strategies. As destinations and businesses compete to attract tourists, innovative approaches are necessary to meet the demands of modern travelers. Among these innovations, social media platforms have become powerful tools for influencing consumer behavior and enhancing marketing efforts in the tourism and hospitality sectors (Cheng & Edwards, 2019; Sigala et al., 2018).

One platform that has revolutionized digital marketing is Instagram, known for its visual appeal and high engagement rates. Instagram allows businesses to connect directly with their target audience through compelling visual content, creating opportunities to showcase products and services while building brand identity (Xiang et al., 2021; Stankov et al., 2022). The hospitality industry, including hotels, has embraced Instagram to promote their offerings, engage potential guests, and ultimately drive revenue. Studies have shown that social media presence significantly influences consumer perceptions, purchase decisions, and loyalty, making platforms like Instagram an integral part of tourism marketing strategies (Leung et al., 2013; Tussyadiah et al., 2018).

In Indonesia, Batam City stands out as a strategic tourism hub due to its proximity to Singapore and Malaysia. This unique location attracts both international and domestic visitors, making it a vital destination for the country's tourism industry. As a prominent player in Batam's hospitality sector, Davienna & Boutique Hotel aims to capitalize on this market by enhancing its marketing strategies to increase room sales and brand recognition. The hotel faces the challenge of leveraging Instagram effectively to capture the attention of modern, tech-savvy travelers.

This study focuses on understanding the role of Instagram as a marketing tool in promoting room sales at Davienna & Boutique Hotel. Moreover, the study aims to provide actionable insights for the effective utilization of Instagram in hotel marketing. The findings will not only benefit Davienna & Boutique Hotel but also contribute to the broader understanding of social media's role in driving performance in the hospitality industry. Previous research has highlighted the importance of visually appealing content, consistent branding, and active engagement with users as key success factors in social media marketing (Hudson & Thal, 2013; Kim & Ko, 2012). This study builds on these insights by examining the specific context of a boutique hotel in Batam City, offering practical recommendations for optimizing Instagram's potential to boost room sales and strengthen customer relationships.

2. METHODS

This research employs a qualitative research approach to delve into the role of Instagram in promoting room sales at Davienna & Boutique Hotel. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for exploring complex social phenomena and understanding the perspectives of individuals involved (Creswell, 2014).

In collecting the data, this research involved analyzing the hotel's Instagram account, including posts, comments, and engagement metrics. Moreover, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders at Davienna & Boutique Hotel, such as the marketing manager, social media manager, and front desk staff. These interviews aimed to gather insights into their perceptions of Instagram's effectiveness, challenges, and opportunities.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

The study aimed to investigate the role of Instagram as a marketing tool for Davienna Boutique Hotel Batam. Through interviews with key stakeholders and analysis of the hotel's Instagram account, several key findings emerged.

Effective Utilization of Instagram

Davienna Boutique Hotel Batam effectively employs Instagram to market its services, with the social media team consistently sharing visually compelling content, including high-quality images and videos. Instagram features like Stories, Reels, and hashtags are strategically used to increase the hotel's visibility. This aligns with previous research by Leung et al. (2013), who emphasized that visually appealing content is crucial for engaging hospitality audiences and building brand presence. Similarly, Buhalis & Mamalakis (2015) highlighted that the creative use of hashtags can help businesses expand their reach and connect with specific target audiences.

Engaging with the Target Audience

The hotel's efforts to interact with its audience through comments, direct messages, and contests have fostered a sense of community. User-generated content (UGC), such as posts from guests, has been instrumental in building trust and showcasing authentic guest experiences. This finding echoes studies by Hudson & Thal (2013) and Chen et al. (2020), who found that social media engagement fosters customer loyalty and encourages word-of-mouth promotion. UGC, in particular, has been shown to enhance perceived authenticity and brand credibility (Gretzel, 2006).

Current State of Instagram Marketing at Davienna Boutique Hotel Batam

Interviews with key stakeholders revealed that Instagram is a cornerstone of the hotel's marketing strategy. As Mr. Morris, the E-commerce Supervisor, noted, *"Instagram is very effective in attracting potential guests."* The hotel's Marketing Communication Supervisor, Mr. Troy, further highlighted that consistent content creation and engagement are pivotal for sustaining interest and converting followers into paying guests. These findings support the assertions of Xiang & Gretzel (2010) and Tuten & Solomon (2020), who identified social media as a critical driver of engagement and sales in the hospitality sector.

The Role of Instagram in Increasing Room Sales

The findings suggest that Instagram has a significant impact on increasing room sales at Davienna Boutique Hotel Batam. As stated by Mr. Morris, *"Instagram is very effective in attracting potential guests. We've seen a direct correlation between increased Instagram activity and higher booking rates."*

Mr. Troy further emphasized the importance of consistent content creation and engagement: *"By regularly posting high-quality content, we can maintain our followers' interest and encourage them to book a stay at our hotel."*

Based on this result, the hotel has seen a positive impact on room sales following periods of increased activity on the platform. This aligns with research by Kim & Ko (2012), which found that active engagement on social media significantly influences purchase intentions in the hospitality industry. The role of Instagram in driving sales is further supported by studies like those of Kaplan & Haenlein (2010), which emphasize social media's ability to connect brands with consumers at every stage of the customer journey.

3.2 Discussion

These findings align with previous research that highlights the significance of social media, particularly Instagram, in the hospitality industry. Research consistently highlights the significant role of social media, particularly Instagram, in the hospitality industry. Instagram's unique features, such as hashtags, stories, and image-based posts, provide effective tools for marketing and customer engagement.

Instagram allows hotels to interact better with consumers, offering cost-effective marketing solutions and creative opportunities through its various features (Cahyani & Fitriyani, 2021). The visual nature of Instagram posts significantly impacts customer decisions, making it a powerful tool for attracting attention and driving engagement (Cahyani & Fitriyani, 2021; Kurniawan et al., 2021).

By leveraging Instagram, Davienna Boutique Hotel Batam can effectively reach a wider audience, enhance brand awareness, and drive bookings. Consistent content creation, active engagement, and strategic use of Instagram features are vital. The findings affirm Tuten & Solomon's (2020) argument that businesses may adopt an integrated approach to social media marketing to achieve optimal results.

To maximize the potential of Instagram, hotels can consider several strategies. Consistency in creating content by developing a content calendar to ensure regular posting of high-quality content can be considered to improve the role of Instagram in the marketing effort (Leung et al., 2013). Moreover, improving engagement with the audience by actively responding to comments and messages, and encouraging user-generated content, as emphasized by Hudson & Thal (2013), can build loyalty. In addition, the consideration of utilizing Instagram features, such as *stories*, *reels*, and IGTV can contribute to creating engaging content (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Finally, monitoring the key metrics such as engagement rate, click-through rate, and website traffic to measure the effectiveness of Instagram campaigns may contribute to understanding the campaign effectiveness (Felix et al., 2017).

4. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the role of Instagram as a marketing tool for Davienna Boutique Hotel Batam. The findings indicate that Instagram has emerged as a powerful platform for promoting the hotel and attracting potential guests. By consistently sharing visually appealing content, engaging with followers, and leveraging various features, the hotel has effectively enhanced its brand visibility and driven room sales.

However, the study also highlights the importance of ongoing efforts to optimize Instagram marketing strategies. To maintain a strong online presence, the hotel should continue to invest in high-quality content, experiment with new features, and analyze performance metrics to measure the impact of its social media activities.

Future research could explore the specific impact of different Instagram features, such as Reels and Stories, on hotel bookings. Additionally, investigating the role of influencer marketing in promoting hotels on Instagram would provide valuable insights into effective marketing strategies.

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