

INTERNET SERVICE MARKETING IN THE HOSPITALITY SECTOR – A CASE STUDY OF VIZERGY HOTELS

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Abstract: In this paper we find how internet service marketing in today's competitive world plays a major role in hospitality sector. This is explained with a case study of Vizergy hotels how they used their internet service marketing to get customers from all around the globe and some of the challenges of its hotels in Manhattan like Walcott facing. The paper also contains strong recommendation at the end to improve their lacking.

Key words: Service marketing, Internet, Vizergy, Hospitality Sector, Walcott

1. INTRODUCTION

Services marketing is marketing based on relationship and value. It may be used to market a service or a product. Marketing a service-base business is different from marketing a product-base business. Service marketing in hospitality sector offers service base business one such example of that is Vizergy hotels. Established in 1998, VIZERGY, formerly SECURE-RES, is the leading supplier of Internet marketing services to the hospitality industry. In 2000, they developed what has today become the industry's most dynamic online reservations system. Fewer clicks to book mean the highest conversion rate in the industry. From this foundation, they have continued to build the system into one of the most comprehensive marketing-and-reservations programs available in the world. Founder Joe Hyman explains the company's roots: "We recognized a need by the hotels". That need was to be able to promote their individual property websites and allow the Internet shopper to book directly without paying excessive distribution costs or supplying deeply discounted rates to third-party merchant sites. They fulfilled this need with the most innovative hotel-booking solution on the market, with no transaction fees or commissions. Hoteliers licensed the software for a low monthly fee. This ASP model quickly took off as hoteliers recognized the incredible savings, from the booking-fee savings to the IT and support savings. Clients never pay for system upgrades. The system is web-based, so there is no hardware to support. The tracking capabilities allow hoteliers to measure production from online marketing campaigns.

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2. INTERNET SERVICE MARKETING OF VIZERGY HOTELS

They have worked with a specialist to produce unprecedented ROI. As the thought and market leader in providing interactive hospitality Internet marketing to the travel sector, VIZERGY applies proven principles to achieve outstanding results. At VIZERGY they take a unique approach of understanding their target audience and individual needs, then integrating your objectives into your marketing plan. Their experience gives us a deep understanding of how travel buyers are shopping today, into solutions that empower hotels and resorts to compete aggressively, drive revenue, generate new leads and strengthen guest loyalty. Their hospitality and travel marketing solutions include:

- Natural Search Marketing (SEO)
- Paid Search Marketing (PPC)
- Website Design
- Hosting and Maintenance
- eCRM/E-Mail Marketing

Many people believe that if you have a website, all is well. This build-it-and-they-will-come approach just doesn't work. Hotel deserves professional marketing plans that are going to not only foster solid relationships with existing customers, but also garner new ones. Only by harnessing the power of VIZERGY's Internet marketing services one can truly tap into the full profitability potential of the Internet. VIZERGY's world class reporting platform, the SEO Super Reporter®, delivers the story of their success which is easy to read, action oriented format.

2.1 Natural Search Marketing

Web visibility can have a huge impact to your bottom line. If the website is not appearing in top search results, then property is virtually invisible to customers. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) specialists will refine the website and strategically build links so that potential buyers are drawn to the site instead of your competitor's website. VIZERGY has developed highly specialized techniques to make sure a website link shows at the top of the list when consumers search for properties in their area. That's critically important, because 65 percent of searchers click only on one of the top ten links produced by their searches. They earned four Adrian Awards for best in web marketing in 2007 alone. The most cost-effective way to improve site visibility is through natural search marketing. At VIZERGY, our SEO experts use powerful software such as the SEO SUPER REPORTER® to develop high-value keywords identifying key demand generators. They then use strategically placed links & skillfully crafted copy to incorporate these into websites, making them more searchable and enhancing visibility.

2.2 Paid Search Marketing(PPC)

VIZERGY's PPC search engine marketing campaigns ensure that their clients' websites are at the top of search results. Their paid search specialists bid on strategically chosen keywords contained in customer website. Bids are incremental, distributed across sets of keywords and periods of time to ensure maximum results. VIZERGY paid search marketing team closely monitors the process to make sure customer are always getting the most "click for their bucks."

2.3 Website Design

Vizergy's high impact websites offer powerful design features at a price that assures remarkable value. A custom hotel website developed by VIZERGY is quite simply, the finest hotel merchandising platform, using the industry's most sophisticated design technology. VIZERGY hotel website designs serve many

purposes which are as follows:

- Showcases a hotel's unique characteristics.
- Creates a visually appealing first impression for potential guests.
- Integrates search engine-friendly features for maximized Web visibility.
- Offers interactive elements that enhance the user experience.
- Integrates with ANY online booking engine.

2.4 Hosting And Maintenance

At VIZERGY, they start with the supposition that customer property is unlike any other. And VIZERGY process is very methodical:

Their seasoned account managers will work closely with customer to understand their unique needs, their competitive situation . Vizergy assemble their team to implement effective hotel Internet marketing ideas and strategies that increase revenue through the Internet channel by driving precisely the right customers to your website. Our comprehensive, turnkey solutions are custom designed to maximize your brand visibility. And they empower you with proven Internet-channel strategies that shift market share. At VIZERGY, we have a deep understanding of the ways travel buyers shop today. And we turn that understanding into uniquely powerful strategies that help you:

- Compete aggressively.
- Drive revenue.
- Generate new lead.
- Build guest loyalty.

Knowledge is power. It may be a cliché, but in the world of Internet marketing, truer words have never been spoken. That's why VIZERGY places such a strong emphasis on giving their clients the industry's most powerful reporting tools. The more one know about the performance of their Internet-marketing programs, the more power they have to optimize them. At Vizergy, they give us rapid, measurable and actionable feedback. In fact, no company delivers more comprehensive reports and insights into the competitive marketplace than Vizergy. Just one example is their SEO SUPER REPORTER.® It allows them to aggregate data from a wide range of sources, including:

- Behavioral information.
- Revenue sources.
- Direct APLs via Google and Yahoo.

2.5 ECRM/E-Mail Marketing

Target marketing is among the most cost-efficient ways of building long-term customer loyalty. VIZERGY engages customers in strong, personalized and mutually beneficial, interactive relationships that increase conversions and sell efficiently. This is easy-to-use platform allows properties to manage their campaigns in-house; or, let our professional marketing specialists handle your campaigns from beginning to end. At Vizergy, they help to create a single-view customer database from POS, PMS, CRS, call-center and web-channel data. Deliver their brand to customer inboxes:

- It's Easy to Use! Vizergy's platform is made for marketers. No technical skills are needed to create professional, effective e-marketing campaigns
- Dedicated Deliverability Solutions division works with ISPs, customers, and partners to provide the highest possible delivery rates

- Powerful Tracking Capabilities. In-depth, real-time tracking provides a 360-degree view of your campaign's results.

3. CHALLENGES

Some of the branches of Vizergy hotels like Hotel Wolcott, in the heart of Manhattan facing challenges of increasing revenues. The hotel needed to drive consumers directly to the property's web site instead of depending on third party sites for reservations. Originally developed as an electronic brochure, the web site was not search engine friendly and was not effectively promoting the hotel's location, niche markets or demand generators.

4. SOLUTIONS

Vizergy created and implemented a direct consumer campaign emphasizing specific keyword phrases, strategic navigation and relevant links. Web site content was also carefully and selected to ensure that search engine rankings were improved even more significantly.

5. RESULTS

The number of total sessions to the site increased from 333,243 in 2006 to 374,860 in 2007, a 12.5% increase. In search engine visibility, the top 30 placement for the site increased from 26% to 63% with top 10 placements increasing from 18% to 40 %. In 2007 total revenue increased by more than \$1million from \$ 2.4 million to \$ 3.5 million. An impressive 43% increase from 2006.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- First page visibility management.
- Design and development of fully searchable website.
- Campaign on hotel's New York city location directed at consumer.
- Dedicated account management..