THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MANAGING SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING TOWARDS ONLINE BOOKING INTENTION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO CHENNAI CITY

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Abstract:

In today's digital age, social media has become a powerful tool for businesses to engage with consumers and influence their purchasing decisions. This research project delves into the effectiveness of managing social media marketing in driving online booking intentions, with a specific focus on Chennai City. With its burgeoning tourism industry and rapidly growing digital landscape, Chennai provides an ideal setting to explore the dynamics between social media marketing management and online booking behavior. The research methodology involves a multifaceted approach, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative methods. A comprehensive literature review lays the foundation by synthesizing existing knowledge on social media marketing, online consumer behavior, and online booking intentions. Building upon this theoretical framework, primary data collection is conducted through surveys, interviews, and analysis of social media metrics. Key findings shed light on various factors influencing the effectiveness of social media marketing in driving online booking intentions. These factors encompass both internal elements, such as content quality, engagement strategies, and platform selection, as well as external factors, including consumer demographics, market trends, and competitor analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The travel and hospitality industry is undergoing a significant transformation driven by the ever-growing influence of social media. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have become more than just communication channels; they now serve as powerful tools for brand storytelling, customer engagement, and ultimately, influencing booking decisions. This research project investigates the effectiveness of managing social media marketing (SMM) strategies in driving online booking intention within the context of Chennai city, a major tourist destination in India. Chennai boasts a rich cultural heritage, stunning beaches, and historical landmarks, attracting a diverse range of travelers. However, with increased competition and the shift towards online booking platforms, hotels and travel service providers in Chennai must adapt their marketing strategies to stay ahead. This study delves into the existing body of research on how SMM impacts consumer behavior and online booking choices.

By focusing on Chennai's unique social media landscape with its high penetration rate, the project aims to understand how local hospitality businesses are currently utilizing SMM and its effectiveness in influencing online bookings. Through a mixed-method approach that combines surveys and interviews with potential travelers and industry professionals, the research seeks to identify the most impactful SMM practices for Chennai's hospitality sector. Ultimately, this project aims to provide valuable insights and practical recommendations for hotels and travel service providers, empowering them to leverage the power of social media to cultivate positive brand perception, generate user engagement, and drive online bookings, ensuring their success in the ever-evolving digital travel landscape.

GROWTH OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY ON THE SOUTHEASTERN COAST OF INDIA

Nestled on the southeastern coast of India, Chennai, the vibrant capital of Tamil Nadu, has emerged as a bustling hub for the hospitality industry, experiencing a remarkable surge in growth and development. Renowned for its rich cultural heritage, diverse cuisine, and a thriving business environment, the city has become an enticing destination for traveller's, both domestic and international. It aims to unravel the captivating narrative of the growth of hospitality in Chennai, exploring the key factors that have propelled the city into a dynamic hospitality hotspot. The evolution of Chennai's hospitality sector is intricately woven into the fabric of its expanding economic landscape and burgeoning tourism. As the city continues to establish itself as a prominent economic center, attracting businesses and industries, the demand for quality accommodation, dining, and entertainment experiences has witnessed an unprecedented rise. This surge in demand has spurred a wave of development, with new hotels, restaurants, and recreational establishments dotting the cityscape, catering to the diverse needs of a growing clientele.

Chennai's allure as a tourist destination has further contributed to the flourishing hospitality scene. The city's historical landmarks, vibrant festivals, and proximity to picturesque coastal areas have positioned it as a must-visit destination for travelers seeking a blend of cultural richness and modern amenities. The hospitality industry, attuned to this demand, has responded with a plethora of offerings, ranging from luxurious hotels to boutique establishments, each contributing to the city's reputation as a welcoming and accommodating destination. The dynamic growth of hospitality in Chennai, shedding light on the strategic developments, market trends, and cultural nuances that have shaped the city's ascent as a prominent player in the global hospitality landscape. As we delve deeper into the narrative, a comprehensive understanding of Chennai's hospitality evolution will unfold, showcasing the symbiotic relationship between the city's economic prowess, cultural heritage, and thriving hospitalitysector.

Few Hotels with their facilities are listed below:

TAJ FISHERMAN'S COVE RESORT

Taj Fisherman's Cove Resort, located in Covelong Beach near Chennai, India, is a luxurious beachfront retreat that epitomizes elegance, comfort, and unparalleled hospitality.Originally established in 1974, Taj Fisherman's Cove has a rich history dating back to its origins as a Dutch colonial fort. The resort seamlessly blends traditional South Indian architecture with modern amenities, creating a timeless ambiance that evokes a sense of tranquility and charm.

SHERATON GRAND CHENNAI RESORT

The Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa stands as a beacon of luxury and sophistication on the scenic East Coast Road in Chennai. the Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa upholds the highest standards of hospitality, ensuring that every guest experience is nothing short of extraordinary. From the moment guests step into the elegant lobby adorned with contemporary artwork and sleek furnishings, they are enveloped in an atmosphere of comfort and refinement

KALDAN SAMUDHRA PALACE

Kaldan - Kaldan means an immortal place in Paradise, and we as Brand Ambassadors, create lifestyle and luxury experiences for our discerning Guests that will remain immortal in their memories. Our Palace is done with an amalgamation of Rajasthani architecture and palatial arts, started construction in 2017, and was brought to life on 9th December 2021 by skilled artisans, sculptors, and builders from all over India.

NOVOTEL CHENNAI SIPCOT

Novotel - Novotel is a French midscale hotel brand owned by Accor. Created in 1967 in France, the company grew into what became the Accor group in 1983, and Novotel remained a pillar brand of Accor's multi-brand strategy. Novotel manages 559 hotels in 65 countries (2021)

RADISSON BLU RESORT TEMPLE BAY

Radisson - Radisson Blu is an international chain of upscale hotels. Its hotels are mainly located in major cities, key airport gateways, and leisure destinations. Radisson Blu has roots dating back to the opening of the SAS Royal Hotel in Denmark in 1960 and was the world's first designer hotel.

HOLIDAY INN CHENNAI OMR

Holiday Inn Chennai is a modern and welcoming hotel located in the vibrant city of Chennai, India. Situated near the Chennai International Airport and the city's major business districts, the hotel offers convenience and comfort for both business and leisure travelers alike The Holiday Inn brand traces its origins back to the mid-20th century when Kemmons Wilson, an American entrepreneur, founded the first Holiday Inn motel in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1952

WELCOME HOTEL BY ITC KENCES

Welcome Hotel - Welcomhotel Chennai is back in an awe-inspiring embodiment of contemporary design and chic facilities, reflective of the Southern Indian magnificence. The well-located hotel in Chennai has easy access to commercial hubs and shopping centers. This iconic property operates with environment- friendly business practices and is certified as a LEED Platinum and LEED Zero Carbon hotel. The newly refurbished hotel brings back signature as well as brand new dining experiences, well-appointed rooms, and grander banquets for socials, meetings, and celebratory gatherings.

Recent Developments:

The Rise of Social Commerce: Highlight the growing trend of social commerce integration within SMM platforms. This allows users to book directly through social media, bypassing traditional booking websites. Analyze how Chennai's hospitality sector is adapting to this shift.

Focus on User-Generated Content (UGC): Emphasize the increasing importance of authenticity and user-generated content (UGC) in influencing booking decisions. Explore how hotels in Chennai can encourage and leverage positive UGC through social media campaigns and influencer marketing.

The Power of Social Listening and Analytics: Discuss the growing importance of social listening tools and analytics for understanding customer sentiment and preferences. This allows hotels to tailor their SMM strategies to resonate better with potential travelers in Chennai.

The Rise of Short-Form Video Marketing: Highlight the explosive growth of short-form video platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels. Analyze how Chennai's hospitality sector can leverage these platforms to create engaging content that captures attention and drives bookings.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- To study the impact and effects of customer booking patterns using social media in hotel booking.

- To analyze customer behavior and booking intention of hotels using various social media platforms

- To Study the impact of customer online hotel booking patterns using social media platforms.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- The study is mainly in a descriptive nature

- Descriptive research is usually defined as a type of quantitative research though qualitative research can also be used for descriptive purposes. The research design should be carefully developed to ensure that the results are valid and reliable.

- Descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon. It can answer what, where, when, and how questions but not why questions.

Review of literature. Thevenot (2007), Comprehensive Examination of Electronic Reviews

This paper particularly focusing on the perceptions surrounding traveler reviews versus those of professional critics. The study revealed a prevailing sentiment among participants that traveler reviews are imbued with a sense of authenticity and relatability, making them more trustworthy and less biased compared to their professional counterparts. This preference for traveler reviews suggests a growing reliance on peer- generated content in decision-making processes, highlighting the evolving landscape of consumer trust and information consumption in the digital age.

Laudon and Traver (2007), Concept of social networks as dynamic communities

These platforms facilitate the creation of personalized profiles, serving as virtual representations of individuals within the network. Through these profiles, users curate their identities, interests, and connections, shaping their online presence and interactions. The emergence of social networks has revolutionized the way people connect, share information, and engage with each other, transcending geographical boundaries and enabling unprecedented levels of communication and collaboration.

Csutoras (2008), Primary objective of social media marketing as twofold

firstly, to establish and enhance brand awareness, and secondly, to foster meaningful interactions with customers, thereby facilitating discussions about a particular business. Beyond merely broadcasting marketing messages, social media platforms offer businesses an unprecedented opportunity to engage directly with their target audience, cultivating relationships and eliciting feedback in real time. By leveraging the interactive nature of social media, marketers can not only amplify brand visibility but also humanize their brand, forging authentic connections with customers. This approach transcends traditional one-way advertising, transforming marketing into a dynamic dialogue between brands and consumers.

Nations, (2008) Highlighted the essence of social networking sites as digital spaces

where individuals, primarily friends and family, converge to engage in conversations, share personal photographs, exchange humorous links sourced from the web, and even reconnect with long-lost acquaintances. These platforms serve as virtual hubs where users can cultivate and strengthen relationships, reminisce about shared experiences, and stay updated on each other's lives dynamically and interactively. By facilitating communication and content sharing in a familiar and accessible online environment, social networking sites have become integral tools for maintaining social connections and fostering a sense of community in the digital age.

PREFERRED SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

Table 1.1

Social media platform	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Twitter	3	2%
Instagram	107	71.3%
YouTube	4	2.7%
Facebook	36	24%
Total	150	100%

Exhibit 1.2
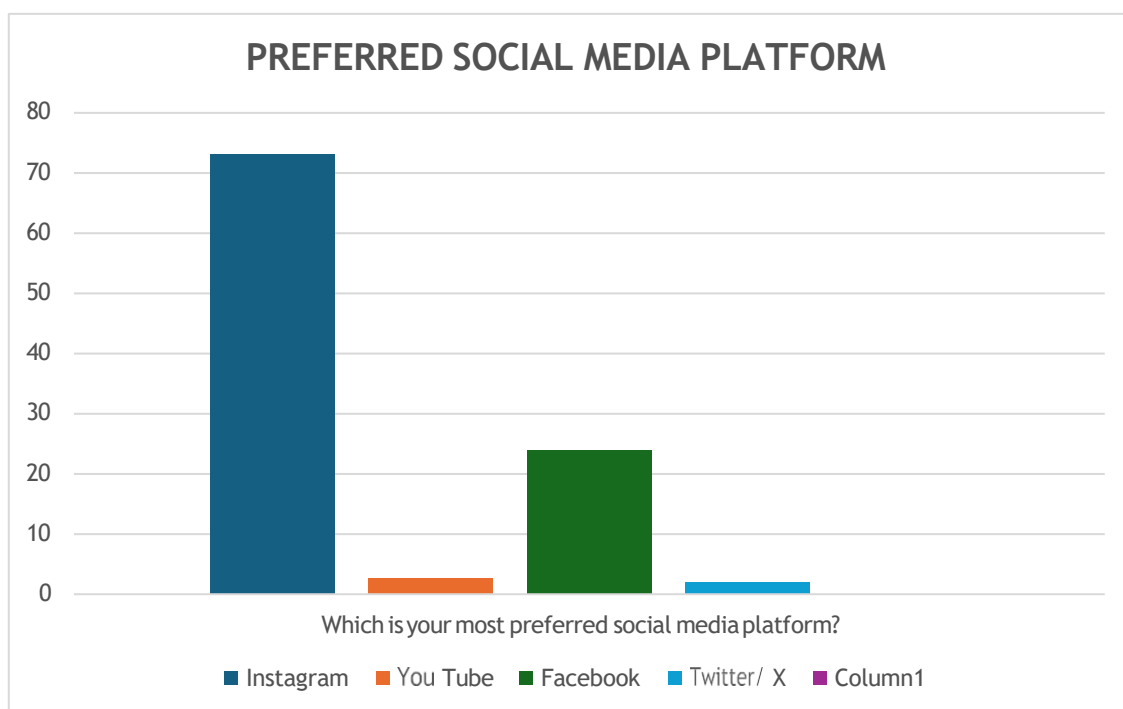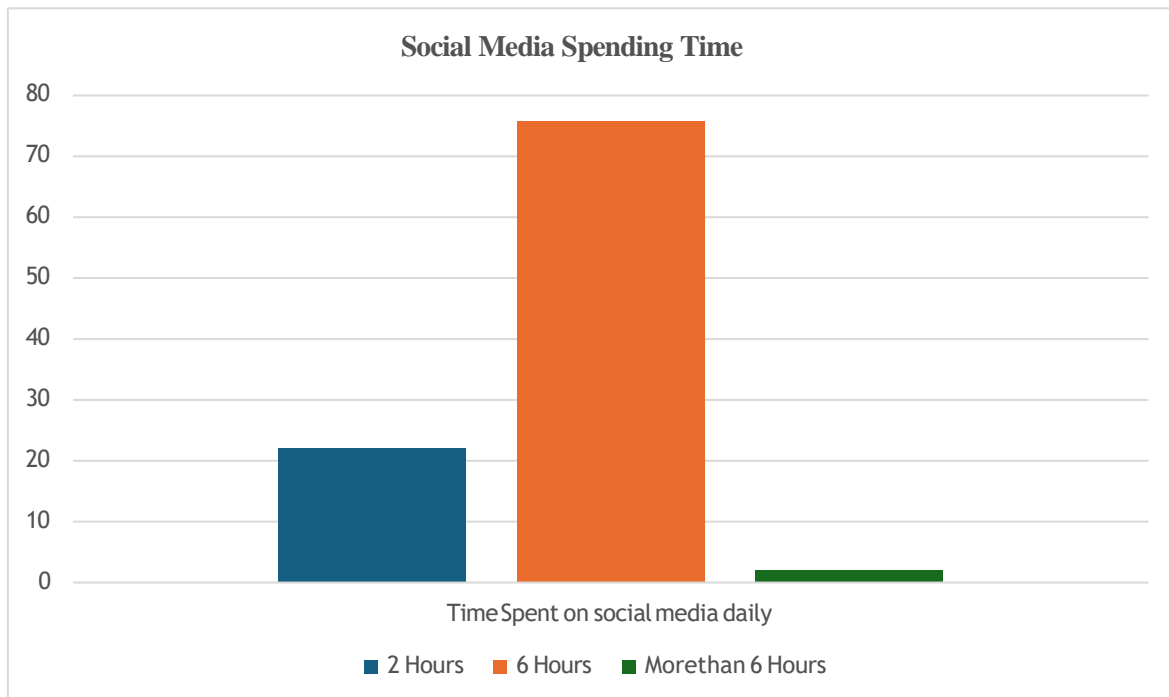

INTERPRETATION :

The majority of 71.3 % of respondents prefer Instagram as the preferred social media platform and 24% of the respondents prefer facebook

SOCIAL MEDIA SPENDING TIME
Table 1.3

Social media usage in hours	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
6 hours	113	75.8%
2hours	33	22.1%
More 6 hours	4	2%
Total	150	100%

#### Exhibit 1.4

INTERPRETATION :

The majority 75.8 % of respondents spend 6 hrs on social media and 22.1 % of respondents spend 2 hrs on social media.

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT INFLUENCES DECISION-MAKING

Table 1.5

Social Media Content	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Personalized content	40	26.7%
Organic content	79	52.7%
Influencer content	27	18%
All of the above	4	2.7%
Total	150	100%

Exhibit 1.6

Social Media Content Influences Decision to Book Hotels
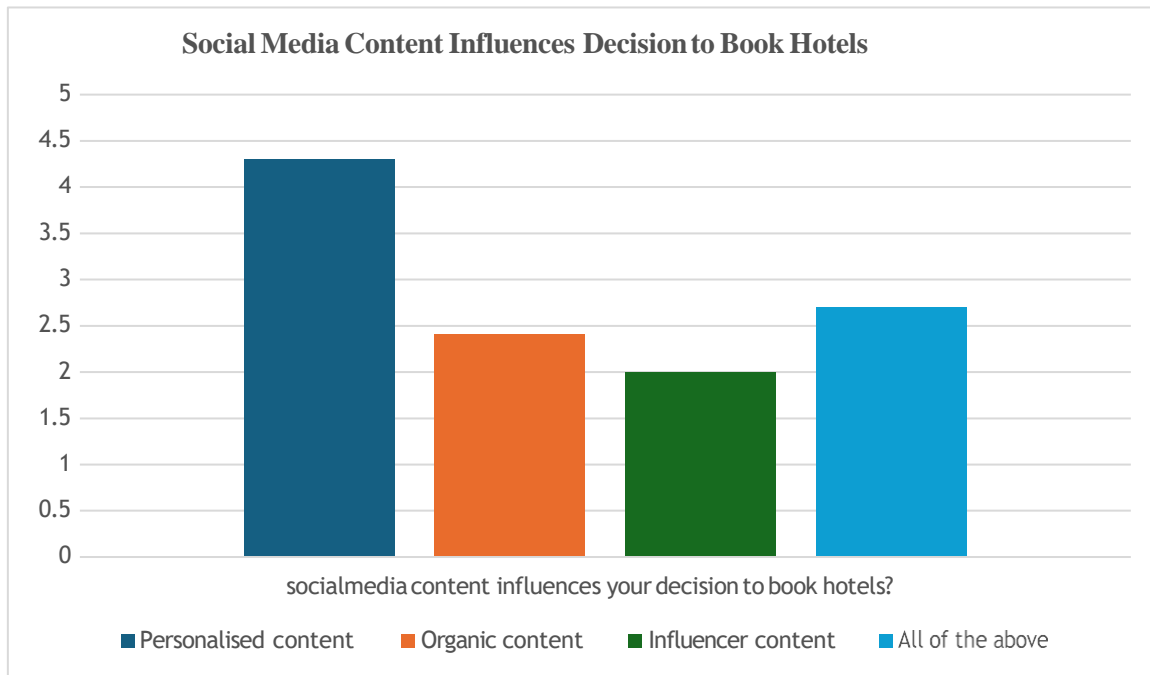
INTERPRETATION :

The majority of 52.7% of customer decision-making is based on organic content in social media.

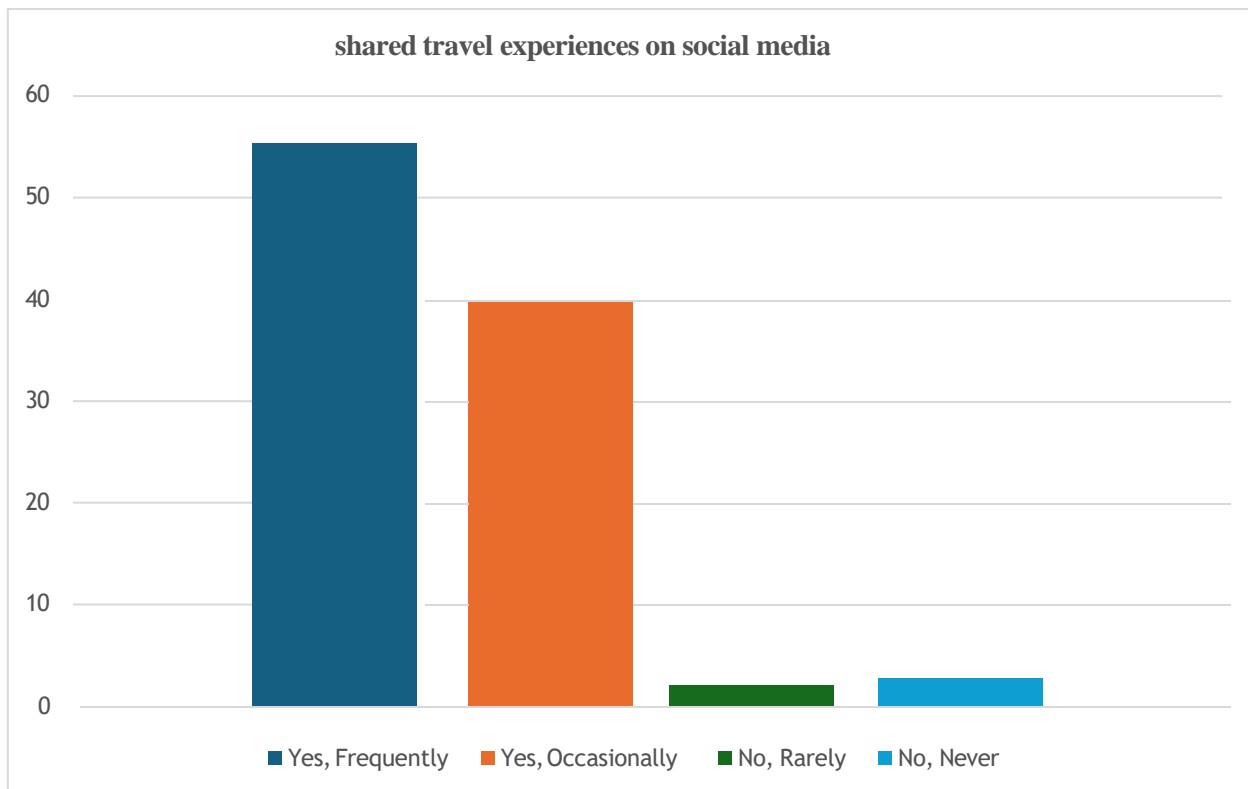Influential content and personalized content also play an important role

SHARED TRAVEL EXPERIENCES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Table 1.7

Promotional Content	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes frequently	83	55.3%
Yes occasionally	60	40%
No rarely	3	2%
No never	4	2.7%
Total	150	100%

Exhibit 1.8

INTERPRETATION :

The majority of 55.3% of people responded that they have shared travel experiences on social network 40 % of respondent shared their experience occasionally

4.2 T-TEST

HYPOTHESIS :

H0: There is no significant difference between the gender of the respondents and those engaged with promotional content related to travel or accommodation on social media.

H1: There is a significant difference between the gender of the respondents and engaged with the promotional content related to travel or accommodation on social media. .

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Gender of the respondent	149	1.26	.441	.036
Have you ever engaged with promotional content related to travel or accommodation on social media?	149	1.44	.597	.049

One-Sample Test

			Test Value = 0		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Gender of the respondent	34.919	148	.000	1.262	1.19	1.33
Have you ever engaged withpromotionalcontent related to travel or accommodation on social media?	29.499	148	.000	1.443	1.35	1.54

INTERPRETATION :

The significance value (.00) is less than the p-value of 0.05. Hence we rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative hypothesis. is a significant difference between the gender of the respondents and engagement with the promotional content related to travel or accommodation on social media.

SUGGESTION

Managing social media marketing effectively to enhance online booking intention in Chennai city can be a strategic endeavor. Here are some suggestions tailored to this context:

1. **Understand Local Market Dynamics:**

   Conduct market research specifically focused on Chennai to understand the local preferences, trends, and behaviors related to online booking in your industry. This can include studying competitor strategies, customer demographics, and popular social media platforms in the region.

2. **Targeted Content Creation:**

   Develop content that resonates with the Chennai audience. This includes using local language, addressing regional preferences, showcasing Chennai-specific offerings, and highlighting any promotions or discounts relevant to the local market.

3. **Engagement Strategies:**

   Foster engagement with your audience through interactive posts, contests, polls, and user- generated content campaigns. Encourage customers to share their experiences related to online booking or interacting with your brand in Chennai.

4. **Influencer Collaborations:**

   Collaborate with local influencers or micro-influencers in Chennai who have a strong following and influence within your target market. Their endorsement can significantly impact online booking intentions among their followers.

5. **Localized Targeting**:

   Utilize social media advertising features to target specific demographics, interests, and geographical locations within Chennai. Tailor your ad campaigns to reach audiences who are more likely to convert into online bookings.

6. **Customer Reviews and Testimonials**:

   Highlight positive customer reviews and testimonials from Chennai- based customers who have used your online booking services. Positive social proof can build trust and encourage others to make bookings.

7. **Customer Support Integration**:

Ensure seamless integration between your social media channels and customer support systems. Promptly respond to queries, comments, and messages from potential customers in Chennai, providing them with the information they need to proceed with online bookings.

8. **Analytics and Optimization**:

Regularly analyze the performance of your social media campaigns using analytics tools. Identify what content resonates best with the Chennai audience, track conversion rates, and optimize your strategies based on data-driven insights.

9. **Localized Promotions and Offers:**

Create special promotions, discounts, or packages specifically for Chennai customers. Promote these offers through social media channels to incentivize online bookings and attract new customers.

10. **Stay Updated and Adaptive:**

Social media trends and user behaviors can evolve quickly. Stay updated with the latest trends, algorithms, and best practices in social media marketing. Be adaptive and willing to tweak your strategies based on feedback and performance metrics.

Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing

Today's business organizations and marketers are generally increasingly making efforts to comprehend the practical issues of regular social media usage. Online merchants seem to depend mostly on social media search tools, the probability of buying intentions, and the concept of electronic mouth. This study aims to test the function of consumer buying intention as a marketing instrument for social media. If the usage of social networks can increase consumer purchasing intent in terms of knowing and choosing. The two can't be ignored by the impact of social media channels for electronic commerce. Since more users are utilizing these networks, the size of the target consumers with this method is constantly increasing due to the potential usage of the internet. (Savitri et al.2022) Nowadays, social media has become a crucial part of our everyday life and people of all ages, groups, and sexes spend significant time on it. Social media can be used for many reasons, whether it be professional marketing, private marketing, networking, or just searching. Advertising on social media platforms creates numerous opportunities for organizations to exhibit their products and brands, which results in a positive impact on the decision-making procedure of the customer. Stel (2018) adds that the screen, while in use, connects people and organizations to perceptions and data. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram prioritize experiences with customers and feedback, while corporations still engage in online trading directly. People actually search for consumer feedback on multiple social media links. (Fanta & Ayman, 2021)

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, customer booking decisions in the top 10 hotels are influenced by a multiple factors, ranging from location, price, and amenities to reviews, reputation, and brand loyalty. The intricate interplay of these elements underscores the importance of delivering exceptional experiences, maintaining a strong online presence, and continuously adapting to evolving consumer preferences to remain competitive in the hospitality industry. Understanding and catering to the diverse needs and preferences of guests is pivotal in securing bookings and fostering long-term loyalty in an increasingly dynamic and competitive market landscape. In conclusion, customer booking decisions in the top 10 hotels are influenced by a multitude of factors, ranging from location, price, and amenities to reviews, reputation, and brand loyalty.

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