

ADVANCES IN HOSPITALITY & TOURISM: MARKETING FOR RESTAURANTS THROUGH WEB

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With the advent of World Wide Web (*www*) in 80s', no one imagined what impact it would make on people. But it was only in late 90s' when *www* really got its fair share of popularity and since then it has taken over almost everything. *www* is the new magic wand used by many to search anything they might need. This phenomenon has touched everything in present- world people, places, and markets, literally everything. Hospitality and Tourism are not exceptions in this case as well.

In today's situation with ever increasing cutthroat competition, *www* proves to be an asset to restaurant managers and owners. Especially when it comes to marketing, Internet becomes the best friend of a restaurateur. Whether it is their own website or a social media platform or on line food ordering websites or even just an image based application like Instagram, marketing has become very handy to any restaurateur with very basic knowledge of either marketing or technology.

Many restaurants, which cannot keep up with the marketing when it comes to marketing and market presence, close down with the same pace with which they are opened. With ever increasing competition, it becomes essential for any restaurant to market themselves almost everyday and hamper customers with something or else of theirs so customer do not forget the brand while making decisions. And more than customers reaching to a service it is the service, which now requires reaching to individual customer, and Internet makes that possible through extensive use of smartphones.

Talking about the smartphone and smartphone users, mobile-based applications are gaining popularity in recent days. Applications with its web presence like Zomato, Swiggy, Ibibo, are making life easier for the consumers. It becomes easy for the customers to book, order or even to comment through these web-based applications. Most of the restaurants today promote their products through these applications. In doing that, web companies help the restaurateurs to a great extent. A lot of these companies do not just provide the space to promote the product or service but also help the restaurateurs with marketing material, offer ideas or even organizing and sponsoring events. But a

lot of times these web-based application charge commission or price for the advertisement space to the advertiser. Social media come to rescue when it comes to free advertising and promotion.

With increase number of social media users like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, world has become a small place to live in real sense. Marketing with the help of Facebook is becoming very popular with new entrants as well as the ones who are refurbishing or diversifying. As per the research by website – marketing4restaurants (cited 24th Sept 2017), only about 8% of the restaurants ran marketing campaigns on face book themselves in 2016 which as per their prediction will rise in 2017. We can easily see this unfolding in today's scenario. One of the main reasons restaurants choose to promote and market themselves with facebook is there free of cost service. Yes, facebook offers the paid subscription as well but when compared with other web-based marketing channels, facebook proves to be much more economical. Facebook has been on each and every mobile screen today which makes it more preferable choice by restaurateurs when marketing on social media is concern.

For a lot of restaurants, especially those with their presence in more than one city, having their own website are proving to be beneficial. Most of the times, these websites are linked to either/all of the social media websites. This gives more exposure to the restaurants and as they are inter-linked with other sites, one advert on one platform makes it visible on all the connected sites.

Another advance related to web based marketing is rise of on-line food delivery. With every increase delivery orders by websites and apps like Zomato, Swiggy, etc. restaurants are tying up with these sites to promote their products and services. For example: Behrouz Biryani, in Pune has got a strong customer data base on zomato (cited on 25th September 2017), so they promote their offers through zomato. Often, these sites charge restaurant fair bit of money. And when you see the individual website for the same restaurant it flashes the offers at the beginning and also gives the chance to the customers to check their social media presence on just one click on the same webpage (Cited on 25th September 2017).

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When spoken to Zomato representative, as per the company deliveries through zomato ordering fetches them as much money as from all other facilities they provide under their umbrella. This phenomenal has been observed by many start-up companies and that's the main reason for mushrooming online food ordering sites like dial-a-meal, eatigo, little, etc.

There are few companies which also give the option not only for food ordering but they also help the customers to book the table. Some of these sites even go in the depth that customers could even order through their apps when they are being seated on the table in the restaurants' dining areas. Eg. eatigo.com These companies are mushrooming now a days with atleast one USP of each through which they are targeting the industry members.

Some of the apps and websites like limetray.com help the restaurants from building their own website to collecting and maintaining the customer data base through their own customer relationship management programme. These companies sometimes also help to promote the products and services through various marketing channels like messages, emails, birthday greeting. But these companies focus on a niche market which mainly consists of new entrants in the industry, because they are the ones who need the most help by the experts at the beginning of their restaurant life cycle.

Looking at the current industry scenario these trends and advances will keep rising with every day additions on either side of the spectrum. This will play a major role in coming days when it comes to customer decisions and choices. The web industry is also helping and supporting the hospitality (restaurant) section with ever changing needs of their customers which is ultimately dictated by end user. If this trend is considered to be continuing then we can expect the industry to even go to a point where cloud kitchens will play a major role in industry.

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