GUEST COMMUNICATION TOOLS

yieldPlanet

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INTRODUCTION

New reality dictates new rules and requires you to take actions that are worth noticing in this challenging period. It is not enough just to sell a room in your property anymore, you need to think about how to sell great experience, emotions and pleasant moments to make your guests come back.

We have asked industry experts to answer 6 questions on how communication with your guests can help to improve the quality of their stay, ultimately turning them into repeat customers.

We hope that these answers will show you all the advantages of guest communication, and will help to create a unique communication strategy for your property, develop your guest experience and increase your revenue.

'*Guest communication platforms can be great marketing tools. They facilitate one of the most important postulates of marketing: to reach the right person with the right message at the right time! Thanks to communication tools, hoteliers can reach guests instantly through personalized messages, providing them tailored offers and hence working as upsell tools not only during pre-arrival but also for in-house guests, creating a contactless guest experience, which has became key in the post Covid-19 environment.*'

- Soraia Letra, Chief Business Development Officer, YieldPlanet

WHY GUEST COMMUNICATION IS SO IMPORTANT

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The basis to improve guest experience in a hotel and increase their loyalty is establishing a direct communication with guests effectively. Nurturing relationships with guests before, during and after their stay is an essential aspect to grow a successful business, because their satisfaction will increase and, consequently, they will keep coming back.

When implementing a communications strategy in a hotel, the first step is to get guests' data. The second step is to make sure to have the resources that will allow these interactions. There are key technologies that hotels should be taking advantage of to optimise their communications and therefore guest experience.

GuestJoy

Communicating with your guests pre-arrival has become crucial in this era. It helps to increase your revenue, enhance guest satisfaction and improve the first impression your hotel gives. Customized emails can bring the highest ROI because guests are targeted directly with offers that are relevant to them while hoteliers only need to set the system up once, and it all works automatically after that.

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Consumers expect immediacy, whether it's a quick search and book options, or a response to their enquiries and in-stay questions, or dealing with cancellations – hotels have to deliver a higher level of service in ever decreasing profit margins and reduced people resources. Hotels will need to use their staff smart to make sure guests are serviced and hotel operations are seamless. Guest communication solutions give the additional boost hotels need to secure bookings, manage online check in, and provide guest services digitally – especially when there is less people interaction. This not only protects staff and guests but gives the opportunity to reach guests instantly.

WHAT IS GUEST COMMUNICATION TOOL

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Guest communication tool is a marketing and loyalty automation platform for the hospitality industry. It helps hotel brands to get to know their guests better and interact with them, improve business reputation, increase direct bookings and build customer loyalty.

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A guest communication tool is multi-function that allows hotels to reach their guests with crucial information, providing the option of contactless check-in, upselling and gathering feedback for hotels. Send one-time emails to a select group of guests for a variety of purposes! Advice on events happening during their stay, special offers, or even maintenance to avoid an unwelcome surprise.

Guest communication is a new category. One of the most important parts nowadays, Guest Messaging for hotels is to message guests via Website Chat, SMS, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, etc, while guests can also reach hotels via the same channels in turn. There is no question that Guest Messaging is on the rocket. The number of mobile messaging app users worldwide is growing from 1.58 billion in 2016 to 2.48 billion in 2021 . On average, people send and receive 32 messages per day, particularly the youngsters (18-34 y.o.). Facebook Messenger is the most popular channel with 145 billion messages per day worldwide. It clearly shows that people prefer typing than talking, so it's easier for hotels to reach guests through messages, which are usually read in 5 seconds.

UPSELLING IS THE NEW BLACK

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Upselling has proved that it is tremendously effective for offering upgrades both to increase the hotel's revenue and reduce commissions, as well as to improve guest satisfaction and repeat customers. More and more travellers demand and look for experiences, and by offering additional improvements and services we can make a hotel night become an unforgettable memory, and it may be even easier to retain that customer and get a good online reputation and improve the brand image.

GuestJoy

Upgrading the room, ordering a prosecco or booking a romantic dinner are all for Hotel Travellers. These are the people who are interested in the experience only hotels provide. They want to feel cared for, they want to enhance their stay and want to rely on the hotel's services. This will generate extra revenue for hotels, and make guests happier. With an upselling tool, guests can effortlessly order services, upgrade their room and book tables at a restaurant online.

AVERAGE MARKETING
CAMPAIGN STATS
(according to PhocusWire):

OPEN RATE

16,1%

CLICK-THROUGH-RATE

2%

CONVERSION RATE

0,3%

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Upselling is a great opportunity for hotels to maximize revenue from occupancy and increase RevPAR, upselling potentially makes up 10% – 20% of hotel guests' total spend (Hospitalitynet). Traditional ways of upselling through the front desk or emails are no longer effective. According to PhocusWire, marketing campaigns only have an average open rate of 16.1%, click-through-rate of 2%, and conversion rate of 0.3%, which is very low.

SMS and messaging apps have opened a new door for hotels. Upselling by direct messaging has a **much higher open rate** of nearly 99% (Adobe Blog), **response rate is** 209% **higher** than phone or email (techjury), is read within 3 minutes, and we have seen a **conversion rate** of 10% according to one of our own case studies.

UPSELLING BY DIRECT MESSAGING STATS:

OPEN RATE

99%

RESPONSE RATE

209%

CONVERSION RATE

10%

2020 TRENDS:
WHAT CONDITIONS THE QUARANTINE LIFESTYLE DICTATES TO HOSPITALITY

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The picture has definitely changed. The most relevant change we see is that communication with customers has been the key to keep them informed, avoid cancellations, and convey trust. In this context, many clients claim direct contact with the hotel more than ever. This has taught us how important it is for hoteliers to foster constant and personalized relationships.

GuestJoy

1 CONTACTLESS

Guest communication, cleanliness and contactless guest experiences have become crucial. People want to avoid 'human touch', long lines and any situation that could bring potential harm to their health. Therefore contactless check-in for hotels is a must-have.

2 FLEXIBILITY

Another key trend we see is flexibility. Hotels need to provide their guests a fast and easy way to cancel their booking and reimburse them (or offer a later stay). Communicate with your guests. Use communication to minimise losses, postpone cancellations, turn cancellations into rebookings, and when the crisis will start to ease, then bring back previously cancelled guests.

3 SAFETY

The third and possibly the most important trend is cleanliness and safety. Train your staff, keep yourself up-to-date, don't assume that information creates informedness, make sure your guests have access to trustworthy media. Have hand sanitizer and masks available for all, and use technology to avoid human contact.

When COVID-19 came, the travel industry drastically changed. "Contactless" entered the industry overnight. Today travelers want to be able to travel through a hands-free experience whereas hotel employees are aware of their safety too.

The shift toward contactless technology solutions has been, slowly but steadily, developing for years, with hotels around the world offering digital check-in and digital room keys and making themselves available through digital communication channels.

COVID-19 has accelerated this trend, creating new demand fast as hoteliers look for ways not only to provide a seamless but also contactless experience for both hotel guests and employees.

HOW AND WHY YOU SHOULD START TO USE TEXT MESSAGING
How often should you text your clients

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Before starting any communication with guests, hotels should consider which communication channels they want to build, why, when and how they need to communicate with their guests.

There are 3 key moments to reach guests: prior to the stay, with email reminders, suggestions, or asking for any last-minute requests; during stay, to know what guests think about their stay; and after the stay, when it might be interesting to send emails to thank guests for their trust.

GuestJoy

We suggest starting a pre-communication with each guest via email: a reservation email, online check-in, a personalized upsell email and post-communication: a post-departure survey. It is very important that all of these are delivered at the right time to the right guest. If an email opening rate stays between 70-80% then we can be sure that guest communication is effective.

The very first thing that you need to do is to power your text messaging with PMS for faster communication. While you keep sending out emails for some cases, e.g. booking confirmation, look for the ways in which you can shorten these emails and send them as text messages to the guests. Here are a few examples and templates under each of the categories that will guide you effectively in using the Hotel Guest Messaging during these times:

1 WELCOME MESSAGE
Before check in

*"Hi, *first name**

*Welcome to *hotel name!* Click on *the URL* to get a full guide on our house rules, WiFi password, breakfast and more information related to COVID-19 measures which we have made mandatory for our guests to follow. We have also made it easier for you to order things through text messages to be delivered right to your room by practicing social distancing.*

Have a safe stay!"

You can use messages to communicate about special services to your guests at the right time on a more instant communication channel. Because the **message is personalized the conversion is 8x higher than email**.
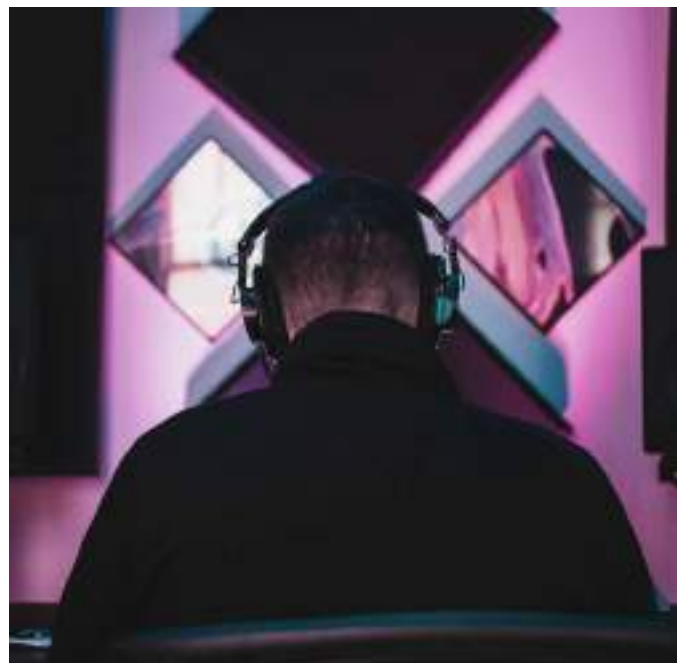

PERSONAL UPSELL MESSAGE
During stay

2

"Hello, *first name.*

I hope you are enjoying your stay! To beat the corona stress and ensure your safety we will bring your breakfast to your room. For more information on the menu options, click on *the URL.

Enjoy your morning!"

This is the time to engage with your guests, to ask their feedback about the overall service or suggestions about more measures to be implemented in the future.

3

FEEDBACK
Before check out

*"Hello, *first name.*

Soon, at 11 AM the latest, it's time to check out. We hope you have enjoyed your stay! We would be extremely glad if you just take a moment to share your experience with us on the link.* Again, if you have any suggestions regarding more COVID-19 measures that we can implement, please feel free to reach out to us.*

We hope to see you again!

WHAT EXPERTS THINK

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"Guest communication will always be something extremely important because communication is the key to understanding your client. Once you understand your client, know what they want and make them feel heard, the chances of them becoming loyal to your brand, product, service... etc. grow incredibly. Therefore we should communicate in key moments during the client lifespan with efficient, personalized and relevant information."

- Paula Navarro, Global Development Manager, Hotelinking

GuestJoy

"COVID-19 has accelerated the evolution of guest communication tools and hoteliers are looking for ways to go more contactless. Hotels will go back to "normal" but it will be more digitalized 'normal'. I think it is very good because if we can digitalize the guest communication processes, then we can get closer to each guest and establish a long term relationship with them. Online-check is safe and helps to save time for both; a hotelier and a guest. Pre-stay communication helps to engage and personalize their stay, post-departure brings more loyal guests and generates good quality reviews."

- Annika Ylem, CEO, Guestjoy

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"The overall hotel customer experience, including ensuring the safety of the guest — is essential for winning their trust. Guests have more questions than probably ever before and when you can successfully ensure your guests, they will be grateful and they will return time and again. At the core of today's operation, it's therefore critical to make sure you get your policies clearly communicated to your guests and that you make yourself accessible in case they have any more questions. In this article, you can read more about why and how to do this."

- Daan de Bruijn, CEO, BookBoost

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