


Chapter 23

Investigating the Impact of Websites on the Selection of Food and Beverage Service Outlets

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ABSTRACT

While restaurant goers are still ultimately seeking the same qualities to receive a positive dining experience, the internet and technology has fundamentally changed how consumers are behaving and their decision making processes. Consumers now have more choice, communication channels, and access to information all readily available at their fingertips. Review websites enable would-be diners to read feedback from real customers, and social media platforms such as Snapchat or Instagram can give people a taste of what to expect without even having to step foot in the establishment. A focus on digital marketing has become increasingly important for F&B outlets that want to remain competitive, and ensure long term profitability. Websites plays an important role for businesses to establish their credibility and build trust with their customers. In this day and age, it is a common tool for consumers to research F&B outlets while choosing a place to eat and this is the reason, why websites for F&B outlets are so important.

1. INTRODUCTION

The exercise of using online platforms and digital channels to promote marketing activities is Digital Marketing. Social media marketing and online marketing are both subsets of digital marketing (Chaffey & Smith, 2017). . Digital marketing includes marketing through website, search engine optimization, social media marketing, video marketing, content marketing etc. 10 years ago people did not spend half as much time online as they do that, what this means for marketers is that they need to put more effort in online marketing whereas, offline marketing was the only focused channel in the previous time (Bala & Verma, 2018).

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Marketing through Websites

Marketing through websites is the need of the hour as the majority of population has now shifted their preference from offline marketing to online marketing. With the help of well designed websites, it becomes easy for the business to attract potential consumers as well as to retain the existing consumers.

Websites nowadays is one of the major digital marketing tool looked by the marketers to promote their businesses and in return get the potential consumers/ costumers that visit the websites.

Websites are, like soft/ hard bound books and daily newspapers consisting lots of information with text and pictures in various its pages. In contrast, linear structure is not present in the websites. The links acts as the binding of pages that might create connections to other websites.

A good website today is a prerequisite before establishing a business online. It helps your business transcend geographical boundaries to reach newer prospects, but also work as digital destinations for your consumers who can access it round the clock without any hassle.

Websites plays an important role in this time of digitalization as more and more people are moving towards the use of internet and technology and with this they tend to come across the websites of different businesses.

Marketing experts must come up with attractive websites, find a way to attract customers to visit the website, keep them there for a while and make them frequently come back to their website. (Kotler et al.,2010).

The hospitality industry, characterized as customer-oriented and information intensive, is in an ideal position to take advantage of the potential the Internet can provide (Baloglu & Pekcan, 2006; Schmidt et al., 2008; Shuai & Wu, 2011; Wu et al., 2013).

In analyzing websites, many researchers have looked at website evaluation from two perspectives: consumer usability and business functionality. While both methods are valid, the perspectives are quite different and each approach includes unique issues, opportunities, and insights. (DiPietro et al., 2010).

Well designed Websites can be an important tool for hospitality and tourism marketing (Aaberge et al., 2004)

Many restaurants use their websites mainly as a digital brochure presence for general information about the company, not taking advantage of the website as an enabler to facilitate the structural, managerial, or commercial reorganization of their online business process (Wang & Russo, 2007).

F&B Service Outlets

Food and Beverage Service outlets are catering establishment which offer food and beverages products/ services to the consumers who are ready to pay for the products consumed/ services availed. The primary catering establishments are running for wealth maximization such as hotels, independent and chain restaurants, pubs and wine bars, fast food, leisure attractions, banquets etc. The secondary catering establishments are those running for the welfare and the objective is not wealth maximization, such as institutional caterings, orphanage caterings, prison caterings, catering in the armed forces etc.

Food and beverage outlets include various types of restaurants (bistros, fine dining, coffee shops, ethnic, themed, speciality), cafés, cafeterias, takeaways, canteens, function rooms, drive-in, lounge service operations, home delivery operations and room service operations for hotel guests.

Importance of website as a tool for promoting F & B Service outlet.

Websites in this advanced world of digitalization is an essential tool of marketing for all the F&B Service outlets irrespective of the size, type, clientele etc.

Websites of F&B Service outlets helps the potential customer in deciding whether to visit/ dine-in that particular outlet and this can be influenced with the proper marketing techniques used on the websites to attract the customers.

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