



An Evolutionary Approach to Hotel Marketing

Outsourcing Marketing Responsibilities Can Be Worth the Investment

By **Marlo Fogelman**

HNN columnist

May 2, 2023 | 8:51 AM

From luxury resorts in Miami or Malibu to urban hotels in Boston, San Francisco or NYC, no property has come through the past few years completely unscathed.

The expensive destinations that thrived post-pandemic still had their bottom lines affected by higher labor and cost of goods. The city properties that relied on large groups or business travel had their bottom lines affected for the same reasons, along with their top-line revenues.

When getting squeezed from all sides, what's a property to do? Two words: think differently.





ISHC Global Insights is a partnership of Hotel News Now and the **International Society of Hospitality Consultants** to bring in-depth analysis to the hotel industry.

While perhaps handcuffed to certain hard costs such as hourly employee union wages or the rising cost of bananas for your tropical fruit bowl, one area in which most properties can most definitely spend more strategically is in marketing.

Even pre-pandemic, our hotel clients tended to spend their marketing dollars inefficiently, putting traditional “marketing” roles on the sales teams or even the general manager. Or, they’d hire a full-time employee who required day-to-day management to handle content creation — certainly not a 40-hour-a-week role for most properties. Or, they’d hire a PR team and not support the work with owned-marketing efforts to directly reach their current audience.

The list of “ors” could go on and on. For many situations, simply outsourcing this function is the key to lower costs and greater revenue.

Outsourced marketing is an easy decision when you consider the multitude of benefits.

Reduced Staffing Costs

With inflation and the reduction of workforce, hiring someone truly qualified to think about your business strategically will cost in the high six figures. Then they’ll also need to either hire agencies or build an internal team to execute.

With outsourced marketing you can stretch your dollar significantly further by investing in a team of specialized experts for the same cost as one senior-level salary.

The bottom line is most individual properties and even small groups simply don’t need 40 hours a week of strategic thinking; they need an annual plan and targeted execution against that plan. Outsourced also offers your team the flexibility to adapt quickly to

strategic pivots, enabling you to scale services up or down without spreading your internal team too thin or overhiring for a specific program or campaign.

Streamlined HR

Recruiting, hiring and training new employees is costly and time-consuming. Outsourcing your marketing department is an efficient and effective way to “staff up” without the human resources headache.

With the addition of an outside partner, you can substitute hiring needs at various levels, reduce onboarding time and eliminate turnover. An outsourced marketing department works collaboratively to integrate within your infrastructure, while also functioning autonomously to reduce the strain on your internal team and resources.

Broad Skill Set

Outsourcing your hotel’s marketing needs to an outside partner allows you to tap into a wide variety of services and skills. Instead of a single subject matter expert, you have at your disposal a dynamic group of career marketing professionals with a range of experience and expertise from social media, digital advertising, email marketing, loyalty initiatives, media and influencer relations, sales, PR and everything in between.

The right outsourced solution can develop a complete end-to-end marketing program utilizing resources entirely within their group — something that would be nearly impossible to find in one internal hire. Marketing agencies are focused exclusively on doing marketing well, and have access to the latest technology, trends and innovations in the hospitality industry — keeping you a step ahead of your competition.

Industry and Competitive Insights

Because marketing agencies work across various industries and accounts, they have a unique view of the latest business trends and potential threats to your hotel’s strategic positioning. They can help a hospitality group carve out its niche within the competitive landscape, stay on top of important industry developments, and discern which trends have staying power and which ones will fade away. Agencies can also

bring new and innovative ideas to the table through their immersion across businesses and industries. They can often see opportunities to create new value well before a hotelier because of their wider view of the overall market and agnostic approach to the business.

No Consultant Quandary

While an outsourced marketing partner may be more novel to some, hiring consultants to assist within the lodging world is commonplace. From feasibility studies to technology assessments and more, hiring outside experts in their space to produce a strategic direction is commonplace. The same holds true here, with an added twist that won't leave you hanging.

Once the strategy is complete, the right partner can then immediately execute on findings. No more spending thousands on consultants who provide great advice but don't implement the plan. With the right outsourced partner, you can have high level strategy and execution in one.

Solutions Where You Need Them

“Wait, I can outsource that?!” is a question I hear 10 times a day. In today's environment, we're not just talking social media, PR and digital marketing. Want to implement a loyalty program? Check. Find a culinary source to revamp menus? Check. Figure out how to utilize AI? Check. With the right partner, outsourced marketing goes way beyond what most consider to be marketing. Marketing can and should be so much more. And with the right team in place, it can be.

As the post-pandemic world continues to settle into what the new normal for travel will be, being strategic about priorities and allocating resources that are within your ability to change must be top of mind. It takes a savvy hotelier to think differently about how to run their business. If the pandemic taught us anything, it's that change can happen quickly and those who learn to adapt quickly are the ones who will succeed in this ever-evolving world.

Marlo Fogelman is an attorney licensed in New York and Massachusetts, and the founder and CEO of Marlo Marketing.