

RezNEWS Feature Article: Top Ten Email Marketing Tips by RezStream

The Internet has become a very cost effective way to not only stay in contact with guests who have already stayed at your property, but also to reach new business and encourage reservation activity. However, many businesses fail to take advantage of this lucrative marketing method. In this month's feature article, **RezNEWS** will share these important, yet often overlooked, Internet marketing tips. As our hectic summer season begins, it is easy to forget to pay attention to our most important resource for future business—our past (and hopefully happy) customers! It's also easy to apply the excuse that "we are too busy" to employ new or any marketing campaigns. If this is the case, do not hesitate to ask for help from a reliable and established Internet marketing firm. Any effort made today, even if it seems like business is good, will pay off in spades in the future when business slows down. Make the Internet a fabulous tool for success!

Top Ten Email Marketing Tips

1. When people make reservations, **ALWAYS** get an email address. Utilize registration cards as a means to collect any missing information at time of check in. Utilize a property management software (PMS) system to track addresses and emails. These systems will allow you to create pinpoint marketing lists, but are only useful if you remember to collect valuable data! Don't forget birthdays, anniversaries, favorite activities, etc.
2. Clearly define your "target audience" for each email marketing offer. A smaller, well-crafted email list will often yield better results than sending an offer to large, untargeted lists.
3. Set specific goals. Two main goals of offering packages and special offers are to entice customers to spend more money and/or stay longer during the times of the year when you want to increase occupancy and revenue.
4. Make sure your specials create enough inherent value that your potential customers will feel compelled to take advantage of them. One of the biggest mistakes people make when creating special offers is not presenting something potential guests want. Not sure what potential guests want? They want value, upgrades, combined services, flexibility, and most importantly, **GOOD DEALS!**
5. Learn from others. The Bellagio hotel in Las Vegas often offers room upgrades in conjunction with reduced rates during slow seasons. Combining services and lower pricing is more compelling than just lowering pricing alone. The Four Seasons offers a free night if you stay three nights on slower weekends. This motivates guests to stay longer during times of the year when your property needs to increase occupancy.
6. Create HTML web pages for each special offer. Make email offers brief, graphically rich, and be sure there is a link to "learn more" or "click here" to view details. By creating web pages for all specials, you will add content to your website, a preference of search engines like Google. You can also add tracking code to your website to evaluate the success of these marketing campaigns.

7. Create loyalty programs for frequent guests. Many PMS systems allow you to track number of stays, number of nights, and amount spent at your business. Create special offers to entice these loyal customers to stay with you during times of the year when you need to increase occupancy and revenue.
8. Do not use Outlook or other similar programs to send email offers. Programs such as Constant Contact or E-Campaign allow you to create more graphically rich special offers and also allow for better sending, tracking, and email removal capabilities.
9. Be persistent. Track your success and adapt offers as necessary. Send at least one special offer per month during slow seasons.
10. Offer specials 24/7. Utilize a booking engine that allows you to offer and modify online packages, and point of sale items, from your website.

A successful email campaign begins with intent. Figure out your target audience and offer something special enough to elicit a response. With each attempt, you will learn what is important to your customers. Be diligent, create appealing specials, and offer specials on a regular and ongoing basis, and you can significantly increase revenue through effective Internet marketing. Also, know your work capacity limits. Don't be overwhelmed by thinking that you have to implement all ten tips in this article. Remember, if you are too busy to try any of these suggestions, you can easily hire a company to help create and send your email campaigns. And lastly, RezStream offers this service to its website promotion customers. Call 866-360-8210 for more information.

About the author

Bill Mitchell is co-owner and Chief Operating Officer for RezStream. Bill has over 20 years experience in the hospitality industry with extensive knowledge in management and marketing for hotels, resorts, and bed and breakfasts. Bill is a nationally recognized featured speaker and consultant for the hospitality industry.