

Marketing in Unchartered Waters - The Covid Era

By Ajay Mehtani

It's a tough world, a difficult & unprecedented situation as the hospitality sector is on a standstill globally! So, should Marketing Spend be put on hold during this time? Should we all go home and hope to return when demand picks?

No.

There is no denying the fact that this pandemic has affected all aspects of our lives and changed the way we conduct our businesses. The Marketing teams also need to embrace this change to make their content and messaging relevant for the current scenario. Some of the factors that the Marketing, Revenue & Sales Teams should consider during these unprecedented times include:

Take a Deep Dive and Understand your Customer

Factor in the changing environment and how it is going to change the customer's price value equation. The customer will be working on new norms, budgets, and processes; do you understand them? If not, now is the time to dive to the bottom of the iceberg and understand their intrinsic needs.

Continue with your Marketing Spend

Difficult as it may sound, you must continue with minimal marketing spend to ensure visibility even in these tough times and work on a new ROI. Stretch every Rupee you spend on Marketing and go BTL, if ATL is expensive, to be seen and heard by your Customer Group or Target Group.

Develop New Offerings or Packages

Understand and analyze data and needs to ensure you align yourself to the changing

market dynamics & continue to develop / launch packages which are relevant in the current scenario.

Build Partnerships

As marketing spend is in short supply, see how you can create win-win models for driving incremental revenues by developing products with strong partners who have the same Target Audience or Groups.

Align Pricing to Market

Easier said than done! Continue to work on dynamic pricing for transient business, monitor data & trends so that you do not lose to your competitors. However, be mindful of price war as the others, too, can get into it, ultimately leading to lower profitability for all.

Negotiate well and keep your specialized sales leaders to negotiate businesses for high volume accounts, as during these times most customers will come back for a price reduction directly or in-directly. Being ready with a plan for each customer on how you can get to a win-win model without having to dilute your pricing is important. Look at alternate strategies, evaluate overall revenues from each customer and formulate your strategy for each target group.

Achieve Market Share

Focus first on getting your fair market share at the right price and value. Deeper penetration with higher discounting will only lead to lower profitability.

Deliver High Levels of Customer Satisfaction

It is critical to retain customers, so prepare to deliver personalized experiences and high levels of satisfaction even during these tough times keeping Social Distancing in

mind. Think of ways in which you can achieve this and plan for it.

Be Relentless in reviewing your Data & Customer Behavior

Keep tabs on your accounts and customers so that you can retain them to grow the accounts.

Change is the only Constant – Be Nimble

Take quick decisions based on data and market conditions. Don't have a bureaucratic approach to decision making. Its best to de-centralize and localize the

decision making, while clearly defining authority and responsibility.

Communicate

Communicate with your customers, associates, and all key stakeholders that you are building a safe environment and have a methodical approach to reaching your goals.

At HVS Anarock we provide Marketing, Sales, Revenue Management, Design & Digital Services for hotels. Connect with us at amehtani@hvs.com if you need assistance and we will be glad to engage with you.

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