

Are you using the right mix of tools to market your property?

You're down to your last few brochures and the all-yearning question and one many don't look forward to is "Do I re-print my brochure?" Do I change the contents of my brochure? Do I put all I've got on to the web instead? Do I start an e-newsletter?

Many owners struggle with these questions and many other marketing ones. There are constantly new methods to promote your business and does the tried and true still work? Is it a mix of brochures, web, e-blast and e-commerce?

Knowing your business, your clientele, what your plan is for the year and the advertising you are doing are all key factors in answering the all mighty printing the brochure question and others.

Has the staple brochure been replaced by the instant gratification of the web. Yes, in most cases it probably has. However, it's important to have a good mix of different advertising mediums to promote your facility. That mix will be determined by your specific property needs, budgets, goals and guest demographics.

Your brochure is the piece that can be tucked away in a car, purse, junk draw or travel file that keeps popping up when a computer isn't accessible. It's picked up at welcome centers, restaurants, attractions and passed on from person to person or talked about over a friendly lunch. It sparks the interest of the consumer to keep it, carry it and motivate them to finalize the plans they have been thinking about before another day goes by. It's the calling card to get those consumers to come knocking on your virtual door at 9am, 2pm, 10pm or 3am!

And when they do, you better be ready. Yes, your website is your 24/7 virtual sales office to answer the questions of those consumers who have now made the step to that all important RESERVATION. Use it to finish up what your brochure started. Make sure those all important questions are being answered when that physical person isn't around to answer it. Are you offering packages, specials, are your menu items listed (for those with a restaurant) and a list of things to do with links? Don't let that reservation get away for lack of information on your website.

You may not necessarily need all that flash and fancy footwork on your website but you do need a concise and complete idea inspiring website that calls to that customer....take me...take me now!

Now the day has come, your guest has arrived and probably has that brochure not too far from their pocket or purse along with the information they found on your website. Besides showing them the best customer service you have to offer (*that's a different article*) don't forget about the marketing hat you are constantly wearing. Do you have their email address and physical address? Get them both, you need to know how to get in contact with them and where they came from...it's called feeder markets. Remember that term? It tells you where your guests are traveling from and perhaps, just perhaps give you a notion of where to target your dollars for that all important advertising.....*another article topic.*

Keep them coming back. Be proactive in getting them information about what you are offering, last minute deals, and slow times for you but good times for them to visit. Get them to send you their friends. Tell them that. Developing an e-newsletter or personal e-blast works well here and will save your dollars on sending them that brochure. Give them a reason to come back or better yet give them a reason to have a friend come with them.

So yes, there is a place for your brochure, your all-hip and up to date website and that "keep them coming back" newsletter. It's an important balance within your property.

If nothing else, I hope I was able to have you realize there is no one answer, no end all, no "I've found the solution". It's an ongoing process of intriguing and informing guests of who you are and what you have and that special mix of all these mediums that will work for you.

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