



HOW TO BOOST YOUR SHOULDER MONTHS WITH EMOTIVE MARKETING

DANIEL TWIGG, MARKETING STRATEGIST AT CLOCKWORK MARKETING, DISCUSSES HOW APPEALING TO YOUR GUESTS' EMOTION CAN GET RESULTS

After price, we make purchases based on emotion. We are fickle and make decisions to buy based on how we feel at the time - a recommendation we've been given or an advert we've seen recently that makes us act, for example.

During a hotel's shoulder months, to boost bookings we all reach for the faithful discounted offer to entice people to purchase out of season.

Black Friday is an annual testament to the effectiveness of a competitive price-based promotion, but more recently, there's been a backlash to the consumerism of the day and drive to buy more.

Hotels are well placed to key into this rising scepticism, offering experiences over products, which is what people feel they need more of now, particularly younger guests.

78% of millennials would rather

purchase an experience or event than a product (Harris) with many opting out of consumerism in favour of mindful or emotionally nourishing experiences.

But why is this happening and what is driving these purchasing decisions?

HOW OUR BRAINS WORK

There are three parts to our brain that influence our behaviour and how we make purchasing decisions.

Our most basic needs are survival and reproduction or food and sex. The "primal" part of our brain influences our behaviour to meet these needs.

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We joke at Clockwork that hotels are well placed to key into these fundamental needs with most offering bedrooms and food. A romantic dinner, bed and breakfast will always be a winning package.

The “rational” part of our brain controls our impulses but also our reasoning and judgement. A cost-effective offer will appeal to our rational brain, as will a tick list of features we want when we visit a hotel: swimming pool, en-suite bathroom, ironingboard, Wi-Fi etc. Factual information needs.

The emotional part of our brain controls our limbic system and keys into our long-term memory and emotional motivations. Things that make us laugh, feel nostalgic or give us goosebumps for example, affect us on a much deeper level.

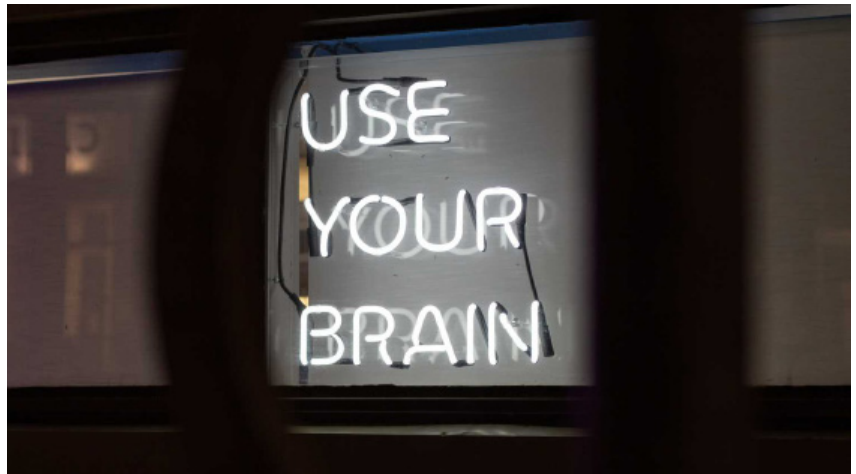
When we are in an emotional state of awareness, we remember things better. Hence stories that provoke emotion are remembered 22 times more than facts. Video that has an emotional impact on viewers is 70% more likely to promote a purchase (Unruly).

Appealing to the emotions of your guests can give you a powerful edge to market your hotel through your shoulder months.

BENEFITS OVER FEATURES

Having worked in marketing different brands across varying sectors, it amazes me how many hotels market themselves solely on their features, appealing only to the rational part of our brain. A swimming pool, free parking, or interactive TV are all great but only appeal on one level as does describing everything with the over-used “L” word – luxury in case you were wondering.

This of course is part of marketing any hotel, but what is the actual benefit to me (the customer) of these features? When I stay at the hotel, how does it make me feel? Does it remind me of happy holiday memories of childhood, do I feel more relaxed after visiting, do I feel free from



BY USING MARKETING THAT PROVOKES AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE, YOU HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF HOLDING PEOPLE'S ATTENTION"

the grind of daily life? Does it appeal to me on a deeper emotional level?

The best brands in the world use emotive marketing to affect us on this more fundamental level than the rational or primal. Although the old adage of “sex sells” will always apply and continue to be used.

Think of any of the most memorable marketing campaigns of the last 10 years and those that come to mind will provoke an emotional response. Laughter at Compare the Market's Meerkats, pride from Nike's “Nothing beats a Londoner”, confidence from “The Lynx Effect”.

While the ads all promote products, not one of them describes the product or its features in their ads. They all appeal to the emotions of the viewer or consumer they are persuading to purchase. The brands connect with us on a deeper, emotional level and therefore, are more memorable than those that don't.

EXPERIENCE AND EMOTION

Going back to the research on millennials, the hotel consumers of the future already value experience over product purchases. It may be that rather than competing with your

normal competitors in the future, you will only be competing with the last great experience your potential guests have had.

If that's freediving in Mauritius, you could be in trouble. But by using emotive marketing that provokes an emotional response, you have a better chance of holding their attention.

A checklist to develop an emotional marketing campaign would be to first research the real needs and motivations of your guests. For example, we know from research that the main reason families holiday is to spend quality time together. Therefore, instead of just marketing the indoor family activities available, build a campaign that keys into their emotional need – “Great times together”.

Additionally, think deeply about the actual emotive benefit(s) your hotel or facilities offers guests and build your campaign around these. If you are a country house hotel in the middle of nowhere, what is the real benefit of staying beyond viewing beautiful countryside? To escape from the daily grind...isolation...mental wellbeing, or ultimately you offer “complete peace”.

Getting to the real emotive benefit of your property, location or features is tough but it could prove the difference in marketing your hotel during the shoulder months and beyond. ■■■



Daniel Twigg