

**Institute of Hospitality Management in Prague**

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**“Social networks in hospitality”**

**Bachelor’s dissertation**

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# **“Social networks in hospitality”**

**Bachelor’s dissertation**

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## **Oath**

I swear

that the bachelor dissertation titled “Social networks in hospitality” was written by me independently, and that all literature and additional material used are cited in the bibliography and that this version is exactly the same as the work submitted electronically.

In accordance with §47b law no. 111/1998 coll. on higher education institutions, I agree to my dissertation being published in its complete form in the publicly accessible electronic database of the Institute of Hospitality Management in Prague.

Signature

.....

Ekaterina Kulikova

In Prague on 21.04.2016

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The purpose of this thesis was to show how important social networks are in hospitality industry. The target companies were hotels. The goal of the research was to provide them information about possibilities they have while using social networks and how to develop their presence on them. This is done by enlightening them about well-known social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest but also gives them advices and recommendations about social media usage for businesses.

The analytical part consists of examples of four hotels, which are engaging with social networks. Each hotel is on their own phase of development. This showed that social networks are new for hospitality, and many hotels does not know how to use them with a benefit for a company. For a better understanding of social networks and use of them for hotels, Operation Manager of Bookassist introduced and told more about it. Description of social networks, which hotels can use is included into analytical part to find out what they can offer.

The data of this thesis were collected from literature, Internet expert articles, webpages analysis and face-to-face interviews. Two types of data were collected for this research. The Primary data were collected through the interviews with managers. The secondary data were collected from literature, Internet expert articles, webpages analysis. The method of research is qualitative.

The result of the research demonstrates that social networks are an important part of hospitality. Nevertheless, many hotels do not know how to work with them. Thus, it is recommended to use social networks for hotels in order to be visible, stay in touch with guests and get more direct reservations.

**Key words:** social media; social networks; e-marketing; hospitality; hotels.

## **SHRNUTÍ**

KULIKOVA, Ekaterina. Sociální sítě v Pohostinství. [Bakalářská práce]. Vysoká škola hotelová. Praha 2016. 60 stranky.

Účelem této práce je ukázat, jak jsou důležité sociální sítě v pohostinství. Zkoumanými společnostmi byly hotely. Cílem zkoumání bylo poskytnout hotelům informace o možnostech, které se jim při užívání sociálních sítí nabízejí a jak na nich zlepšit svou přítomnost.

Jsou poučeni o známých sociálních sítích, jako je Facebook, Instagram, Twitter a Pinterest, ale jsou jim též dány rady a doporučení ohledně sociálních sítí užívaných pro byznys.

Analytická část se skládá z příkladů hotelů, které jsou se sociálními sítěmi propojeny. Každý hotel je ve své vlastní fázi rozvoje. To ukazuje, jak jsou sociální sítě novým prvkem v pohostinství a jak mnoho hotelů neví, jak je prospěšně využívat. Operační manažer společnosti Bookassist je pro lepší pochopení a užívání představuje a více o nich mluví. Popis sociálních sítí, které hotely můžou využívat, je zahrnut v analytické části, která zjišťuje, co jim můžou sítě nabídnout.

Údaje v této práci byly vzaty z literatury, odborných internetových článků, analýzy internetových stránek a z osobních rozhovorů. Dva druhy údajů byly shromážděny pro tento výzkum. Primární data pocházejí z rozhovorů s manažery. Sekundární z literatury, internetových stránek a internetové analýzy. Metoda výzkumu je kvalitativní.

Výsledek výzkumu ukazuje, že sociální média jsou důležitou součástí pohostinství. Nicméně mnoho hotelů s nimi neumí pracovat. Takže se doporučuje je používat, aby hotely byly viditelné, zůstaly v kontaktu s hosty a získaly více přímých rezervací.

**Klíčová slova-** sociální média, sociální sítě, e-marketing, pohostinství, hotely

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Technology plays an important role in development of hospitality industry. Information and communication technologies had great influence on the industry and particularly the Internet caused major structural changes. With a development of Internet, the behavior of travelers while choosing a destination or a hotel changed. Nowadays most of the people are using Internet to find travel related information, plan their trips, and purchase tourism products.

With a development of Internet, social networks became a part of almost every person's life. Social media platforms help people to search for travel related information and share their experience with others. To stay up to date, hotels started to engage in social networks. Almost every hotel has at least one page on social media. As it always with something new, people does not know how to efficiently and effectively use it.

There are various platforms provided by the social media networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+ and Twitter to the marketing of products and services in the hospitality industry. Social network offers media technologies that can facilitate online functionality and monitoring perspectives wherein the data gathered can be used to develop their services for customer satisfaction. The hospitality industry can market themselves in social media and networking. Hospitality industry can use social media to engage customers and clients in dialogue and recognize their needs. Through these networking sites, hospitality industry can interact with consumers before, during, and after the vacation experience. Moreover, effective use of social networks can increase a number of reservations.

Nowadays Internet is the main source of income for a business. Almost 90% of population is booking their trips and hotels through the Internet. This radically changed the situation for hotels. Today it is not enough to provide guests with a great service, to have a great looking hotel and qualified employees. Customers need to find the hotel online, develop a trust via visiting the hotel website and accept the price according to the desired service in comparison to other hotels in the chosen destination.

Analytical part of a thesis consists of interview with Operation Manager of Bookassist in order to find out more about social networks and hotels' engagement with them. Main part

of research is review of four different hotels in Prague. Review was done to understand why hotels are working with social media, what they want to achieve, how they do it and is it worth it or not.

This thesis will explain which social networks hospitality industry can use, how effectively and efficiently to use them and is it a good tool to promote a hotel and to increase number of reservations.

## **1.1 Research plan**

This chapter explains how the thesis was accomplished. It also provides information about research objective and methods, and gives the questions that the author wanted to answer. It also defines what kinds of data were collected and how the research is structured.

### **1.1.1 Research objectives**

The objective of this research is to show how to use social networks with aim to promote business and increase number of direct bookings in hospitality industry.

### **1.1.2 Research questions**

Questions related to this Bachelor's thesis are connected to the topic of usage of social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest, in hospitality industry.

The research will be focused on answering main questions:

- Why hospitality companies should engage in social networks?
- How to use them in order to achieve best results?
- How to use social networks efficiently and effectively?

### **1.1.3 Research Method**

There are two ways of approaching when conducting a research: quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Quantitative research method emphasizes quantification in the collection and analysis of the information. The aim is to gather numerical evidence where conclusions can be drawn from or they can be used to test hypotheses. In order to get reliable results it is necessary to study relatively large sample group and use a computer to analyze the collected information. The information is derived from questionnaire surveys, secondary sources and from observation involving counts. (Veal, 1997)

Qualitative research method on the contrary does not involve numerical data but emphasizes words rather than numbers. This method uses only a small sample group; the primary information is gathered from a small number of people. The information gathered cannot usually be presented in numerical form. This research method is used when a full understanding of the sample group is required. The information is derived from observation, informal and in-depth interviewing and participant observation. (Veal, 1997) The researcher can select either one of the two or both research methods. . Each method has its weaknesses and limits and no perfect research method exists. Therefore, it is generally advisable to use multiple methods by for example combining a qualitative case study with a quantitative survey (Rubin and Babbie, 2010).

The main objective to gather information for the research was to have face-to-face interviews with the hotel's managers. The qualitative research method was chosen for this reason. As the research was being done for independent hotels, the qualitative method was more applicable for gathering information from a smaller group of people. The method also made it possible to get more in-depth information from the respondents. If a quantitative research method had been used the information would have been more limited and it would not have given enough data in order to draw well-based conclusions.

#### **1.1.4 Data Collection**

According to Myers (2008), data can be collected through primary or secondary sources. In the former case a researcher is involved in the collection of “those data which are unpublished and which the researcher has gathered directly from the people or organization” (Myers, 2008) and include activities such as fieldwork or interviews. Secondary data, on the other hand, refer to data that already exist somewhere and include data from sources such as journal or newspaper articles or published books (Myers, 2008). The researcher should use as many data sources as possible (e.g. using primary and secondary data) as this will make a research more powerful (Myers, 2008).

The Primary data for the research were collected through the interviews with managers. The secondary data of this study were collected from literature, Internet expert articles, webpages analysis.

#### **1.1.5 Structure of the research**

Firstly, the description of social networks, which hotels can use, is provided.

The analytical part of bachelor's thesis includes interview with Operation Manager of Bookassist – Mr. Jaromir Pažout. The aim of the interview was to find out why hotels should engage with social networks. Which social networks are best for business, how to post to achieve results and new trends in hospitality. As well, analyzes of social networks' pages were mentioned in order to understand the importance of it.

The third part includes interview with managers of hotels, who are in charge of social networks. Interviews are based on a questionnaire. The goal was to find out what they are expecting from social networks, what are their plans and strategies, how they analyze those pages, and if they are aware of new trends, companies and programs, which can help businesses with social media.

Analytical part consists of review of social networks' pages and website of chosen hotels. Recommendations were given after reviews. Conclusion was made after reviews, feedback, analyzes and interview with manager.

Analyzes of pages were based on criteria. The criteria are:

- Presence - How many social networks hotel uses?
- Visibility - Where guests/potential clients can find links to hotel's social networks?
- Activity - How often hotel managers post on social networks? How it is decided?
- Engagement - Are employees responding to clients' comments, suggestions and offers? Is there an interaction between hotel and guests/potential clients?

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, definitions of most common terms related to the subject will be explain. Social networks are part of E-marketing. What is E-Marketing, why it is important and what are the benefits of it is explained in this chapter.

Social media brings many opportunities to a business. This chapter will introduce to the opportunities, which will arise when engaging in social media.

### **2.1 Definitions of terms**

Social network - a dedicated website or other application that enables users to communicate with each other by posting information, comments, messages, images, etc.

Social media – websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.

Internet - a global computer network providing a variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication protocols.

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) – The process of maximizing the number of visitors to a particular website by ensuring that the site appears high on the list of results returned by a search engine.

Retweet - (on Twitter) repost or forward (a message posted by another user).

Follower - someone who is tracking a particular person, group, organization, etc. on a social media website or application. (Oxford Dictionaries)

### **2.2 E-marketing**

Marketing is essential part of a business. The methods of marketing have changed and improved, and we have become a lot more efficient at telling our stories and getting our marketing messages out there. E-Marketing is the product of the meeting between modern communication technologies and the age-old marketing principles that humans have always applied.

What is E- Marketing?

Very simply put, E-Marketing or electronic marketing refers to the application of marketing principles and techniques via electronic media and more specifically the

Internet. The terms E-Marketing, Internet marketing and online marketing, are frequently interchanged, and can often be considered synonymous.

E-Marketing is the process of marketing a brand using the Internet. It includes both direct response marketing and indirect marketing elements and uses a range of technologies to help connect businesses to their customers.

By such a definition, E-Marketing encompasses all the activities a business conducts via the worldwide web with the aim of attracting new business, retaining current business and developing its brand identity.

Why is it important?

When implemented correctly, the return on investment (ROI) from E-Marketing can far exceed that of traditional marketing strategies.

Whether you are a "bricks and mortar" business or a concern operating purely online, the Internet is a force that cannot be ignored. It can be a means to reach literally millions of people every year. It is at the forefront of a redefinition of way businesses interact with their customers.

The benefits of E-Marketing over traditional marketing

- Reach

The nature of the internet means businesses now have a truly global reach. While traditional media costs limit this, rather reach to huge multinationals, E-Marketing opens up new avenues for smaller businesses, on a much smaller budget, to access potential consumers from all over the world.

- Scope

Internet marketing allows the marketer to reach consumers in a wide range of ways and enables them to offer a wide range of products and services. E-Marketing includes, among other things, information management, public relations, customer service and sales. With the range of new technologies becoming available all the time, this scope can only grow.

- Interactivity

Whereas traditional marketing is largely about getting a brand's message out there, E-Marketing facilitates conversations between companies and consumers. With a two-way communication channel, companies can feed off the responses of their consumers, making them more dynamic and adaptive.

- Immediacy

Internet marketing is able to, in ways never before imagined, provide an immediate impact. Effectively, Internet marketing makes business hours 24 hours per day, 7 days per week for every week of the year. By closing, the gap between providing information and eliciting a consumer reaction, the consumer's buying cycle is speeded up and advertising spend can go much further in creating immediate leads.

- Demographics and targeting

The demographics of the Internet are a marketer's dream. Internet users, considered as a group, have greater buying power and could perhaps be considered as a population group skewed towards the middle-classes.

Buying power is not all though. The nature of the Internet is such that its users will tend to organize themselves into far more focused groupings. Perceptive marketers who know where to look can quite easily find access to the niche markets they wish to target. Marketing messages are most effective when they are presented directly to the audience most likely to be interested. The Internet creates the perfect environment for niche marketing to targeted groups.

- Adaptivity and closed loop marketing

Closed Loop Marketing requires the constant measurement and analysis of the results of marketing initiatives. By continuously tracking the response and effectiveness of a campaign, the marketer can be far more dynamic in adapting to consumers' wants and needs.

With E-Marketing, responses can be analyzed in real-time and campaigns can be tweaked continuously. Combined with the immediacy of the Internet as a medium, this means that there is minimal advertising spend wasted on less than effective campaigns.

Maximum marketing efficiency from E-Marketing creates new opportunities to seize strategic competitive advantages.

The combination of all these factors results in an improved ROI and ultimately, more customers, happier customers and an improved bottom line.

### **2.3 E-marketing in the hospitality industry**

E-marketing is also known as Internet marketing, web marketing, online marketing or digital marketing. It is growing at a dramatic pace in the hospitality industry and is significantly impacting the business behaviors since it drives more revenue than traditional marketing.

A successful e-marketing strategy should comprise a set of specific e-actions that help hoteliers reach their planned objectives. These e-actions can be grouped into the following five main sections:

- Search Engine Marketing
- Social Media Marketing
- Mobile advertising
- Email advertising
- Display advertising

#### Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

The large majority of Internet surfers use search engines to find information about hotels or travel destinations online. This makes search engines one of the most effective tools in driving targeted traffic to a hotel or destination's website. In the hospitality sector, hoteliers have two options with regard to SEM: Search Engine Optimization (SEO) or sponsored search:

Search Engine Optimization (SEO):

SEO attempt to improve a website's organic (i.e. non-sponsored) search rankings in Search Engine Results Pages (SERPs) by increasing the content's relevance to search terms.

Several techniques are recommended with regard to SEO:

The Conversion Optimizer: This technique helps to assess, through several testing methods, how to increase the website's conversion rate. That is, the probability that a website visit leads to an effective booking.

Optimization of HTML elements: HTML elements, apart from keywords and site design, play a major role in SEO since they are the cornerstone upon which all websites are built. HTML elements comprise title, Meta description, Header tags, image name, Alt tags; internal linking, etc.

Content optimization for Search Engine: While the website's content should match the guests' search criteria, many hoteliers fail in making their websites a dumping ground for

content to end up with websites that generate very poor value to guests and very low business opportunities.

### Sponsored search

Sponsored search corresponds to search ads that allow a hotel /chain to be included in the sponsored results of a search for selected keywords. This action is generally undertaken through a bidding process on keywords. The Search Engines provide the mechanism for the sponsored search process to occur. This process is continually evolving and gaining complexity year on year.

### Social Media marketing

Social Media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube... possess the advantage that they can spread any information or update posted rapidly to a very wide audience. Furthermore, sharable videos (i.e. choosing an engaging storyline and telling it with compelling visuals) constitute an amazing tool that keeps users' attention and subtly persuade them along the way words cannot.

Moreover, the implementation of Web 2.0 services has significantly contributed in transforming hotels'/hotel chains' websites into social platforms to feature user-generated content. This enables guests to share their stories, photos and experiences, which instantly fosters word of mouth.

### Mobile advertising

Mobile advertising is growing rapidly since mobile devices have multiplied, connectivity speeds have improved and screen resolutions have advanced. For these reasons, the online experience should be seamless across devices. An efficient action plan for a successful mobile advertising should include the following actions:

Interface design: Adjustment of the web content for screen size so that users can comfortably access content in an intuitive way on a smaller screen and benefit from all functionalities on a mobile device (hotel search, access to reviews, bookings, payments, etc.).

Study of people's behavior: This aims at the examination of "when", "where" and "why" people use Smartphones and tablets to better understand their booking trend, needs and expectations.

Deals with Google: To generate fast growing Google search traffic to the hotel website from mobile.

QR codes' use implementation: QR codes (i.e. Quick Response codes) represent a tremendous tool at the disposal of hoteliers to use for marketing purposes and for customer service improvement. By displaying QR codes at the concierge desk, in elevators or at the back of a room card, hoteliers are offering their in-house guests the possibility to get automatically diverted, upon scanning these codes via their mobile devices, to a limitless supply of digital content (e.g. benefit from special offers, get valuable recommendations on the city attractions and night life, etc.). Another interesting use of QR codes might include the creation of a mobile review page to be linked to a QR code on the hotel bill so that guests get encouraged to write their reviews while their memories are still fresh. This certainly improves reviews' accuracy and consequently customer service.

### Email advertising

Email advertising, also known as email marketing, is considered as a powerful e-marketing tool for hoteliers since it creates direct revenue opportunities for past, present and future guests. However, as emails and/or e-newsletters might be unsolicited, senders should either offer recipients an opt-out option or get their prior consent (opt-in). In fact, experience shows that permission-based email marketing is one of the most cost-effective and efficient marketing tools available.

The benefits of email marketing can be summarized as follows:

- Serves both as direct-response vehicle and as branding tool.
- Creates personalized interactive relationships.
- Targets and entices recipients with relevant promotions.
- Plants seed in the mind of recipients regarding future travel.
- Serves as a tool to move distressed inventory.
- Functions as a sales force since it reaches thousands in seconds.
- Recruits new customers and retain old ones.

### Display advertising

Display advertising conveys its advertising message visually using text, logos, animations, videos, photographs or other graphics.

The most common two display advertising techniques are the following:

Web banner advertising (or banner ads): They are typically graphic ads displayed within a web page. They use rich media to incorporate video, audio, animations or other interactive

elements. These include Frame ad, Pop-ups/pop-unders, Floating ad, Expanding ad, Trick banners, etc.

Text ads: A text ad displays text-based hyperlinks. Text-based ads may display separately from the web page's primary content or they can be embedded by hyperlinking individual words or phrases to a hotel's website.

The online marketing is doubtless one of nowadays most powerful advertising methods. All companies, and notably in the Tourism and Hospitality industry, are fiercely competing to lead and overwhelm the online space in order to shift market shares from competition, increase their online traffic and make more profits. In addition, International hotel chains are considerably reducing their offline marketing budgets year on year for the benefit of the online ones.

However, it is always required for any company wishing to succeed its e-marketing strategy, to ensure that all of its online space is well managed and that it is entirely under control. Moreover, updates and innovations in the online world are a MUST to attract customers and keep their interest constantly stimulated. (Derouiche, 2014)

## **2.4 Social Media Marketing**

Social Media Marketing (SMM) may be described as the act of using social networks, online communities, blogs or any other Internet form of media for marketing. "It is the umbrella term for the wide variety of tools and applications that give the Web its social capabilities" (Miletsky, 2010). These tools are inclusive of familiar social networks like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn and YouTube. The goal of social media marketing is to gain brand awareness and interaction with the customers to talk about a specific business (Csutoras, 2008). Social Media Marketing concepts and techniques basically consist of:

1. Increase brand awareness of services,
2. Increase sales,
3. Educate and inform customers,
4. Improve customer service,
5. Monitor brand reputation.

Social marketing provides visibility and awareness for the brand; this is the awareness that is essential to convert potential customers to loyal customers eventually. The secret is to create a thematic content that can lead to an effective marketing campaign. This move will

generate brand awareness and the brand will be top of mind with the consumers if they decide to buy the product or services.

While traditional media keeps customers informed, social media goes a step further by keeping the customers stimulated and involved. When a company gets their customers involved and engaged, it leads to lasting working relationships with organizations. The level of customer support increases with the use of social media since it is personal and interactive. In the event of an unfortunate situation, social media may serve as a catalyst to turn this situation into an opportunity for a company to extend their services and go the extra mile to reverse the negative feeling.

Reputation management is a construe component of online activity for organizations with plenty of internet users, especially their customers. Whereas some organizations utilising the internet are cautious to project themselves in a way that suits specific audiences, other internet users embrace a more open approach. Nevertheless, the growth of social media can be positive for consumers but it can be bad news or an opportunity for hotel operators. Jeremy Wagstaff, a commentator on technology has shared that the most effective way to get satisfactory service these days is to tweet about how bad it is. Since hospitality is a leisure industry, social media may act as a disaster item for one's brand (Wagstaff, 2010).

#### Benefits of Social media marketing

A study conducted by two seniors at the Cornell School of Hotel Administration, Laura McCarthy and Debra Stock, explained that guest who travels frequently place their emphasis on reviews by consumers more so than the ratings awarded by established organization, such as AAA and Forbes. It is also surprising to find that people were likely to post both favorable and unfavorable review (Hospitality Industry, 2010). Nielsen states that 57% of customers will research for online reviews before making a purchase of a product or service (The Nielsen Company, 2010)

With the growing trend towards social media marketing, it is now reflected as an item in some marketing budgets. These individuals in hospitality should always keep in mind the benefits of social media. With the advancement of technology, social media is and will be very much part of our daily lives. Online marketing can take place in several social media platforms, and that should be taken into consideration for the marketing strategy of a hotel. Each hotel is different and must be treated accordingly, so a blend of social media tools such as Twitter, Facebook , YouTube and Corporate Blogs should be used if necessary.

## **2.5 Social Media Opportunities**

Companies can benefit from social media for many reasons. First, social media is of low cost and has a global reach. Compared to traditional advertising that often requires a big budget (e.g. space fee) the only cost companies need to invest for promoting through social media channels is to invest time to keep a site running (Masterson and Tribby, 2008). Furthermore, social media offers companies, especially small and medium sized companies (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010), a great opportunity to reach out and talk to their current and potential customers who increasingly expect to find their brands online (O'Connor, 2010). Furthermore, participating in several social media channels can help organizations to increase their visibility (Aggarwal, 2010).

On another level, social media has put the consumer in charge. It is open to everyone and everyone has the opportunity to voice their opinions and views (Evans and McKee, 2010). Companies can no longer control consumers by sending them a one-way message. Social media involves a two-way relationship where consumers talk to companies and among each other in order to get a real view about products, services, and brands (Evans and McKee, 2010). On the social web consumers have the opportunity to talk to each other and increasingly they seek to find out about second opinions, experiences and views about services and products (Evans and McKee, 2010). For many companies this may be difficult to accept as this can greatly influence how a firm's campaign or message is perceived by an audience. Consumers may not support it and create another message that can be the opposite making the efforts, time as well as the money invested seem all in vain. However, as much as companies would like to control what is being said about them in most cases they cannot control it. Therefore, companies need to find ways to address this (Evans and McKee, 2010). By integrating such trustworthy online word of mouth in their social media, strategy hotels can support their customers to reduce perceived risk in their early stage of the decision-making process and offer them a way to share their experiences after their trip (Murphy et al., 2010). Similarly, Anil Aggarwal (2011), CEO of Milestone Internet Marketing, suggests that hotels should encourage their guests to leave more reviews on different social media platforms. the fact that dissatisfied customers with a bad experience are more likely to share it with others than customers who had a good experience, hotels should use this opportunity to increase the amount of positive word of mouth and promote their business. Hotels should not fear the presence of bad reviews (Aggarwal, , 2011). While responding to a good review can strengthen the customer's loyalty to a brand, responding to a bad review can show customers that their concern is being acknowledged

and taken care of. In the end, the hotel might even be able to convert an angry guest into a loyal customer. Thus, integrating such systems gives hotels also the opportunity to build a loyal customer base (Aggarwal, 2011). Lastly, social media offers companies the opportunity to engage with their customers and create a dialogue and a relationship with them (Evans and McKee, 2010). Once a company has created an account on a social media platform, it has the opportunity to interact with customers by producing content (O'Connor, 2010). Generally, consumers will be skeptical towards overtly commercial content or messages. Rather, content should be relevant and engaging and foster dialog between the brand and the consumer (O'Connor, 2010). Suggestions in doing include offering insider tips, local weather or restaurant suggestions. Probably any recommendation about events in a city will appeal to travelers. Challenging users to take a quiz and poll (Withiam, 2010) or the application of activities such open-ended questions or fill-in the blank posts can also help heighten interaction (HeBS, 2011). There are several features and affordances of social media that can help a brand to invite interaction and engagement. Brands can make use of various design features that can make a page more appealing and engage users more to a page, for example (Withiam, 2010).

### **3. ANALYTICAL PART**

Three parts are in the analytical part of a thesis. Firstly, social networks, which hotels can use will be described.

Second part is an interview with an Operation Manager of Bookassist – Mr. Jaromir Pažout. Bookassist helps hotels to build their brand online, drive direct business to their branded website, capture bookings with world class booking technology, help them optimize their online distribution and ensure they grow their margin per booking. The goal of interview was to find out why hotels should engage with social networks. Which social networks are best for business, how to post to achieve results and new trends in hospitality. As well, analyzes of social networks' pages were mentioned in order to understand the importance of it.

Lastly, the analytical part includes review of four independent hotels in Prague. Independent hotels were chosen because chain hotels have to get an approval from head office before doing something. Independent hotels can easily adapt for changes and suggestions.

The four hotels are Art Nouveau Palace Prague; The Emblem Hotel; Assenzio Hotel Prague and Deminka Palace Hotel.

Reviews consist of description, detailed review of social networks' pages and website, interview with manager, based on a questionnaire, analyze of social networks and conclusion.

The goal is to understand what hotels are expecting from social networks, what are their plans and strategies, are they aware of trends, companies and programs on a market and how they analyze social networks' pages.

Questions for the interview and from questionnaire are provided at appendices of a thesis.

#### **3.1 Social networks for hospitality**

##### **Facebook**

Nowadays, Facebook is the world leader Social Network. It is the Social Networks with the most features. Users can publish text, pictures, and videos. They can also share it with their friends' publications from other friends or from companies. But not only can they share what they see on Facebook, they can also share mostly everything they find interesting on the web so that their Facebook friends can see it and also share it. Users can

also join groups to discuss about their hobbies and interests for example. They can also create events and invite their friends to attend. Moreover, they can play games directly while being on Facebook. So Facebook has become more and more useful for their users as they can do many things in the same place.

For companies Facebook has become more and more interesting. Facebook allows businesses to create public profiles called “pages”. Those have many of the same features as a user’s profile. Users can connect with a page and become fans in order to follow the company’s publications easily. Pages can have public messaging wall, events, pictures, and custom applications (Zarrella, 2010). Facebook describes its pages as “a voice to any public figure or organization to join the conversation with Facebook users...a public profile lets users connect to what they care about” (Kotler, Bowen, Makens, 2006).

The question that arises in many hospitality businesses is why Facebook marketing? Facebook, another source of social media, is a fantastic avenue to stay visible and successful by making a face or a presence for the organization online. Facebook is one of the extensive social network on earth and almost reaching the 500 million active users. The key component is to put in place an overall social media strategy instead of a standalone plan for Facebook. Since the customers tend to visit different social media sites and platforms with lightning speed, it is therefore imperative for companies to observe and manage their presence within a given site as a tactical execution. It has to be able to advantage site-specific features of overall social media strategy (Manchanda, 2010).

In Facebook, people have a profile, but a hotel does not require a profile. Instead, a hotel is like a brand, and they need to have pages instead of a profile. A hotel, which uses Facebook, must know their audience, and set up the pages according to their audience demographic. With such information, the content is created and Facebook marketing campaign must have the right exposure, awareness and motivation. With this in place, it can increase people and followers for the brand. O'Neill stresses that organizations tend to measure the impact of social media in a quantitative way rather than in a qualitative way. This means that these particular organizations tend to count the number of “followers” that are participating in Facebook instead of looking closely at these “followers” and analyzing their behavior in relation to the product; this can lead to recruiting them as unpaid evangelists (O'Reilly, Milstein, 2009).

## **Twitter**

Twitter is a messaging service that shares many characteristics with other communication tools, with elements similar to email, texting, blogging, and so forth. However, a few factors make Twitter unique. The messages you can send, called Tweets, can be no longer than 140 characters (spaces included), which is about the length of a news headline. Tweets are public, unless people make their account private but this is quite rare on Twitter. That means people can easily meet new people on Twitter. The Tweets are opt-in, and people choose to get a stream of Tweets of people and companies they choose to “follow” (O’Reilly, Milstein, 2009).

Users usually share their daily life activities and events, but also their ideas, thoughts and comments about what people care about. Users of Twitter like to share their knowledge about the topics they are interested about, thus following people and companies sharing the same interests. By following others, users can then interact with them directly with private messages or with Tweets sent directly to another user on their Twitter page. More than just publishing, users will also “retweet” Tweets than they find interesting, which means that they share it on their own Twitter page with their own followers (people that follow a user) can read it. Moreover, like with Facebook, people using Twitter often share on Twitter interesting articles that they read on the web.

Twitter is an excellent mind reading tool. It lets people see not just what individuals are thinking about but also what groups are focusing on and trendy subjects of conversation. Moreover, Twitter is a key business channel, letting companies engage with customers, partners and other constituents in a direct way that is both personal and public (O’Reilly, Milstein, 2009). Twitter is a powerful tool to stay connected with your customers. It can also be used a number of additional ways to make your business easier, better and more connected – from attracting new customers to making powerful new connections (Micek, Whitlock, 2008).

Twitter is an effective medium for communications, whether it is to read or receiving the latest news to virtual conversations and building community. That is a reason for one to be on Twitter. The apparent advantage for the hospitality industry to utilize social media is for the purpose of customer service, and Twitter is the ideal medium for resolving customer

related issues or simply leaving a positive impact on the guest with a simple “thank you or you are welcome” tweet.

This is clear that people these days are taking their communication to an open medium with the use of Twitter. Hence, hotels using social media tools are indeed encouraging their customers to use the twitter service to voice their opinions.

The secret towards an effective use of Twitter is for a hotels or an organization to observe the following key points:

- Conduct Some Research,
- Determine Your Goals,
- Identifying a Twitter Profile,
- Build Social Equity,
- Track the conversion rate measure ROI.

It is essential to conduct a research and hotels likely to use twitter should invest the time understanding the types of conversations that is actively exchanged before executing a communications plan of its own. Twitter can be used in many ways, therefore the hotel has to determine their goals and the results it hopes to achieve using Twitter. It can either be a platform for customer support or broadcasting of information such as new promotions or ad hoc activities during special occasions. A profile of some kind has to be created. If it were for a hotel, a branded account would be recommended, as the Twitter name should reflect the name of the organization along with a company logo. Twitter etiquette can harness trust within the community and credibility as well. To succeed in building social equity, customer engagement is vital. With all these in place, tracking the conversations will sum up the results to better understand the current trends and what it entitles in the social web environment. These results should always map back to the goals and objectives (Brito, 2010).

### **Google +**

Google is more than just a search engine. The company has created many applications and services all aimed towards making the Internet a better place to hang out. From its famous Google Maps, News and Groups to its Google Earth projects, Google has created very

useful tools. Moreover, Google entered the world of Social Media and created Google +, a Social Network that takes some of the best components of other of Google's services.

In many ways Google + is quite similar to Facebook, but it has already proven to be better when it comes to reaching the right people which can be very useful for companies. It is also more powerful than Twitter when it comes to keeping up with breaking news. One interesting feature from Google + is "Circle", which enables users to organize their friends into handy groups: friends, family, acquaintances, following and others can be created. Then users can choose to publish their posts to all their circles, only with some of them, or publicly with all Google + users (Hattersley, 2012).

### **Pinterest**

Pinterest is a collection of virtual online pinboards that people use to share pictures they find interesting. Users "pin" pictures and other images to their personal pinboards and then share their pins with their online friends and followers. A pinboard is a place where people can create and share the things they like or find interesting. Users can have as many pinboards as they want, and organize them by category. Pinterest is the most efficient and effective for visual sharing. Moreover, anything a user pins on Pinterest can be shared on Facebook and Twitter too, as they are made to co-exist.

Concerning businesses, Pinterest offers a unique new way to promote brands and engage with target customers. The benefits of using Pinterest to market businesses include rapidly increasing popularity, attractive demographics, proven ability to drive traffic to other sites, appeal in specific vertical markets (Miller, 2012).

### **Instagram**

Launched in 2010, Instagram is the fastest-growing social network in the world, with 400 million active users who share an average of 70 million photos and post 2.5 billion likes per day. Instagram offers unique opportunities for hotels to build awareness and engage travelers. (ReviewPro, 2015)

The truth is that Instagram is extremely interactive and allows brands to develop strong connections with consumers, as well as gain a larger group of fans and followers. Hospitality brands can promote greater interactivity by hosting consumer contests and creating engaging promotions that stimulate ongoing interaction. Instagram also provides a

valuable stream of consumer-created content that can be re-purposed on a hospitality brand's Facebook page, Twitter feed, or blog. (MDG Advertising, 2012)

They say a picture is worth a thousand words. For hotels, the stakes are much higher. In the hospitality industry, a picture can be worth thousands of dollars in bookings.

With more than 50% of hotel bookings done over the Internet, the importance of giving potential guests a rich visual experience is more apparent than ever. Plus, considering the influence of social media on hotel bookings, its importance for hotel managers to leverage photo-driven social platforms to generate more sales for their hotels. (Rupesh, 2014)

Instagram and the hospitality industry are a perfect pair. The travel industry has always been visual and brands have always used images to entice guests. Brands boast about their properties with images to encourage potential guests to book and lure past guests back. Every hotel, hostel, and bed and breakfast should use Instagram to capitalize on the attention of its young, highly engaged audience. (Gaggioli, 2015)

## **YouTube**

There is no denying the power of YouTube. With over 1 billion users, YouTube is the 2nd largest search engine in the world and has drastically changed the way media is consumed. Youtube With an estimated 300 hours of video being uploaded every minute, the average users attention span has been steadily dropping, due to the overwhelming amount of content available. This has made content creation more difficult for hoteliers looking to use YouTube as a marketing platform, but with the right video it can still be very effective. So what kind of videos can hotels make to properly showcase their property, without losing their audience?

The first step in creating a great video is determining its goal and how it will tell the hotel's story. If the property has recently gone through renovations, a video announcing the completion and showcasing the newly refurbished areas is a great way to generate a positive image of the hotel. To determine what to highlight, look at the hotel reviews. If guests are raving about the pool or restaurant, creating a short video around that can have a big impact on guests looking to book. At the end of these videos there needs to be some form of call to action to help generate traffic to the hotel's website or YouTube page. Guests who find the videos on YouTube will need an easy way to navigate to the hotel's website without having to return to Google or another search engine, so including an URL

in the description or an annotation link will keep keep the guest away from the OTA's PPC campaigns and ads.

YouTube's reach and international user bases allow hotels a unique opportunity to reach a much wider audience. If a hotel hosts a lot of international travelers, or is looking to attract more, their videos should take advantage of YouTube's Closed Captioning features to translate their message into other languages. If there is a specific region being targeted, doing some research into their cultural values can help to shape the video to be more appealing and avoid any accidental cultural faux pas.

Content is key for these videos and should be made to best represent the hotel and the guests it wants to attract. Business hotels may take a more serious approach, while leisure properties and resorts may adopt a more playful and relaxing feel. The purpose of these videos is to get them in front of as many potential guests as possible, directing them to the site and encouraging more direct bookings. (Jackson, 2015)

### **Comparison of social networks**

#### Facebook

- 1 billion+ users worldwide
- Highly targeted advertising options
- Wide demographic
- User base dominated by 25+ age group
- Content that works: links, video, images, lifestyle, light hearted, entertaining, educational, stories

#### Twitter

- 271 million + users worldwide
- Microblogging platform
- User base dominated by ages 18-49
- Primarily used by celebrities, public figures, news channels
- Content that works: links to news/blog articles, hashtags, interactions with other brands or consumers

Google+ is the most recent major entry into the competitive field of the top social networking sites. It launched in mid-2011 and already has more than 500 million users. Google has the significant advantage of always being on your web browser at all times, so it advertises itself as a social experience that keeps you connected even when you're not on the specific Google+ site. This site is designed to be a total communication social network. (Toptenreviews.com, 2013)

#### Pinterest

- 70 million + users worldwide
- Virtual pinboard of the internet
- Create “pinned” images from any website – usually shops/blogs with DIYs, beautiful images, infographics, etc.
- User base dominated 18-49 year old females
- Advertising great for targeting females and selling pretty/innovative products and clothing

#### Instagram

- 200 million + users worldwide
- Very active users
- User base dominated by younger age group (teens – 20s)
- Requires a mobile phone (cannot post from browser)
- Extremely visual – people want to see beautiful, inspiring posts
- Content that works: carefully edited images of food, outfits, products, scenery, travel, etc.

#### YouTube

- 1 billion + users worldwide
- 4 billion + views per day
- Largest video sharing site
- Also a search engine
- Advertise targeted to location, interests, keywords
- Content that works: entertainment, instructional videos, commentary, news, demonstrations, humour, how-to's, etc (Rodgers, 2015)

### **3.2 Social networks' statistics**

Consumer and B2B purchases are influenced by social content. Social media now plays almost as large a role in purchasing decisions as does TV and 57% of consumers say they are influenced to think more highly of business after seeing positive comments or praise online.

Still, interesting contradictions remain. Most businesses now use social media for marketing and those efforts are expected to continue to increase, yet many marketers and top executives alike find the business value difficult to quantify.

Social is important today, but even more so tomorrow. 90% of young adults—ages 18 to 29—use social media (compared to just 35% of those over age 65). Fully a third of millennials say social media is one of their preferred channels for communicating with businesses. In addition, those media consumption habits are unlikely to change over time, meaning that when the millennials start turning 40, their media usage will look much more like that of today's millennials than of today's 40-year-olds.

Social media marketing spending will rise anyway. The share of overall marketing budgets devoted to social media marketing is expected to increase from about 10% on average today to nearly 25% within the next five years.

That may be because social media is not just about lead gen. Social is viewed as the second-most effective digital tactic for customer retention, behind only email. 64% of sales reps say they closed at least one deal in 2014 directly from social media use. In addition, of small business owners who use social media, 92% agree, "social media marketing is important for my business." (Business2community.com, 2016)

#### Stats about Social Media Demographics

52% of online adults now use two or more social media sites. (Pew Research, 2015)

Of the 7.2 billion people on earth, 3 billion have Internet access; 2.1 billion are active on social media; and 1.7 billion use social networks from a mobile device. (Link Humans, 2015)

The number of worldwide social media users is expected to reach 2.5 billion by 2018. (Statistica, 2015)

The “most important” social networks to teens and young adults (aged 12-24) are now Instagram (32%), Twitter (24%), Facebook (14%), Snapchat (13%) and Tumblr (4%). (Mary Meeker’s Internet Trends, 2015)

### Stats about Social Media Metrics and Measurement

Website traffic and “vanity metrics” (friends, followers, “likes”) are the most common metrics marketers use to measure the business impact of social media. Just 14% tie social media to sales levels. (The CMO Survey, 2015)

“Engagement” (such as likes, shares, etc.) is considered the most important metric for evaluating social media marketing success, with 80% of marketers identifying it as one of the top three metrics. Audience size (61%) and website traffic (56%) round out the top three. (Simply Measured, 2015)

46% of B2B marketers are not sure whether any social channels have generated revenue for their business. (MarketingProfs, 2015)

However, consumers say that social media plays almost as big a role in purchasing decisions as does television. (Ad Age, 2015)

The tools most commonly used to measure social media marketing results are the native analytics provided by the social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) themselves, at 65%. These are followed by social media management platforms like HootSuite (62%) and web analytics (e.g., Google Analytics) at 59%. Just 22% of businesses use dedicated social media measurement platforms. (Simply Measured, 2015)

### Social Media Marketing and Advertising Stats and Facts

33% of millennials identify social media as one of their preferred channels for communicating with businesses. Less than 5% of those 55 and older agree. (MarketingSherpa, 2015)

More than half (52%) of marketers say Facebook is “the most important social network they use to grow and market their business.” LinkedIn came in second place with 21%, followed by Twitter, YouTube and Google Plus. (V3B Blog, 2015)

Social media is viewed as the second-most effective digital marketing tactic for customer retention purposes, behind only email. (TNW News, 2015)

The three characteristics of brand social media posting most important to consumers, in order, are 1) the brand shares new content; 2) the content is relevant to the brand; and 3) the brand engages with its followers. (SocialTimes, 2015)

For 2016, Instagram is the top social channel marketers plan to invest more advertising in (72%), followed by Facebook (61%), Pinterest (41%), Snapchat (36%) and Amazon (34%). (MediaPost, 2015)

Consumers expect brands to be present on at least three different social networks, and 80% expect brands to be present on Facebook. (Experience: The Blog, 2015)

Followers value images, videos, and customer reviews from brands most highly on social media. They place the least value on white papers and ebooks. (SocialTimes, 2015)

Posts with videos attract three times as many inbound links as plain text. (iMedia Connection, 2015)

#### Stats about Enterprise and Executive Social Media Use

Among the top 100 global brands (primarily B2C), YouTube is the most widely adopted social network; all 100 companies maintain at least one YouTube channel. Twitter is the second most adopted at 98% followed by Facebook (96%), Instagram (a surprise at 85%), Google+ (78%) and Pinterest (67%). (Dazeinfo, 2015)

### **3.3 Interview with Mr. Jaromir Pažout**

Mr. Jaromir Pažout is Operation Manager of Bookassist. Bookassist helps hotels to build their brand online, drive direct business to their branded website, capture bookings with world class booking technology, help them optimize their online distribution and ensure they grow their margin per booking.

Hotels should engage in social networks for many reasons. First is visibility. When the person is typing hotel's name in search, despite the paid advertising and booking engines, first page should mostly consist of links to a hotel's website and social networks.

Second reason is Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Social Media presence can increase search rankings. Some people will likely click on a link with hotel's Twitter or Facebook page, than a website. In addition, social networks are search engines themselves. When searching for a brand on social network it is not uncommon to see several different

profiles, and it is not always clear which one is official. Marketers need to ensure that it will be easy for a searcher to identify the real profile. This might be to delete duplicate account(s) or to verify account, if social network offer this opportunity.

Social Media Engagement is a third reason. It is the interaction between people and brands on social networks. Communicating, followers responding to posts, people paying attention to a page are part of engagement. Engagement is measured differently in each social network; it is a like, a retweet, or a comment, etc.

Lastly, having profiles on social networks is increasing brand awareness. Brand Awareness is about clients knowing logo and products of a company. Nevertheless, to increase brand awareness, content of a page, page itself, strategy and plan, everything should be done in a correct way. It takes time and money to make social networks' pages attractive and bringing the results. Nevertheless, it is worth it.

Facebook is a basic network with which hotels should start when they decide to create profiles on social networks. Network with a biggest audience and many options to promote a business.

Google+ is a second network to which hoteliers should pay attention. Google+ might help a lot if it is used right. Create a Google+ page for a hotel, upload all the necessary information, such as photos, description, location and link to a hotel's website. Add a Google+ link to a hotel's website and social networks. Google+ is all about people and the relationship between people.

Some marketers may say that Google+ is non-essential social network. Nevertheless, a company's profile on Google+, it is one of the first thing a searcher will see. Considering this, it is necessary to work with this network. It is important to post on Google+ the same as on Facebook.

Pinterest and Instagram are best social networks from a photos point of view. Visual experience is important while selling accommodation. Show the experience, not functionality. Necessary not to forget about hotel's destination. Most of the travelers have a prior aim to sightsee the city, not just to stay in a hotel. Pinterest is as well great for sightseeing, just create a board(s) about hotel's city and this is just the way to start. In addition, rooms, design, F & B outlet, and all the boards, this can be created and related to a hotel. Moreover, Pinterest and Instagram are increasing search rankings.

Mr. Pažout thinks that Twitter is the last social network hotel should create profile on, because Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Google+ have more advantages for a hotel, which just starting with social media. Twitter has a big audience, but compare to Facebook, the audience and possibilities on page are bigger.

In Mr. Pažout's opinion, it is enough to post at least twice per week on Facebook. The same strategy is for Google+. As mentioned above, everything what is posted on Facebook is posted on Google+.

This plan is for a business, which has time to work with social media. If it is the opposite way, the best solution is to post minimum 2 times per month. Nevertheless, it is necessary to post.

For social platforms, like Pinterest and Instagram, posts once per week it is enough.

Mr. Pažout thinks that posting on social networks once per day is too much for a business.

Analyzing of social networks' pages and website is necessary in order to understand how to improve and what have been done right or wrong.

Every social network has its own analyzes. Usually, all the basic information is provided free. When starting with analyzes, first step is to use inside analytics of a social network.

For a website, it is a Google Analytics. It is one of the most powerful tool for analyzing and monitoring traffic on a website. Google Analytics gives information about who is visiting a website, what they are looking for and how they are getting to a website.

Promotion of hotel's social networks pages it is not essential. It is important to have links to pages on a website. Hotel can include links to printing materials, newsletter, which is sent. Best way of promotion is online.

Important step, when creating a page on a social network is a name. For example, page on Facebook can have two options for the name. It might look like this – facebook.com/hotelXprague or like this facebook.com/hotel-X-prague-254909135867. Everyone will agree that first name looks better. Therefore, it is essential for marketers not to forget about name of a page.

New websites through which a guest can book accommodation are Instant booking by TripAdvisor.com and hoteltonight.com

Of course, not to forget about well-known booking.com; hrs.com; airbnb.com; expedia.com.

Nowadays, people are booking more through OTAs, which is not beneficial for a hotel, which should pay a commission. Goal for every hotel is to receive more direct bookings. That is why on every social network there is should be a link to a page, where booking might be done.

The main trend nowadays is focus on tablets and mobiles. For the past year, more reservations were done using mobile devices. It is essential to have a mobile version of a website. Paying attention to details is important. Quality of pictures and updated information are part of it. If a hotel has extra money, it is a good idea to create a mobile application. It is costly, but it is a bonus for a company.

Many people nowadays are using Facebook for searching a hotel. YouTube is used as a search engine for information about destination. Hotel can have a YouTube account, shoot 2-3 videos and easily appear on a first page, when a visitor searching only using a destination. It can be done by using keywords and writing a description for a video. Of course, it is important to link social networks with YouTube channel. YouTube is the most visited website. It is one more tool for a business to be visible and to increase brand awareness.

In conclusion, it is important to have a page on at least one social network. The best way to start is to set up a Facebook page. After having a good Facebook page, hotel can create pages on several networks. The essential part of engagement with social media is to be online and to post. It is not enough just to have social networks' pages, hotels should post, be active, and engage with clients.

It is necessary to be up-to-date, and to keep an eye on new trends. Nowadays, each website should have a mobile version. For more advance businesses, mobile application is an option as well.

### **3.4 Art Nouveau Palace Prague**

#### **Description of a hotel**

Art Nouveau Palace Hotel is a five-star hotel located at Panská Street in the center of Prague. The capacity of a hotel is 127 rooms. Including 92 Deluxe rooms, 26 Executive and 9 suites (8 junior suites and one Art Nouveau Suite).

Hotel has a long history started back in 1909. "The Art Nouveau Palace Hotel Prague embodies one of Prague's most precious architectural treasures. The hotel is located in the

very center of the city - just on the borderline between historic Old and New Towns. There is no other comparable hotel in Prague, which could boast such a rich and exciting history of the building it occupies. In 1903, the Prague builder and hotel proprietor, Mr. František Buldra, together with the architect George Justich, launched the development of the Art Nouveau Palace Hotel Prague on the original medieval groundwork. The building itself was completed on April 21 1909.” Many famous people were choosing Art Nouveau Palace as their accommodation while visiting Prague. There are many reasons to that. First of all, location and a history of a hotel. Secondly, the rooms. “Italian Carrara Marble bathrooms; High ceilings; Air-conditioning” and many other features are influencing the guests’ choice.

F&B Outlet of Art Nouveau Palace has a lot to offer to guests and local citizens. In a hotel, there are two restaurants and café. L'Epoque Restaurant is open to the guests for a full American breakfast buffet every morning. For a dinner, guests and local citizens can visit Gourmet Club Restaurant, which is listed within the “Top 10 International Restaurants in Prague”.

Brochure of a hotel states:” Come and visit our Gourmet Club Restaurant and let it enchant you by its turn of the century English style cozy atmosphere. Our fine menu, attentive service and live piano music will make your diner unforgettable.”

Café Palace is located in the lobby of a hotel. It is great for a meetings or a quick break. The main zest of Café Palace is walls of it. “The walls of Café Palace are decorated with autographs of our famous guests such as Bob Dylan, Louis Armstrong, Jacqueline Onassis Kennedy, Gina Lollobrigida and many others.’

Art Nouveau Palace Hotel offers variable private rooms and meeting hall with capacity up to 200 attendees.

In addition, guests can use concierge, parking and limousine services.

From all mentioned above, the conclusion is that Art Nouveau Palace is a great hotel with variety of offers to guests and local citizens. From restaurants to meeting halls, all kind of guests will find what they want at Art Nouveau Palace.

### **Review of social networks’ pages and website**

Art Nouveau Palace Hotel has pages on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and LinkedIn.

Before giving recommendations to a management of Art Nouveau Palace review of website, Facebook and Twitter pages were done. Facebook and Twitter were chosen because the hotel uses those social networks more than other.

## **Website**

### Advantages

- Website is available in seven different languages

Website can be viewed in Czech, English, Russian, Spanish, German, French and Italian.

That is a good additional way to attract customer. Many people does not know English, and for them it will be pleased to have an opportunity to view a website in their native language.

- Room comparison

Hotel offers four types of rooms. Deluxe, Executive and 2 types of suite. When choosing a room, it is good to understand how the rooms are differing. In a table, visitors can see a comparison between all types of rooms or suites. It is the quickest and easiest way to see how rooms are differing and which room might be preferable.

- Sufficient amount of photos in a gallery

Another important point while choosing the accommodation is to see how the room looks like. Photos can show the design, amenities and the room itself. By sufficient amount of photos writer means that there are 4-5 photos of each room, which are showing all the needed information about them.

### Disadvantages

- Not updated information

Hotel uses this website for more than for 7 years. The design and photos are not up to date.

- Booking engine

The location of “Book now” button is important. The best solution is to test the placement of it, and make a noticeable appearance.

## **Facebook**

### Advantages

- Posts in two languages - Czech and English

The best idea is to post in 2-3 languages. Czech language is first option because the hotel is located in Czech Republic, domestic tourists are visiting the hotel, and not everyone knows English. The second option is English due to its internationalism and understandability by many people.

- Idea of posting about famous people who stayed in a hotel

This is an interesting way to attract guests. Famous people are known for choosing most of the times the best things. Art Nouveau Palace accommodated many famous people such as Uma Thurman, Bob Dylan, Louis Armstrong and others.

- Use of hashtags

Hashtags are an essential part of every post. All users can see a hashtag word. In addition, it is allowing people, who are not following a page, to see the content, which is posted. The use of hashtags should be done very carefully. It is important not to use many hashtags, and they should be meaningful.

- Using location

Along with hashtags, location is an essential part of post. By clicking on a location, users can see all the posts with the same location. It is a way to find out more about a hotel. Some reviews, photos and comments might be found there.

#### Disadvantages

- No posts every day

The main way to be visible on social network and to achieve a success is to post every day. A constant updating of a timeline is the golden rule while dealing with social networks' pages.

- No communication with followers/users that left comments etc.

When followers are writing comments, no matter is it a comment, question or a suggestion, there is should be a reply to this.

- Not every post is in English

Preferably to post in English every post. So, all the followers/users will understand. More likes, followers, reposts and appreciation.

## **Twitter**

### Advantages

- Tweets are not the same

There are different topics mentioned in tweets. Some of them are about hotel, facts or events in Prague and special offers.

- Posts about destination

It is interesting to know about hotels' destination. By posting about Prague, guests will be aware about events, which are happening in a city. Some facts about Prague or Czech Republic.

#### Disadvantages

- No activity

Posts should be frequent. Every day or at least once per 2 days.

- Not following people

Following people is a part of every social network. Accounts, which are followed, should be somehow related to hotel's page.

- Some posts only in Czech

For getting more followers, likes, retweets each post should be in two languages – Czech and English. Twitter has a limit of 140 symbols per tweet. In a situation, when the message is long, it might be possible to post two tweets, one in Czech and one in English.

#### Statistics from April'16:

##### Facebook statistics

Number of followers – 679 people

Rating – 4.6 out of 5.0

Reviews – 80

##### Twitter statistics

Number of followers - 28

Number of following - 1

Number of tweets – 50

#### **Interview with employee of a hotel, who is in charge of social networks**

Štěpán Tichý is Senior Sales Manager of Art Nouveau Palace Hotel. He is in charge of social networks' pages, which hotel has. Social networks are Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and LinkedIn.

The main target nowadays is to improve hotel's Facebook page. Mr. Tichý is trying to post every day, but sometimes it is impossible. Therefore, generally posts are uploaded 3-4 times per week.

Hotel has three Facebook pages. First is for the hotel itself and two pages for Café Palace and for Gourmet Club Restaurant.

Target audience for a hotel page is international clients, who stayed in a hotel, and who are planning to visit it. For F&B Outlet are local people.

Art Nouveau Palace Hotel uses an external company to analyze social networks' pages.

Analyze of social networks is every week. Every Monday the report is received. The main points at the report are number of clicks, visitors and interconnection between this and number of new reservations.

Mr. Tichý uses Google Analytics and Google+. Now the team is working on improvement of Google+ page. They are uploading photos and starting to be active on this platform. Mr. Tichý is sure that Google+ will help hotel with promotion and marketing.

There are many programs and companies, which can help a business to work with social networks. For example, Buffer, SocialBakers and Hootsuite. Mr. Tichý knows about SocialBakers and he is planning to work with this company. Social Media statistics is important. Businesses should engage with companies, which can provide detailed information about statistics of pages.

Concerning applications, hotel has a mobile version of a website. Currently they are working on an interactive map of Prague. It is an application, which a guest can download, and concierge can send directly from tablet to guest's mobile phone all the suggestions in which a guest is interested.

In Mr. Tichý's opinion, the best social network for a business is Facebook. Due to its audience and age range. Many people are using Facebook and this social network is the most well-known and used. The age of users varies from 13 to 65.

In addition, hotel will have a new web site. The reasons to have a new one are that old website was not updated for a long period. The new web site will be easy to use, it will be more functional, and the design will be improved. It is important to have a good structured and easy to use web page. Because it is a main source where guests can find links to social networks' pages.

The hotel management tried to promote and attract guests by giving discounts. The results showed that it works well for selling accommodation. On the opposite side, it does not change a lot in F&B Outlet.

To improve hotels' quality and receive suggestions newsletter is send to every client after 7 days from checkout. They can find there survey and link to a TripAdvisor. Management is working on including there as well links to social networks' pages.

Mr. Tichý is considering using Instagram as a tool of promoting a hotel through photos. As well, it is great for a hotel's visibility in social networks and World Wide Web.

### **Analyze of social networks' pages**

- Presence

Hotel has pages on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and LinkedIn.

- Visibility

Guests can find links to pages on hotel's website.

- Activity

Manager is trying to post every day on Facebook. The preferable time is afternoon.

- Engagement

There is an engagement between hotel's employees and guests on Facebook page. Employees are replying to comments and staying in touch with potential customers and guests, who stayed in a hotel.

### **Facebook statistics**

Management of Art Nouveau Palace decided to start developing their social media presence from Facebook. The focus was on Facebook page, with a future development on other social networks, which hotel using, such as Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn and Pinterest.

Facebook statistics, provided by management of Art Nouveau Palace, shows an increase in likes, after recommendations were taking into action. There is been an increase of 257 likes in two months.

**Table 1. Facebook statistics**

Month	Number of likes
January'16	423
March'16	680

**Table 2. Statistics from the week 14-20th of March**

Feature	Numbers
Post Reach	1053
Post Engagement	781
Book now	1
Website clicks	2
Check-ins	23
New likes	9

**Table 3. Statistics from the week 21-27th of March'16.**

Feature	Numbers
Post Reach	947
Post Engagement	1019
Book now	1
Website clicks	1
New likes	6

Source – information received from Mr. Štěpán Tichý.

For a better understanding, the explanation of features will be given below.

Post reach is the number of unique people who saw your content. It affects every other metric you can track: Engagement, likes, comments, clicks and negative feedback are affected

Post and page reach both have three main subcategories: organic, viral and paid reach.

Organic Reach represents the number of unique people who saw your content in their News Feed, ticker or on your Page. Viral Reach is the number of unique people who saw your post or page mentioned from a story published by a friend. These stories can include liking, commenting or sharing on your page, answering a question or responding to an event. Paid Reach is the number of unique people who saw your paid content.

Post reaches, which are shown in the table, are either organic or viral.

Post engagement means that someone clicked, liked, commented on or shared your post.

Three components contribute to positive engagement with brand posts:

- Likes
- Comments
- Shares

### **Google Analytics of hotel's website**

Comparison between two periods - 1.11.2015 - 28.2.2015 vs. 1.11.2014 - 28.2.2014.

Total number of visits in the given time period increased by 3,54% (33078 vs. 31946).

Visit is a time period when the user actively interacts with the website, application, etc. All the data about usage (screen views, events, e-shopping) are connected to a certain visit.

Total number of users in the given period rose by 4,49% (23457 vs. 22449).

Users that visited the website at least once during the time period (including new and returning visitors).

The percentage of new users from all the users has increased by 0,96% (68,55% vs. 67,90%)

The total amount of page views decreased by 7,58% (137174 vs. 148418).

Page view means the total number of pages view – including refreshed pages.

Average time of page visit decreased by 16,39% (00:02:34 vs. 00:03:04).

Rate of immediate leave from the website increased by 21,97%.

The average number of pages viewed during a single visit decreased by 10,74% (4,15 vs. 4,65)

The trend is ongoing – it points out the higher number of visitors, but a shorter time spent on the website and a higher number of the people that leave immediately.

Source – information received from Mr. Štěpán Tichý.

## **Conclusion**

The improvement after suggestions is visible. After posting almost every day on Facebook, the number of likes and clicks is increasing each day. In three months the number of likes increased by 2 times (from 400 likes per post to 700 likes) Due to that, there is a trend in increasing of number of bookings directly through the hotel's website.

The hypothesis about Art Nouveau Palace Hotel is proved. “Active daily posting on Facebook helps Art Nouveau Palace Hotel increase number of direct bookings.”

By posting more on social networks, hotel is becoming more visible and building brand awareness. Engagement with Google+ will help to increase visibility and brand awareness of Art Nouveau Palace.

## **3.5 The Emblem Hotel Prague**

### **Description of a hotel**

The Emblem Hotel is a five-star design hotel located in the city center of Prague. Capacity of a hotel is 59 rooms. There are eight types of rooms: QueenDom, KingDom, TwinKey, Pied-a-terre, Suite Pretender, The Atelier, Suite Terrace, and Suite Library.

Hotel's guests and local citizens can have a delightful experience at George Prime Steak Restaurant. In the morning, breakfast is served there. Restaurant as well opens for a lunch and dinner.

Hotel has an M SPA, which is open for guests and locals. “The M Spa is a heaven of tranquility with a holistic spa, fitness and wellness center focused on the individual needs of guests” – this description can be found on SPA's website. SPA has its own page on Facebook.

The Maharal Club is all about meetings and events in a hotel. “We have created The Maharal Club to be the Living Room of the Emblem—the “go-to” place for you to work/lounge/drink/chat/play. The club has a total of 4 different “Living Spaces” that are freely accessible to you: The Pantry (also known as The Kitchen), The Salon, The Games Room, and The Drawing Room.” – Hotel’s website states.

Hotel webpage says: “The Emblem is a place for people from Prague and from abroad to explore, discover and discuss together, and it is redefining the way we travel entirely.”

The Emblem Hotel is known for its great promotion and marketing through social media. That is why a review was done in order to understand and learn from the hotel with an experience in the social networks.

To conclude, The Emblem Hotel is a place, which can offer a lot to guests. From rich breakfast, continued at M SPA, to a business meeting at one of hotel’s meeting rooms continued with a dinner at George Prime Steak restaurant.

### **Website of Emblem Hotel Prague**

The design of a website is stylish, which is understandable, because it is a design hotel.

Links to social networks can be found at the bottom of a page. There is also a sign “For exclusive deals and discounts, follow us on Facebook”.

Website provides information about hotel, rooms, restaurant, M SPA, The Maharal Club, events in a hotel and photos from gallery. The booking button is clearly visible and located at the top of a webpage.

### **Emblem’s Facebook Presence**

Statistic from April’16:

Facebook fans – 4296

Number of reviews – 190

Rating - 4.7 out of 5.0

Fans - 56% women and 42% men

TOP five Countries: Czech Republic, Mexico, Brazil, US, UK

## Emblem's Facebook Strategy

Pictures are top priority (because they get the most engagement)

Break content down into the following categories:

- To-do list (events)
- People of the Emblem (people who work for or closely with us)

We love (anything from art, shops, websites, and culture)

- Spotted(sights around Prague)
- Photo albums (from events, #emblemprague, lifestyle around the hotel, etc.)
- Lifestyle

## Emblem's Facebook Promoted Content

- 4-5 times a year
- Giveaways, contests, special promos

## **Emblem's Twitter Presence**

Statistic from April'16:

Number of followers – 6501

Number of following – 657

Number of tweets - 941

Engagement -

- Gain approx. 10 followers per week
- Anywhere between 5 – 10 retweets/favorites per week
- Anywhere between 5 – 25 tweets per week (depending on content)

## Emblem's Twitter Strategy

Content -

- Taken from Facebook, other blogs, and links aggregated in Daily Emails (if relevant enough)
- Daily engage with favorites and re-tweets
- Constant monitoring for questions/comments about people's stay

### **Emblem's Pinterest Presence**

Statistic from April'16:

Number of boards – 19

Number of pins – 590

Number of followers - 267

Number of following - 269

Likes – 28

Main boards - Arriving / Living / Relaxing / Socializing / Eating / Lifestyle at The Emblem

These boards include all stock pictures of hotel

Popular boards -

- Czech Food/Drink Staples
- Czech/Slovak Creatives: Past and Present
- Mercedes Benz Prague Fashion Weekend

Boards are created not only to draw Pinterest users' interest to the hotel but also to Prague.

### **Emblem's Instagram Presence**

Statistic from April'16:

Number of followers – 523

Number of following accounts – 269

Number of posts – 85

### **Emblem's Vimeo Presence**

Statistic from April'16:

Number of videos – 5

Number of views – 14 136

Videos are called “Beers with...” It is an ongoing series where we host certain musicians in exchange for a brief interview.

### **Emblem's Google+ Presence**

Statistic from April'16:

Number of followers – 18

Number of views – 1 205 567

### **Interview with employee of a hotel, who is in charge of social networks**

Katarina Dvořáková is a Director of Sales & Marketing in Emblem Hotel. The Emblem Hotel is present on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and Vimeo. In addition, The Emblem Hotel can be found on Google+.

Posting strategy for Facebook is 4-5 posts per a week. At least one tweet per day on Twitter. Hotel's management is changing the Instagram strategy. The new idea is to post 3-4 times a week. There is a constant updating/managing/adding of boards on Pinterest. Regarding Vimeo, whenever management has video, they are posting it there.

Target audience is anyone from the age of 25+ who have a strong interest in travel, art, culture, and design.

Social networks' pages are analyzed weekly. Analyzing of social media is an essential part. Hootsuite, Buffer and Mention analyze Emblem pages. Mention helps to monitor all the websites, blogs and social networks. Hootsuite is a social media management system. The system's user interface takes the form of a dashboard, and supports social network integrations for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Foursquare and many other networks. Buffer is a software application designed to manage accounts in social networks, by providing the means for a user to schedule posts to Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Buffer shares content at the best possible times throughout the day so followers and fans see post updates more often.

Google Analytics as well used for analyzes.

Management is about to start using Revinate, mostly for the Marketing purposes.

Revinate designs and develops technology to improve the guest experience at hotels worldwide. The company's culture is focused on generating bold ideas and having the bravery to pursue them.

Hotel has an app called The Navigator, which is a guide to a hotel and to Prague.

### **Analyze of social networks' pages**

- Presence

Hotel has pages on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and Vimeo.

- Visibility

Guests can find links to pages on hotel's website and social networks' pages

- Activity

Activity depends on a social network. In general, posts are every day.

- Engagement

There is an engagement between hotel's employees and guests. Employees are replying to comments and staying in touch with potential customers and guests, who stayed in a hotel.

As well, there is an engagement with local citizens, when posting about events, which are hosted in a hotel.

## **Conclusion**

The Emblem Hotel Prague is a good example of how hotels should work with social networks. Hotel has five pages on social media and a page on Google+.

Engagement with many social networks takes time and money. Nevertheless, it is worth it. It makes hotel visible and it brings new reservations.

Emblem Hotel has a strategy on working with networks that is another point why it makes them a good example. Having a plan and strategy is an essential part, because without it posting every day on variety networks will be very hard.

Hypothesis for Emblem Hotel Prague is proven. "Use of major social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter, plays an essential part in promoting a hotel online".

## **3.6 Assenzio Hotel Prague and Deminka Palace Prague**

### **Description of Assenzio Hotel Prague and a website**

Assenzio Hotel is a four-star hotel based in XIX-century palace in the city center of Prague.

The capacity of a hotel is 69 rooms. Room types are Standard Double, Junior Suites and Junior Suites (Double Masonette).

Assenzio hotel has a restaurant. Every morning guests can enjoy a buffet breakfast there. As well, it is open for a lunch and dinner.

Services provided by a hotel:

- Lobby Bar 24/24
- Internet Point
- Smokers' Room
- Reception 24/24
- Multilingual employees
- Fax services
- Translation services
- Booking of excursions, museums, theatres, nightclubs and transfers.

Website of a hotel can be viewed in six languages, including Czech, English, Italian, Russian, German and Spanish. Guests can find all the necessary information about hotel, offers and Prague there. In addition, it is possible to sign up for a newsletter or leave a comment, which might be placed in “Guests’ reviews” page. The reservation button is very visible, and it is attract attention. Photo gallery section shows photos of rooms & suites, breakfast room and restaurant. In addition, a visitor of hotel’s website can see a current weather forecast in Prague. Website has a mobile version.

Hotel has a page on Facebook. Facebook statistics:

Number of followers – 488

Rating – 4.6

Reviews – 59

### **Description of Deminka Palace Hotel and a website**

Deminka Palace Hotel is a four-star hotel located in a historical building in the center of Prague. Capacity of a hotel is 32 rooms. Room types are Super Double, Junior Suite and Royal Suite. Hotel has a bar and a restaurant. Bar is located in a lobby, where guests can enjoy Italian coffee in the mornings and cocktails in the evening. The Restaurant Demínka is well known to most people living in Prague.

Apart from a small interruption, it has been in operation since 1886 and it is one of the oldest running restaurants in Prague.

Hotel’s website states, “In the heart of Prague just behind the National Museum, the Deminka Palace represents the meeting point between history and modernity, art and wellness, past and future.”

Since January 2010, Deminka Palace has been the official partner of the` State Opera of Prague. An ideal place for all artists, hotel's historical house usually hosts musicians, singers, dancers and directors of the Czech State Opera Orchestra.

Website of a hotel is similar to Assenzio Hotel' website. It is presented in six languages – Czech, English, Italian, Russian, German and French.

Website introduces visitors to hotel's facilities, history and location. Photo gallery shows pictures of hotel, rooms & suites, bar and restaurant Deminka. By using only one click, it is possible to make a reservation or sign up for a newsletter. Mobile version of a hotel's website is available for clients with mobile phones or tablets.

Hotel has pages on Facebook. Facebook statistics:

Number of followers – 1041

Rating – 4.3

Reviews – 142

In conclusion, Assenzio Hotel and Deminka Palace Hotel are accommodation for mostly leisure tourists. They are located near city center of Prague. Hotels have all necessary for a comfortable stay of guests.

### **Interview with employee of a hotel, who is in charge of social networks**

Luigi Pagliacci is a General Manager of Assenzio Hotel Prague and Deminka Palace. Both hotels have a Facebook page. There is a YouTube channel called “Yes Club Prague” and this club is located in Deminka Palace. LinkedIn is considered to be used soon.

Recently there has been no updating on both Facebook pages, due to timing and no employees to work with social networks. Nevertheless, the focus is on Facebook. Social networks' pages are not analyzed due to no posting.

In Mr. Pagliacci's opinion, it is enough to post on social media once per week.

The target audience is a young generation up to 30 years old. It is leisure clients, no families and business guests.

Google Analytics is used for a websites of hotels. Management uses Google+.

Mr. Pagliacci does not know about SocialBakers, Hootsuite and neither Buffer.

Luigi Pagliacci thinks that the best social network for promoting a business is Facebook. Instagram is also a good tool for promotion. Pictures are creating a better view than text. Facebook is a communication tool with guests and potential clients. It can be used instead of e-mails.

Use of social networks is all about passing emotions and experience.

YouTube channel is a great idea, but not all the people are willing to spend even a minute on watching a video.

Facebook page can create image and brand of a hotel.

Facebook can be used as well to keep up with reviews. Firstly, people leave comments on TripAdvisor. Secondly, hotel's website and social networks.

Posts from guests are important. Most of the people are sharing only when they travel. By adding a location or a hashtag, it is easy to see what guests like or dislike about hotel.

Website is important for a business. Mr. Pagliacci states "Photos are the most important part of a website. People are not spending their time on reading. Due to that fact, photos are helpful to attract a client."

Mr. Pagliacci uses Google advertising for his hotels. Google has a special advertisement for hotels. Hotel Ads drive traffic and bookings to a site by putting hotel's ad front and center when travelers are ready to book. Hotel Ads appear globally on google.com and Google Maps, wherever travelers are shopping for hotels – on desktop, tablet and mobile devices.

Smartphone and tablets are the future for bookings. Even nowadays, many people are using mobile devices to choose and book an accommodation. That is why it is important to have a website with mobile version.

**Analyze of social networks' pages**

- Presence

Hotels have pages on Facebook.

- Visibility

Guests can find links to pages on hotels' websites.

- Activity

There is no frequent activity on Facebook pages of both hotels.

- Engagement

Due to no posting, there is no engagement with followers.

### **Conclusion**

The example of Assenzio Hotel Prague and Deminka Palace Hotel shows that not every hotel is trying to use social networks for increasing number of direct bookings. The main idea for them is to use it for being visible and to stay in communication with guests. Now hotels' pages activity is low. Nevertheless, they have already a base and a number of people, who are following them. Therefore, when the hotels' management will have time and employees to work with social media, it will work for them.

Hypothesis for Assenzio Hotel Prague and Deminka Palace Prague is «Not all of the hotels in Prague are willing to put a lot of effort into social networks» There are might be several reasons for that. Including, not enough time, employees to work with networks and not seeing opportunities, which will arise with use of social networks.

## **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendations for hotels on social networks' use**

Social Media can play an important role in marketing, messaging, and customer interaction. Social media together with the hospitality industry can make a great pair. Nevertheless, it is unfortunate that very few hotels actually know how to work with it. As a result, the strategies for social media undertaken by the hotels are full of mistakes, which results in countless number of missed opportunities.

One common mistake that hotel tend to make is insufficient social media visibility for the property. Sometimes hotels hide the social media presence without realizing the non-intended action. It defeats the purpose of how social media is meant to affect a business. The property may have Twitter and Facebook account, but without any indication, these guests may not even have known the property has a social media account. Therefore having visibility or some form of in-house literature such as newsletters, in-room feedback cards, and bills from F&B Outlet or reception to inform the guest on the social media presence, would be an advantage to encourage the existing customers to join the hotels' social media network.

Some hotels' website have social media widgets that are either non-existing or the icons too small for the eyes of the customers. However, if widgets are not placed strategically, be it too small or barely noticeable, then it also defeats the purpose. Social media is about connecting with the customers and enabling a two-way conversation, and widgets should be placed at the strategic location on the website.

### **Facebook**

Two effective ways to use Facebook for a business. Firstly, community building by creating conversations, driving awareness and increasing their fan base. Second, marketing and promotion tool: through the building of a community, they have the opportunity to market and promote their products, services and events. Use Facebook as a marketing and promotion tool can be useful in driving traffic to a website.

Posts should be short, between 100 and 250 characters, or visual, pictures and videos get 120% more engagement.

Tips for a Facebook page:

- Set up a Facebook URL that reflects the business name;

- Follow up with fans comments and answer them;
- Post engaging questions or polls;
- Link other Social post about 2 interesting topics related to their business regularly;
- Find and like 5 new pages at the start;
- Tag people/pages in the posts;
- Ask people to comment, like, or share posts.

## **Twitter**

When creating a business Twitter account, few things are good to do first, to ensure the company a good start. Before posting any tweet, it is good to take the time to observe people on Twitter and especially to understand the ways people talk about your company, as Twitter is a great medium to have conversations.

Tips for Twitter:

- Retweet two interesting tweets per day, retweeting being an essential part of the way people hold conversations on Twitter, to show to their followers that they are interesting which is a good way to build relationships;
- Follow 10 new people per week, which helps to get more followers, especially users that follow the tourism industry's experts;
- Write at least three new tweets every day. Those can be business related, promotional, something fun and interesting, and so on;
- Use hashtags;
- Link to the Twitter account on the company website so that customers visiting the website can know about the Twitter account;
- Recently Twitter add possibility of polls. Therefore, if there is nothing to post, it is possible to create poll. "What do you like most about our hotel? What do you like most about Prague?" It is easy to do, and something new to followers.

## **Google +**

Google+ is a way to connect with customers for hotels. Moreover, it makes the accommodation more findable on Google search.

When creating the accommodation's page it is good to fill the information sections with as much details as possible, as it will be directly linked to Google+ Local, Google Map and all other Google tools.

Tips to follow when starting with Google+:

- To add 5 new people to the Circles each week;
- Attending public Google+ Hangouts hosted by the hospitality and tourism industry experts in order to build relationships and expand the company web presence;
- Share content at least twice per day;
- Linking all the social media used by the company using the “Recommended Links” section, so that Google+ followers can find the company on other social media;
- Make sure the posts are always set to “Public” in order to reach maximum users;
- Add people to Circles;
- Add link to website;
- Post regularly and keep up the e-marketing efforts in order to secure the SEO benefits that come along with popularity on Google+. Google+ is part of Google, and that Google is the most important search engine in the world.

## **Pinterest**

Using Pinterest can have many benefits for an accommodation. Pinterest drives traffic and sales. It allows the hotel to highlight special offers and events, provide rooms and service information. Moreover, improves hotel's website search rankings.

When starting with Pinterest, there are few essential things to do. First, write a hotel's description. Second, set a profile picture, it can be a logo or a photo of property. Thirdly, to link back to the website and add an icon of Pinterest to a website. Lastly, interesting and appropriate pinboards should be created.

Tips to raise users' interest and get potential customers follow the pinboards:

- Follow 5 new interesting and inspiring pin boards each week from other users related to the tourism industry;
- To add one new board with at least 6 new pins each week;

- Always use keywords in the pin descriptions and board titles to make users find them more easily when using the search tool;
- Link Pinterest with other social networks
- Post different things, not just rooms or services pictures.
- Experiment with pinboard styles.

## **Instagram**

Instagram is an ideal social network from a point of photos. In hospitality, photos play an essential role. Guests want to see how hotel's rooms look like, what food are offered at the restaurant and what other facilities hotel has.

Starting an Instagram account is simple. It is important to choose an account name, ideally, it should be a hotel's name and it should be the same as for other social networks. Add a short description of a hotel and as a profile picture logo or photo of a hotel.

There are many ideas for photos. From simple photos of hotel and restaurant to behind the scenes photos. It could be employees at work, new menu items, and guests enjoying their stay, and local scenery and activities.

Important part is location, include it to each post. It helps to promote hotel's destination and photos becoming searchable.

Use hashtags. Create hashtags for a hotel and include them in posts along with other popular and relevant hashtags. Three or four hashtags per post is enough. Hashtags can be based on a hotel's name, chain name and destination.

Engage with followers and other users. Create contests, share guests' photos and comment. Add icon or link to the hotel's website and social networks. Guests should be aware that hotel is using Instagram.

Ideas for post on social networks

Short posts can be in many languages. If hotel has a Russian/Spanish/ French stuff, they can translate one phrase and this way even if Russian person knows English, he/she will be glad to see something in his/her native language. Even though sometimes there is a possibility, "see translation".

Posts related to F&B Outlet. Bar has a new cocktail. Post can be like this "Come and try our new signature cocktail"

When there is nothing to post, maybe it is a good idea to post information about hotel's rooms and even hotel's stuff. For example, this is our concierge Zuzana, she is always happy to see you in our hotel and provide you with all necessary information.

As well, posts can be like this, "You also can find us on Twitter/LinkedIn and Pinterest and links to social networks.

## 5. CONCLUSION

After a thorough review, the conclusion can be made. Each hotel is different from another. Art Nouveau Palace Hotel is at the beginning of development in social networks. Even though, the results could be seen already. The focus of management is on Facebook page. The goal is to be visible and to bring new direct reservations. After following the recommendations, changes were made and hotel started to get results. By continuing and keeping eye on new trends, Art Nouveau Palace Hotel will achieve bigger results.

The Emblem Hotel Prague is a hotel with a perfect strategy and reputation in social networks. Management of the hotel knows what to do, they are aware of trends and companies, which can help. They are developing their pages and being an up-to-date hotel. Assenzio Hotel Prague and Deminka Palace Hotel have pages on Facebook. Nevertheless, they are not active on social networks. Management of hotels has no time or employees to work with social networks. Therefore, hotels are still visible on Internet, and guests can find them. It will be easier to start posting and promoting a hotel, when the base is already done.

Each hotel has their own reasons to use social networks. One main reason can be related to all of the hotels. This reason is visibility. Nowadays it is important to be online, so hotels are following the trend. The second reason to engage with social media is to increase number of direct bookings. Two hotels out of four believe that social networks are tool for this.

Social media is undeniably important in the modern travel industry. It is a benefit for hotels to use them. No matter is it just to be visible, to get new direct reservations, or to stay in touch with guests and potential clients.

Nowadays before travelling people are searching about destination, hotel, entertainment and related subjects online. Social networks are part of a search engine for travelers. Using a location of a city/hotel/restaurant/ museum person can make an opinion about place, while looking at photos and reading comments and descriptions.

Hotel's pages on social networks might be very useful for guests. If a page is diverse, only by viewing one page on Facebook, guest can find out about hotel itself, city in which it is located, and events, which are taking, place now. Information on a page might be different and related to many topics connected with hotel and city.

Hoteliers should not forget about reviews. Nowadays people are sharing almost everything with their followers. By being active on social networks, is easier to keep an eye on reviews, comments and suggestions from guests.

Some travelers are using social networks not just for inspiration but also for planning a trip. Search engine is a part of every social media platform. Nowadays people are using Facebook, Instagram and different social networks for a search instead of Google, Yahoo or Bing.

The best solution for hotels is to engage with many social networks. By having pages on several networks, the more people can follow, know about and interact with a hotel. Facebook is a number one social network for a business. First reason is an audience; Facebook has a bigger number of active users among all social networks. Secondly, it is a diverse social engine; possibility of posts is big, it can be a text, video, audio, photo, poll, questionnaire, links to websites and much more. Lastly, the reputation of Facebook as good social network for marketing a business. Facebook offers many possibilities for a business to promote it free.

Effective and efficient use of social network is a hard work, but it will bring results. Nowadays, more than ever, social networks are a brilliant tool for staying in touch with guests, promoting a hotel and getting new direct reservations. Social networks change constantly. Therefore, it is important to be aware of changes, and to adjust hotel's strategy and content of pages.

Presence on the social media helps the company to drive more traffic on the accommodation website, increase communication with customers, improve online influence, reach more potential customers, and get higher ranking in the search engines results, thus linked to search engine optimization.

Social media such as Facebook, Twitter, TripAdvisor, Google +, and Pinterest have all together billions of members, which makes them very useful for businesses for e-marketing. For tourism companies it is a huge amount of potential customers. Moreover, all those social media are easy to use for companies and a lot can be done with them. Besides, e-marketing on social media is now growing fast. Thus, it is recommended to use social media to not be left behind. Social media will continue to develop for businesses,

and concerning hospitality companies new applications on Facebook for direct hotel bookings are appearing.

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## **7. APPENDICIES**

### **7.1 Appendix 1**

Questionnaire for employees of hotels, who are in charge of social networks

- Which social networks do you use?
- How often do you post on social networks?
- Do you have a plan when you should post or not?
- What is your target audience?
- Which programs you use to analyze pages?
- How often you analyze social networks' pages?
- Do you use Google analytics?
- Do you use Google+?
- Do you know about system called "Buffer"?
- Do you know about SocialBakers?
- Do you know about Hootsuite?
- Do you use applications? Which?
- Which social network is the best for marketing a business? Why?

Source – own processing.

### **7.2 Appendix 2**

Questions for Operation Manager of Bookassist – Mr. Jaromir Pažout.

- Why hotels should engage in social networks?
- Which social networks are the best for hotels? Why?
- How often is necessary to post on social networks?
- Which programs are necessary to use in order to analyze hotel's social networks?
- What is the best way to promote hotel's social networks pages?
- Can you tell about new websites through which hotels can sell accommodation?
- What are new trends in social networks?

Source – own processing.

