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CASE STUDIES IN SOCIAL MEDIA LISTENING AND OPTIMIZATION

Brand Karma provides social media analytics and consulting services to hospitality companies. It was founded in 2006 and operates out of Singapore, Greater China, the United States and Europe. Its clients include over 3,000 leading hotel companies around the world, such as the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group and Carlson Hotels Worldwide. The following provides descriptions of three case studies illustrating how a company like Brand Karma engages with hotels to help them protect the value and cultivate the potential of their brands. Most importantly, the case studies provide insights as to important issues in deploying successful social media strategies.

Case Study 1 – Developing a Centralized Social Media Listening Strategy for a Global Hotel Company

The client, a large international hotel company with over 1,000 properties, needed to centralize its social media listening strategy to be able to ensure rapid and measurable responses across the company's brands and properties worldwide. The company used worldwide call centres to listen to and resolve guest concerns. The client needed a solution that would allow individual call centre employees to quickly find and bring up data of properties or brands they were searching for. This called for a social media listening tool with a customized interface and

scalable backend. Brand Karma developed the system after aligning it with current workflows and the specific needs of the hotel group. The hotel group employees are now able to understand and articulate social media trends about how guests felt about the brands and strategic hotel properties.

Case Study 2 – Designing a Comprehensive Social Media Strategy

A leading five-star hospitality company based in Asia decided to carefully consider and develop its social media strategy before rolling it out. It did not want to make the same mistakes many brands had during the early days of social media – putting pages up overnight with no clear idea of the strategy or business objectives behind them. Part of the careful deployment was to train employees according to their role in the organization including property GMs, sales and marketing directors, revenue managers, eCommerce managers, operations directors, and corporate and regional executives so that they could understand how social media impacted their daily work. To make the social media data derived from Brand Karma’s listening tool more relevant, it was linked to external business data feeds, including solicited guest satisfaction data, web traffic, online bookings and RevPAR trends. The deployment of the strategy was successful. The company is now able to deliver frequent bookings and strong PR through its social media activities.

Case Study 3 – Using Social Media to Overcome Crises

The tourism industry in Thailand has been particularly challenged in recent years due to political unrest and natural disasters that dampened travel demand. Even in the luxury space, average daily rates have fallen. The client in this case was a new independent designer resort in Thailand faced with the challenge of securing customer recognition of its product quality.

Using Brand Karma Analytics data, the property's marketing team with the help of Brand Karma was able to identify key property attributes and matched these to travel personas. The two companies then collaborated on an intelligent social advertising campaign targeted at customers who recognized the value of the hotel's product and service levels. The campaign resulted in a 49:1 revenue return on social advertising expenditure, successfully raised the resort's average daily rate and drove on-property ancillary expenditures, and achieved a consistent top 3 rank of the hotel in its market on prominent social media sites. Further, together the teams were able to develop customized packages and offerings that emphasized the resort's social media differentiators.

Conclusion

The case studies show how the right analytics tools can provide important data needed as input for branding strategy decisions. However, they also illustrate that simply buying a ready-made technological solution is not enough. Further, the case studies stress that social media is not an add-on advertising strategy but should involve all aspects of the company and needs to be aligned with strategic objectives. Most importantly, the case studies provide evidence that social media strategies, if done right, can have great impacts on the company brand and enhance performance of the company.