

Social Reviews for Right Hotel Selection



INTRODUCTION

In this age of internet driven market, hotel guests do voice their opinions within a matter of minutes. These reviews can make or break a hotel's reputation based on the customer reviews. Given the extensive use of social media there are a lot of benefits a company can accrue like maintaining brand perception, encourage satisfied customers to speak good about the brand and offering immediate response to a bad experience.

Through social media, hotels can maintain and grow their digital footprint, gain valuable insights about customer's expectation which will enable hotels to offer a personalized and contextual customer experience which will lead to competitive differentiation.

According to a survey conducted by Phocuswright (leading travel industry research company),

- More than half of global respondents make a decision of booking only after they go through the reviews.
- 77 percent of the respondents go through the reviews on TripAdvisor before making a hotel booking.
- 87 percent of the respondents felt impressed when the hotel management responded to a bad review.
- 80 percent of the respondents would read at least 6 to 12 reviews before making up their mind on a particular hotel.

THE CHALLENGE

For a hotel business with regard to social reviews is that there are multiple platforms like social networking sites, blogs and forums and websites where in customers express their opinions. To aggregate data (reviews) from all the above sources and analyzing or inferring in quick time is a challenge in itself.

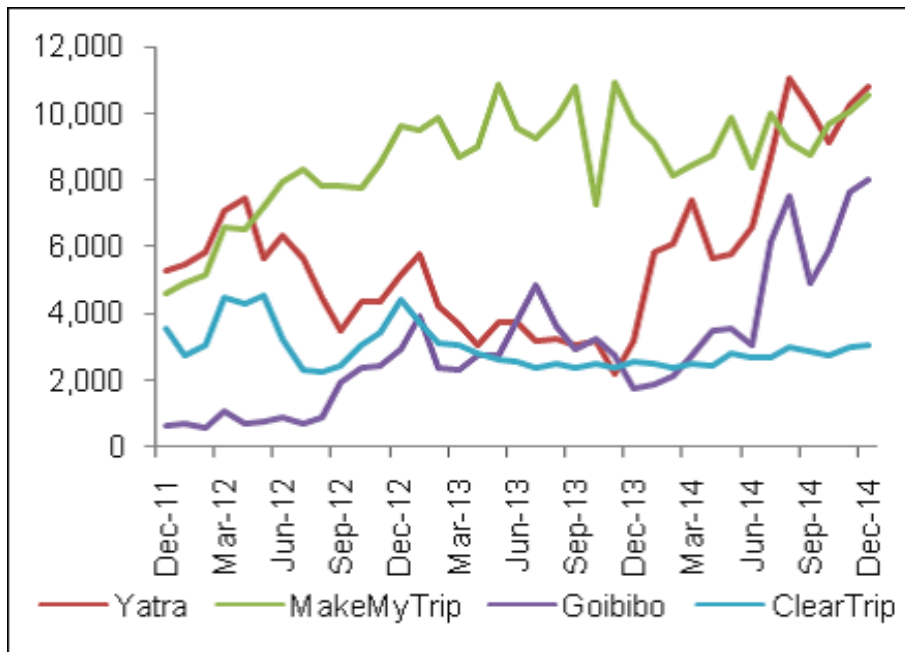
Customer Analytics is a core aspect for the Hotel business and the volume of content generated by customers across all platforms is simply huge To derive any kind of value out of the content is quite a tedious task if not impossible, but with the use of an analytical tool, the process of analyzing the content and deriving actionable insights becomes effortless.

FACT

“Online hotel booking in India to hit \$1.8 billion by 2016”

- Google

UNIQUE VISITORS IN THOUSANDS



Source: MakeMyTrip Investor Presentation, Industry Sources, ComScore

This shows the online presence of customers belonging to the Travel Industry which will only grow YoY indicating huge growth potential in the Hotel Business.

SOLUTION

Keeping the needs of travelers in mind, PRISM is geared to aggregate reviews and discovers sentiments and scoring at an 'attribute' level. Imagine being able to look for best rated hotels based on 'food quality', or 'location', zooming in on a few choices, and directly being able to read the comments that people have made about these attributes. From spending hours reading reviews of each hotel option, you zoom in on the attribute that matters to you the most, go directly to the relevant part of the review, and make a decision. What could have taken hours can now be done in minutes, thanks to PRISM.

HOW IT WORKS

The PRISM engine can store reviews in chronological order. The cutting edge sentiment analysis technology then goes through the reviews, digging deep into each sentence, to determine what is being said about the hotel.

Let us take an example. Let us pick up some sentences from a typical review.

“The location is excellent, but the rooms are small.”

The reviewer has made two observations about the hotel, and in the same sentence. One is about location (positive), the other about rooms (negative) PRISM’s advanced analytical engine automatically performs the following analyses:

- ⊙ Recognizes the two attributes being discussed
- ⊙ Allocating sentiments to the two attributes (positive for location, negative for rooms)
- ⊙ Assigns scores to the sentiments, e.g. the location may be assigned a score of +3, while the rooms may be given a -2
- ⊙ Allows a rollup of attributes under major heads. For example, if another reviewer talks about the shower being dirty, the engine can roll up shower as a subset of the category ‘room’, and assign a negative score to both ‘shower’ and consequently, to ‘room’. This allows a user to zoom in from major categories to sub-heads in a matter of 2-3 clicks
- ⊙ Provide a trend analysis of ratings over time, so that the user may assign higher weight age to comments that are more recent (imagine walking into a hotel based on fantastic ratings, only to find that over the last two months, it is undergoing repairs and is filled with noise and dust!)
- ⊙ Based on the rollup, assign an overall rating to the hotel as well, apart from assigning a rating to each attribute

THE TECHNOLOGY AT WORK

PRISM uses advanced sentiment analysis techniques, based on a combination of machine learning and proprietary techniques to identify customer reviews about specific attributes and highlight them. The technology does not require a pre-built taxonomy to be used. In other words, the features need not be pre-supplied by a user for analysis – they are automatically picked up by the engine from the comments. In the above example, 'location' or 'rooms' need not have been pre-defined for the engine to identify them as attributes of a hotel and assign a score to them.

This feature makes the engine extremely powerful, versatile and flexible, making the user experience extremely intuitive.

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