



Heads in Beds: Hospitality and Tourism Marketing

By Ivo Raza

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This practical book provides guidelines and tips about travel and tourism marketing that can be put to immediate use. *Heads in Beds* gives insight into achieving best results by demystifying many misconceptions about marketing. Focusing on the practical side of managing hospitality and tourism marketing, this text includes several topics not covered *anywhere else*—marketing to travel agents, COOP marketing with wholesalers, and loyalty marketing. It provides readers with solid advice and strong direction. *Heads In Beds* is a book written for practitioners by a practitioner. So whether you are just starting a new job, a general manager, sales and marketing director, or a seasoned veteran looking for methods to increase your yield, the material in this book will help you manage the marketing function and generate better results. Other relevant job titles include: VPs and Directors of promotions, sales, destinations, and tourism, as well as hotel operators or innkeepers.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

In *Heads in Beds: Hospitality and Tourism Marketing*, author Ivo Raza teaches the reader how to build brands, generate sales and grow profits through marketing. Written for students as well as practitioners, this book is based on eight principles that the author teaches and brings to life:

- **Branding:** generate sales through strong brands
- **Knowledge:** the more you know, the more you'll grow
- **Results:** long-term strategies solve short term needs
- **Big Picture:** it's not about style versus substance, it's about substance armed with style
- **Creative Budgeting:** outthink versus outspend
- **Happiness:** enjoy what you're doing
- **Dare To:** be different!
- **Success:** compete with yourself for your own excellence

Heads in Beds: Hospitality and Tourism Marketing contains extensive discussions and practical information about the marketing job, markets and products, marketing budgets, branding, advertising, creation of brochures and collateral materials, promotions and public relations, Internet marketing, and several key topics not found in other resources such as:

- Marketing to Travel Agents
- COOP Marketing with Wholesalers
- Loyalty Marketing

About the Author

Ivo Raza is a branding consultant and founder of Brandhaus, a full-service marketing agency that specializes in integrated marketing solutions for hospitality, travel, and tourism clients. He has developed brand strategies, directed advertising campaigns, and managed marketing projects for a variety of companies and brands including Allegro Resorts, Viva Wyndham Resorts, Karisma Hotels, El Dorado Resorts, Jack Tar Village Resorts, Occidental Hotels, Royal Hideaway, Schick, Blue Diamond, Kraft Foods, Boston Beer, and others. For seven years, Ivo was in charge of marketing at Allegro, which he helped grow into the largest chain of all-inclusive resorts. His professional mantra is: "Don't out-spend. Out-brand." He lives in Miami, Florida, and may be reached at ivo@brandhaus.net.

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The purpose of marketing is to build brands, generate sales, and increase profits. This is my personal belief and the mantra of *Heads in Beds*. Whether you are a hospitality student, innkeeper, general manager, corporate director of marketing, director of tourism for a destination, the company's chief marketing officer, or someone who is simply interested in the marketing of hospitality, the principles and practices covered in this book should be relevant. Its premise is based on the following eight beliefs:

1. Branding: The best way of generating strong sales is by building strong brands. The beauty of

branding is that when it is done properly, it works. Actually, it works so well that it is regrettable that so few companies do it right. Instead of employing a knowledge-based approach based on empirical data, creativity, and guts, companies unfortunately often dabble in dilettantish pseudoprofessional activities based on personal tastes, opinions, and company politics. Pair this with a lack of return-on-investment accountability, the ambiguity surrounding branding, and the corporate fear of dealing with brands' emotional properties, and you'll end up with the current garden variety of me-too brands.

Nevertheless, in our world of parity products, marketing in general and branding in particular have become the main determining factors in the success of companies. This does not only apply to huge marketers such as Toyota, which through intelligent branding introduced Lexus (a new brand—not an extension!). It also applies to many giants of today that have not been around for very long and have succeeded in a short period of time due to well-planned, well-executed branding strategies; Nike, Starbucks, Swatch, Amazon, Expedia, Travelocity and Yahoo come to mind. But branding is not limited to large companies. The principles of branding apply to the smallest operators just as much as to the mega brands. Study good branding, use it to your advantage, and your sales will grow. Strong brands have strong relationships with their consumers and generate strong profits.

2. Knowledge: The more you know, the more you'll grow. The best marketing is based on knowledge, and the only way to acquire knowledge is by doing your homework. The best creative ideas are not possible otherwise. You may occasionally stumble over a brilliant thought, but you will not be able to create good ideas acid deliver results continuously unless you make a conscious effort to educate yourself as well as your organization.

Don't mistake experience for knowledge, however. It is fairly easy to gain experience; stay at the same job for 20 years and you'll have it. But that won't automatically make you a guru. Practice alone doesn't make perfect. If you commit yourself to becoming an expert in your area, you'll produce better results faster. Thus, you'll do smarter marketing, which will help you grow personally, grow, stronger brands, and grow your profits.

3. Results: The right long-term strategy solves short-term needs. In a world of instant gratification and quarterly results, it is painfully difficult to embrace a long-term approach, yet no great achievements have been accomplished without it. In reality, your entire professional life is a long-term project. And your biggest challenge is to make everything you do part of that long-term campaign instead of jumping from one short-term project to another (also know as "putting out fires").

The long-term marketing approach is by its nature proactive; you will be recognizing patterns of behavior, thus gaining knowledge and insight. Then you'll develop long-term (and mid-term) strategies, which will be executed through actions that will deliver continuous (and immediate, i.e., short-term) results over extended periods of time, subject to continuous learning, monitoring, and tweaking.

The short-term approach, on the other hand, focuses totally on immediate issues or situations that need rapid tactical solutions. Approaching marketing only with short-term, immediate actions is like trying to lose weight without a long-term commitment. You may have days when you do not eat anything and exercise for 10 hours, but the result will be major fatigue and no visible effect. If, however, you commit to eating well every day and exercising regularly, the results will come. And, as a bonus, by being (and staying) in shape for the long term, you'll easily be able to overcome short periods of inactivity or consumption of fatty foods.

I know that it is especially difficult to champion a long-term strategy in an industry in which the entire inventory expires every 24 hours. At some point in his or her career, everyone will be faced with the short-term need to increase occupancy for next month by 22%. However, when you start with a strong long-term

strategy, short-term problems will be easy to handle and will be solved successfully. You will have mechanisms in place that will allow you to achieve short-term goals, and you will have an ongoing positive momentum in the market, along with a strong brand, which will help you bridge difficult periods, deliver immediate results, and increase your sales over the long run.

4. Big picture: It's not about style versus substance, it's about substance armed with style. For some strange reason, the marketing community is missing the bigger picture by belonging to one of two schools of thought or conviction: style versus substance, form versus function, suits versus creatives, visual versus verbal. How about seeing the bigger picture, folks? How about creating a lethally powerful campaign by arming substance with style, by using a timeless visual and immortalizing it with outstanding copy? I'm talking about enlightened strategic creativity here. We all have a left as well as a right side of the brain; we have to use them both. In today's competitive environment, I don't know how I could survive without employing both sides. As a matter of fact, there are no "both sides." All sides must be on my side. The only one allowed on the other side is my competition. Let them debate whether form follows function and whether to focus on the sizzle or the steak. You've got to see the bigger picture. Your form must strengthen your function. You've got to sell the sizzle *and* the steak.

5. Creative budgeting: Outthink versus outspend. When it comes to marketing budgets, my belief is: outthink versus outspend. Creative marketing doesn't have to be wasteful. Vast budgets and lack of accountability have resulted in the perception of marketing as an expense rather than an investment. This is the main reason why marketing is often deemed dispensable when budget cuts are necessary. Don't get me wrong. Good money must be invested in marketing; otherwise, your company will never achieve the necessary critical mass. But there's a huge difference between smart allocation and splurging. Call me a budgetary Spartan if you will, but I feel very comfortable knowing that I have squeezed the most marketing action out of every single marketing dollar. If you create systems that enable you to truly maximize your available budget, not only will you look good to your board of directors, but your sales will grow. A caveat here: Beware of the bean-counter syndrome. If your company is run by accountants who consider a reduction in the marketing budget as another source of revenue, you may need to remind them of Thornton Wilder, who said: "Money is like manure. If you let it pile up, it just smells. But if you spread it around wisely, you can encourage things to grow." (Things such as brands.)

6. Happiness: Enjoy what you do while you're alive, for you'll be dead a long time. Indirectly, this book is about personal happiness. Finding the right job and career is a blessing and will bring happiness and fulfillment. Confucius said it better: "Choose a job you love and you will never have to work another day in your life." To me, marketing is the only business discipline that provides an opportunity to be involved in all the aspects of any business—from creative work such as directing photo shoots and developing advertising to creating new products to more somber activities such as controlling budgets; all in all, it is enjoyable and truly rewarding work. Just make sure it is right for you.

Dare to: Be different, explore, be silly, break rules, be funny, be crazy, be smart, make mistakes. A famous bumper sticker reads: "WHY BE NORMAL?" Indeed, why? Not in the mental-institution sense, but rather in the breaking-away-from-the-usual sense. At the risk of sounding esoteric, the truth is that nothing in this world is exactly as we think it is. We just happen to believe it is so because of a variety of elements that surround us and that we have grown to accept. Often our mental boundaries are conditioned by society. But fresh thinking, entrepreneurship, and innovation have always been disruptive, not conformist. And disruption is good, provided that it is constructive. Disruption creates new views, frontiers, opportunities, and products. Making mistakes teaches us as much as studying. Unfortunately, society teaches us to conform, to play by the rules, to obey structure and keep our collective noses to the grindstone. Playing it safe, however, is not the way you build outstanding brands or have fun doing it.

8. Success: Succeed by competing with yourself for your own excellence. "Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you are right," said Henry Ford. Your success lies within you. This is not a shabby maxim to live by. All the brand-building principles apply to you as well. Think of yourself as a brand and follow the same steps you would follow with any other brand. What does the brand called YOU stand for? What are its strengths, positioning, strategy? What makes YOU different from any other brand? Why should someone pay more for brand YOU than any other? Then, once you have developed your strategy, don't waste too much time measuring yourself against others. The only way to truly succeed is by competing with yourself for your own excellence. The Austrian psychologist Viktor Frankl said it brilliantly in the preface to his book *Man's Search for Meaning*: "Don't aim at success—the more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue . . . as the unintended side effect of one's personal dedication to a course greater than oneself."

WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM *HEADS IM BEDS*?

This book was not written for a specific type of hospitality marketer, but rather for anyone responsible for (or interested in) marketing hospitality, tourism, and travel products. However, a basic familiarity with the terminology and concepts is required. So, if you are completely new to the topic, you should read it along with an introductory textbook on hospitality sales, marketing, and operations.

Heads in Beds is a book written for practitioners by a practitioner. So, whether you are a hospitality student, just starting a new job, a general manager, a sales and marketing director, or a seasoned veteran looking for methods to increase your yield, the material in this book will help you manage the marketing function and generate better results.

Miguel de Cervantes wrote: "There is no book so bad but something good may be found in it." I hope that "something good" from this one results in stronger brands, better sales, and bigger profits.

HOW THIS BOOK CAME TO BE

You have noticed by now that I am a strong believer in marketing and branding. I actually believe that branding is the key differentiating factor in any industry, and especially in hospitality, travel, and tourism. This is why I felt compelled to write *Heads in Beds*.

The initial idea for this book was conceived in 1996, when I joined Allegro Resorts Corporation and realized that I had no clue about what it would take to market a hospitality product. I had good experience in consumer products marketing, advertising, and branding, but knew nothing about hotels or hospitality distribution. I had never worked in a hotel or any type of hospitality company, and ADR meant no more than F & B.

A futile search for good hands-on literature about hospitality marketing turned up only Philip Kotler, John Bowen, and James Makens' excellent textbook *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism*. But I needed something more than a textbook; I needed a book that would provide practical advice and insider information on most aspects of the hospitality marketing job. I needed a book that would help me shorten my learning curve. When I finally gave up the search, I vowed that some day I would write a hospitality marketing book for people in similar situations.

Fast forward to late 1999: I started writing *Heads in Beds*. After a few months I had written several chapters, which made me realize that some day I might actually finish it. And what's the purpose of finishing a book if it doesn't get published? So I started looking for a publishing agent, which was a major undertaking in itself. But I got lucky. My book idea seemed intriguing to Dianne Littwin, and we made an agreement. A few weeks

later, she had several interested publishers and I signed on with Prentice Hall.

In CONCLUSION

This book contains nothing about franchising, timesharing, and other hospitality topics that are either covered extensively in other books or unfamiliar to me. It is not a book of rules. It is a book of concepts, principles, practices, and guidelines.

Nietzsche said that a good book is made better by good readers and clearer by good opponents. For either, my email address is ivo@brandhaus.net.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lori Thomas:

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