Tactics to Accelerate Your Hotel's Recovery

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Overview

The world is slowly reopening, and with that the hospitality industry is headed towards growth. We are already observing a strong comeback in certain segments and regions of the world, meanwhile other locations may benefit from pent-up demand as soon as they reduce restrictions and open for international tourism. That being said, there are things each of us can do to navigate our way through, and out of, this altered environment.

This document provides a list of options to ensure your business is prepared to take advantage of demand now and as it increases. The suggestions below are wide ranging, so which ones will be the most appropriate for you to implement depends on your unique situation, your hotel type and market.

For the purposes of this document the strategies we share are grouped into the below 4 distinct sections:

1. Manage Segmentation Shifts

2. Utilize Direct Booking Channels

3. Utilize Other Booking Channels

4. Address Specifics Driven by System Integrations

Where a tactic requires review of existing configuration or new configuration within SynXis CR, we have included a link to the appendix of supporting resources in Sabre Hospitality University (SHU) that support execution of the strategy options.

Manage Segmentation Shifts

Not all segments and markets are returning at the same pace. While you may have relied on certain segments or markets pre-COVID, it is key to recognize the current (and upcoming) segments and markets that are providing volume and revenue and focus your strategy around these groups. To help you get started, here is an overview list of items to evaluate:

Offering:
- What are you doing to focus on trending segments that you may not have depended on before?
- What can you do to gain short-term and long-term occupancy from these segments/markets?
- Which amenities do you have that may be attractive to these trending segments/markets?
- Are you promoting amenities and facilities for these audiences?
- What else do you need to be able to properly support these trending segments?
- Does your revenue strategy support these market segments?
- Does your content and room descriptions highlight these offers?

Competition:
- Do you know what the comp set is doing (price, promotions, content, etc.)?
- Have you evaluated changes in who is now in your comp set and who is no longer in your comp set?
- What are they doing differently and how can you learn from them to ensure you stay competitive?
- Are there new platform opportunities for your hotel?

Optimization for the Leisure Travel Market

Product Strategy

1. Solidify your packaged offerings
   a. Create unique experience offerings that include:
      i. Museums and landmarks
      ii. Wineries, distilleries, and food tours
      iii. Additional interesting local activities and businesses
   b. Create a search optimized travel guide on your brand website and have employees list their favorite things to do; Embed links in the guide that tie back to package offers on your website
   c. Create a list of "safety approved" partners to reassures potential guests that there are safe things to do around town.
2. Consider adding activities on property for guests while off-site entertainment options are limited. For example:
   a. Trivia or bingo night
   b. Cooking workshops
   c. Craft tutorials

Rate Strategy

1. Determine your rate strategy goals – increase LOS, upsell, increase ancillary spending, increase bookings from target segments
2. Reduce the number of discounts offered by applying profitable short-term promotions on the right channels
3. Consider opportunities for dynamic or add-on packages
4. Provide flexibility on booking policies

Distribution / Retailing Strategy

1. Review room and rate descriptions across all channels and consider using bullet point lists to make content more easily consumed
2. Ensure your descriptive content showcases relevant amenities for your property
3. Verify that all content (descriptive and visual) matches the trending market segments
4. Add easily accessible descriptions about the hotel's safety and cleaning protocols, including brand names of products used
5. Create booking urgency for promotions or packages across all channels
6. Adopt the new OpenTravel Alliance features and amenities that showcase your heightened safety protocols

Fulfillment Strategy

1. Evaluate how can you use the leisure segment demand to drive longer length of stays at your property - consider LOS promo rates
2. Reassess your comp set – it may have changed since the pandemic:
   a. Update your competitive or SWOT analysis and adjusting your room and other descriptive content if required
   b. Shop (your updated) comp set and other local hotels to observe what they are offering in terms of retail, discounting, and promotions
   c. Utilize the Smith Travel Accommodations Report (STAR) to assist in your comp set update and evaluation

      d.   Based on your findings, consider adjusting your <u>rate</u> or <u>merchandising</u> strategies, but avoid competing in a race to the bottom – stay competitive

3. As demand peaks and falls make sure to provide flexibility in <u>policies</u>
   a. Policy assignment makes it easy to change policies by period
   b. Staggered policies allow for additional control when a booking is modified or cancelled
   c. Verify your marketing and content (cancellation policies, <u>cancel emails, confirmation emails</u>, etc.) supports flexibility and encourages rebooking
4. Consider adding a <u>payment processing</u> provider that offers an installment payment option
5. Utilize your social platforms to keep your audience engaged, even if some are not comfortable traveling yet
6. Collaborate with local venues to promote packaged offers (venue tickets plus hotel) or advertise a percentage off BAR for anyone who books with the hotel and shows the tickets at check-in

Optimization for the Business Travel Market

1. Create <u>rates</u> and direct <u>booking links</u> to your SynXis Booking Engine for any new clients
2. Stay engaged with past and potential corporate guests – many companies are deal shopping now for long-term contracts
3. Partner with local medical facilities on staff housing needs
4. Develop rates and promotions around day bookings for those that are looking for an alternative and quiet space to work
5. Consider working with airline crews. Airline crews have been going out to bid since March of 2020, even if they have an existing contract in place. Under normal circumstances, downtown locations always had the preference since there was so much more to do. Now quieter locations with green space that are within a reasonable distance from airport are being considered.
   a. If you currently have a crew, maintain a close relationship to prevent them from leaving
   b. If you do not have crew business and have formerly been left out of consideration, there may be an opportunity today

Optimization for the Group Market

1. Adjust your approach towards targeting <u>smaller business meetings and groups</u>
2. Create flexible options including indoor/outdoor combined spaces and
3. Harness AV capabilities to assist those looking for dual in-person and virtual group
4. Reduce cancellations by centering deals around moving events to future dates
5. Maintain your relationships with local event planners – they are planning future events now
6. Consider offering your hotel's inventory as an additional quarantine/staging facility. Work with local government or businesses to identify potential in your market
7. Explore short-term groups looking for quarantine spaces for either before or after travel and/or events such as sports teams, construction crews and the entertainment industry.

Utilize Direct Booking Channels

With travel picking back up it is important to take some time to review all your application settings and booking flow to optimize the guest booking experience and conversion rates.

SynXis Booking Engine (or your brand website)

Descriptive Content
1. Ensure your Covid-19 cleaning procedures are updated
2. Include details on additional health and safety measures your hotel is incorporating in the descriptions

Images
1. Evaluate the order of your hotel images, placing lifestyle images first
2. Highlight leisure images over business images in the carousel and adjust this priority as market segments shift
3. Update your hero image to a lifestyle image such as people dining in your restaurants or a family having a good time – avoid any images of large groups

Retailing Strategies
1. Consider adjusting sort order to highlight pandemic-era bundled offerings like parent's getaway and family staycation promotions
2. Adjust your product segmentation carousel to present offerings differently and target booker preferences (examples: set by meal plan or experience)
3. Highlight your unique value proposition through rate offers, reputation management, rate inclusions and services
4. Partner with local business and attractions to develop leisure-oriented bundled packages and crosslink to each other's websites. Utilize direct booking links to promote on social media platforms
5. Consider using coupons to entice existing guest to return to your property
6. Build loyalty to optimize repeat business by creating an attractive loyalty program
7. Adjust your strategies based on expert input and customers feedback on why they selected your hotel and the amenities/features they enjoyed the most during their stay
8. Ensure there is internal strategy alignment regarding:
   a. Rate parity, rate strategy, and flexible booking policies that reinforce rebooking
   b. Direct channel bookings and benefits of booking direct channels
   c. Safety, so that customers will book direct

SynXis Voice Agent

1. All three sections outlined for SynXis Booking Engine above (Descriptive Content, Images, and Retailing Strategies) apply for SynXis Voice Agent and provide value that your call center agents can leverage to drive greater conversion.
2. Additionally, ensure your channelized descriptions for the Voice Channel empower your call agents (especially agents that are not on property) to quickly internalize and use your property, room, rate and offering descriptions as selling points. Consider creating this content in a bulleted list format that put items that are most important to customers at the top of the list.

Utilize Other Booking Channels

1. Explore new channels that may provide a funnel of business for your hotel
2. Update the images used to showcase your property on all booking channels, focusing on the images that feature what travelers are looking for in a hotel now including:
   a. Leisure over business
   b. Focus on younger travelers (have indicated a higher willingness to resume travel)
   c. Activities with social distance shown (no large crowd photos)
3. Contact your Market Manager for your third-party channels:
   a. Ask for advice on what tactics they are seeing work successfully in your market
   b. Adjust descriptions to detail health and safety policies you have in place
   c. Modify cancellation policies to provide flexibility
4. Encourage your customers to complete reviews with their booking channel to share their experience of how it was staying at your property since the pandemic began
5. Review your Global Distribution Systems:
   a. Review your HOD content and descriptions
   b. Set up an optimization session with representative from your GDS channels to explore your current content, rooms and rates as well as to ask for insight on best practices
   c. Validate or establish COVID/health/safety indicators on the GDS/IDS/Channel Connect

Address Specifics Driven by Systems Integrations

1. Integration with non-SynXis systems changes your business processes.
   a. If you are RMS or RMS/PMS integrated, double-check settings:
      i. Best Available Rate (BAR)
      ii. Revenue Management Tools (for RMS integrated hotels)
      iii. Manage in an integrated environment
   b. If you are only integrated with PMS:
      i. Property connections/integrations
      ii. Manage in an integrated environment
2. If you have a rate data feed, ensure that you are receiving data for any competitors that previously suspended operations and act if needed
3. If you have a significant number of rooms unavailable for operational purposes make sure it is not artificially inflating your LRV or hurdle point
4. Remember the purpose of an RMS system is to detect trends in your data and project them forward:
   a. Since this situation is virus driven instead of trend driven, more interaction is warranted
   b. Avoid constraining your system with too many restrictions
   c. Pay attention to data cleanliness so that your RMS can drive performance when demand resurfaces

Supporting Resources

In addition to the course offerings to support adjustments to today's demand challenges, please periodically check in to take advantage of updated content and resources. As a foundation, we have several offerings available to provide you with on-demand support:

- **Application Help Pages**: Quick reference and step-action process documentation
- **Sabre Hospitality University (SHU)**: Role-based eLearning that enables each user to adapt to and optimize their use of our application based on their realm of responsibility. Additional content outside the scope of a particular role is also accessible via the search function.
- **Knowledge Base (KB) in Sabre Hospitality Community**: This includes troubleshooting documentation, specific use case, and setup guides. Links to these resources are often included in courses and on help pages where more robust and specific details may be beneficial.

Sabre Hospitality University Course Offerings

Searching the SHU is easy – just type a keyword, for example merchandising, in the search box and click on the magnifying glass icon:
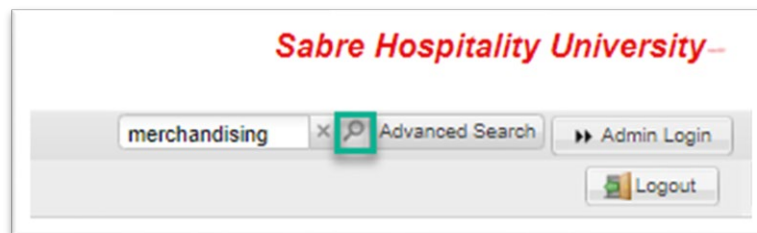
The specific SHU course names provided here correlate to the curated strategy options outlined above; for ease in locating content copy/paste the relevant text below into the SHU search tool:

- Best Available Rate (BAR) in SynXis CR
- Channel Connect
- Configure Email Templates in SynXis CR
- Configure a Non-Integrated Loyalty Program
- Configure Payment Processing in SynXis CR
- Create HOD and HCD Content
- Groups (Configuration)
- Image Management in SynXis CR
- Manage SynXis CR with PMS and RMS Integration
- Merchandising Options – Packages, Promotions, and Coupons
- Property Connections – Integrations with SynXis CR
- Revenue Management Tools
- Room Setup in SynXis CR
- Stay Restrictions
- SynXis Booking Engine with Booking Engine Designer
- Utilize the SynXis Booking Engine Designer
- SynXis CR Policies Configuration
- SynXis CR Rate Configuration & Pricing
- Utilize SynXis CR Reports