

**CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR SELF-DRIVEN
MARKETING ON SOCIAL MEDIA: A CASE STUDY
OF THE SRI LANKAN BOUTIQUE HOTEL
INDUSTRY**

H M U K Herath

149055F

Degree of Master of Business Administration
in Information Technology

Department of Computer Science & Engineering

University of Moratuwa

Sri Lanka

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Herath Mudiyansele Umesha Kumari Herath

149055F

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master
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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a Degree or Diploma in any other University or institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where the acknowledgement is made in the text.

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The above candidate has carried out research for the Masters thesis under my supervision.

Name of the supervisor:

Dr. H. M. N. Dilum Bandara

Signature of the supervisor:

Date:

ABSTRACT

Boutique hotels are adopting social media to build relationships, spread word of mouth, initiate quality engagement that will ultimately turn into bookings, and to build a brand over their competition. Such engagement on social media is considered to be attractive as they enable targeted marketing, direct customer engagement, multiple forms of engagement, low cost, and facilitates self-promotion. However, the effectiveness of social media-based market initiatives is not clear as they primarily rely on soft metrics such as the number of likes, sharing, and comments than the actual customer conversions. Moreover, it is unclear what factors to be considered when conducting social media marketing by business owners themselves. We address these problems through a case study of ten boutique hotels in Sri Lanka with strong social media presence. The research was conducted as qualitative analysis based on the Straussian grounded theory. This version of grounded theory allows a literature review for theoretical sampling, concept development, and defining properties and dimensions. Data were gathered through a set of face-to-face and telephone interviews. We found nine factors that mainly contribute to successful social media presence. Those factors include the target audience, platform for communication, mode of communication, maintaining engagement, audience reach, timing, resources, company policies and platform rules and regulations.

Keywords: Boutique hotels, Grounded theory, Social Media, Social Media Marketing, Social Presence

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBSL	Central Bank of Sri Lanka
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
SLTDA	Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority
SMM	Social Media Marketing
WWW	World Wide Web