vizlly
by leonardo

THE EVOLUTION OF FACEBOOK

What Hoteliers Need to Know to Be Successful

www.vizlly.com

2 Billion and Counting

In June 2017, Mark Zuckerberg announced that Facebook had reached a new milestone: 2 billion monthly active users. This historic feat meant that 26% of the world's population was now using Facebook to connect with friends and family.

Businesses have also benefited from the platform and its global popularity, using it to reach and connect with customers. To capitalize on its role as a marketing and advertising platform, Facebook has made significant changes and upgrades over the last 2 years; changes which impact the way businesses use Facebook.

In this eBook, we will explain Facebook's evolution from social media network to leading advertising platform, and how hoteliers can navigate these changes to ensure they're leveraging Facebook to its full potential. We'll provide best practices for how to reach and engage more travel shoppers on this platform, and tools that can help turn Facebook engagement into direct bookings for your hotel.

---

f Search   🔍   **Home**

Mark Zuckerberg ✔   🔔 Follow   ⋯
June 27 · Palo Alto, CA, United States · 🌐

As of this morning, the Facebook community is now officially 2 billion people!

We're making progress connecting the world, and now let's bring the world closer together.

It's an honor to be on this journey with you.

👍 Like   💬 Comment   ↪ Share

👍❤️😮 Victor Dias, Kate Rouch and 426K others   Top Comments ▾

11,910 Shares   24K Comments

Imas Aras Ekhas You still have 5 billion to go, I trust you will make it Mark!
Like · Reply · 👍😯❤️ 884 · June 27 at 1:09pm

  Mark Zuckerberg ✔ We still have a long way to go to connect everyone. But we must do more than just connect -- we must bring people closer together.
  Like · Reply · ❤️😯❤️ 3.9K · June 27 at 1:21pm
  ↳ View more replies

Jorge Cueto Mark, how long did it take to go from 1 billion to 2 billion?
Like · Reply · 👍😯❤️ 505 · June 27 at 1:12pm

  Mark Zuckerberg ✔ We reached 1 billion in October 2012, so a little less than five years.
  Like · Reply · 😯❤️ 5.1K · June 27 at 1:16pm
  ↳ View more replies

Dex Torricke-Barton ✔ As many people as were alive in 1927!
Like · Reply · 😯❤️ 531 · June 27 at 1:30pm

The Evolution of Facebook

When Facebook first launched in 2004, it was intended as a social networking platform for college kids. However, its popularity soon spread beyond college campuses to young people throughout the United States and around the world.

With momentum gathering, Facebook expanded its use to brands and celebrities with the introduction of Brand pages in 2007. This opened up a new way for consumers to interact with companies directly online. For brands, it meant "developing content and a voice for an entirely new channel, one that taught many of them about what resonated with current and potential customers. [Facebook] created a shift in how social media was viewed by businesses. It went from a "nice-to-have" to a "must-have" business tool." (Weaver, 2012)

Companies have been leveraging Facebook ever since as a free way to interact with their customers and grow their following. But as far back as 2009, Facebook had big plans for how businesses would eventually use Facebook; changes which have now come to fruition.

Facebook Becomes an Ad Platform

In the last two years, **Facebook has slowly transformed itself from a social network into a multi-pronged advertising platform**; one that allows advertisers and marketers to better reach their target audience, and for users to discover and interact with companies like never before.

Facebook's biggest change came in June 2016, when it announced a major update to its News Feed algorithm that would prioritize posts from friends and family over promotional posts from business pages. At the same time, Facebook also increased the number of paid ads or "boosted posts" appearing in peoples' News Feeds. This shift was a deliberate and incredibly successful one. In Q2 2017, Facebook reported $9.16 billion in advertising revenue, a 47% increase year-over-year. Facebook is now the second largest digital advertising platform behind Google, with **98% of revenue now coming from digital advertising**, and the 6th most valuable company in the world by market cap.

Despite this success, however, Facebook's CFO, David Ebersman, has warned that the amount of ads it displays to users is now reaching a saturation point. If the company wants to continue to grow, it needs to find new sources of revenue. And, surprisingly, where Facebook might see the biggest area of growth is in search.

Facebook Search

In 2014, Facebook ended its partnership with Bing as its primary search provider, and has since invested heavily in its own search capabilities. Today, users can search for just about anything in the Facebook ecosystem, including people, public posts, images and business pages. Facebook search now handles over 2 billion searches per day, up from 1.5 billion searches per day in 2015 (33% increase). This places Facebook as **the second most used search engine in the world** behind Google. Yes, even more popular than Bing and Yahoo!

Facebook's search functionality is still relatively new; therefore, all of its search results currently rank organically. In other words, pages and posts that best match the search query will rank the highest. However, this isn't likely to last long. In 2016, Google raked in a whopping $36.7 billion from search advertising, and Facebook would love to steal some of that business. So, as Facebook's search functionality continues to improve, it seems inevitable that it will start rolling out sponsored ads in search results too.

New Ways to Reach Travel Shoppers on Facebook

Facebook search gives users more reason to stay on Facebook and consume more content. For this reason, it's a good place for hoteliers to invest their time and money.

Facebook search represents a new way to reach and engage with travel shoppers online. There are currently around 60 million business pages indexed on Facebook, which can be found using the Facebook search bar or by using a separate tool called Professional Services.

Professional Services was launched by Facebook in late 2015 and is a directory that helps consumers find the best local businesses and services to fit their needs. Facebook users simply select the city and type of service they are looking for (e.g. hotels) and are given a list of results that match their criteria. Hotel results can be filtered according to price, if friends have stayed there before, or if the property is suitable for groups. Results are accompanied by guest reviews, and users can click through to the hotel's Facebook page for more information. They can even navigate directly to the hotel's booking engine if its Facebook page is set up correctly.

Facebook's Professional Services tool makes suggestions based on your search query.

Facebook's Personal Data Collection

One of the biggest advantages Facebook has over traditional search engines is the amount of data it has on its users. To understand just how much personal data Facebook owns, in 2010, Max Schrems asked Facebook to send him all of the user data it had relating to his account. Amazingly, Facebook responded and sent him a 1,200 page document! It showed that Facebook kept records of all the IP addresses from every machine Max had ever used to access Facebook, a full history of his messages, chats and status updates (including ones he had deleted), and even his "last location," which used a combination of check-ins, data gathered from apps, IP addresses, and geo-tagged uploads to work out where he was. That was 7 years ago.

Can you imagine how much data Facebook now has on Max? And the sheer size of personal data it has for its other 2 billion users? Facebook uses this data to deliver a unique search experience for every user. That means, for example, travel shoppers searching for a hotel in Toronto could see a completely different set of search results based on what Facebook knows about them.

While it may sound a little creepy, the way Facebook uses its data is actually very smart. In March 2017, it rolled out a new mobile feature called City Guides, which combines data from your Facebook friends and publicly available information to see where your friends have stayed, dined and toured in major cities around the globe. This information can be helpful when deciding where to travel, where to stay, and what to do in each city.

How to Optimize Your Facebook Page

With all of this personal data, and continuous improvements being made to Facebook search, hoteliers need to re-evaluate how they are using Facebook, and how it might help them drive more direct bookings.

Think of your Facebook page as an extension of your website. Just as you would optimize your website for traditional search engines (e.g. Google), you also need to optimize your Facebook page for Facebook search. We've identified 4 best practices to start with, to increase the visibility of your hotel's Facebook page.

1. **Set Your Page Category.** Start by setting your page category to accurately reflect your property. For most properties, this will likely be the "Hotel" category, but Facebook also allows for Resort, Inn, Lodge, Motel and Bed & Breakfast, to name a few. You can select up to 3 categories, however, only select the categories that best match your property.

2. **NAP.** NAP is an acronym for Name, Address and Phone Number. All three are important, not just for Facebook search, but for <u>SEO in general</u>. Make sure these attributes are correct on your Facebook page because Facebook and other search engines like Google will <u>cross-reference your NAP</u> to validate you are a legitimate business.

3. **Customize Your Facebook URL.** The URL for your Facebook page should include your hotel's full name in the format: www.facebook.com/myhotelname. This quick fix can be made by clicking "<u>edit your current page username</u>" under the About section.

4. **Complete the "About" Section on Your Facebook Page.** The About section is where your hotel's basic information lives. In fact, your page category, NAP & custom Facebook URL all live here. This section also allows you to enter more information, like your website URL, company overview, milestones and story. Use this as an opportunity to describe **what makes your hotel special** using keyword-rich language to help you rank in search results.

What to Post on Facebook

Bougaivillea Beach Resort shares information about a rugby competition.

Remember that Facebook indexes all public posts. This presents a new way for travel shoppers to find you through the platform. If someone searches for specific information about a place, event, or attraction, they might just stumble upon your content in Facebook search results.

To attract more eyeballs to your Facebook page, you need to regularly **share useful content that travel shoppers want to see**. It could be an article about upcoming events in your city, a packing list for visiting your region, or a video of a nearby tourist attraction, as examples.

Don't forget to also talk about your hotel. Take a closer look at what happens day-to-day on your property. Do you host regular events, like cocktail hour? Weddings? Sunday roasts? Or movie nights?

Talk about them on Facebook! Try to create content that will be "liked" or shared by Facebook users to expand your organic reach, and ensure your post includes hashtags and keywords you're trying to rank for.

Make It Visual

Keep in mind that the way in which people interact with Facebook makes it a highly visual platform. People are often scrolling through their News Feeds quickly, looking for content that catches their eye. Your Facebook posts therefore need to be accompanied by visuals (e.g. photos, images, diagrams, maps, videos, .GIFs, etc.). Visual content is quick and easy to consume, and 40x more likely to get shared on social media than any other type of content, increasing your organic reach. Therefore, **share high-quality visuals** that will captivate travel shoppers' attention. It might be a photo of your pool, a signature dish from your restaurant, or clean crisp sheets on the bed.

If you're not sure what to post, or your visual content could use an upgrade, there are a number of free apps that can help. Here are 4 of our favorites:
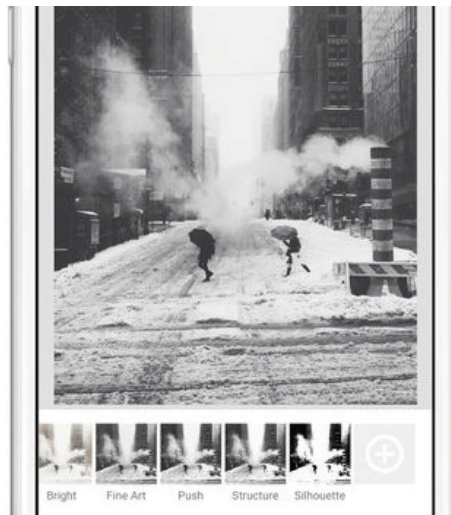
Snapseed is a photo editing tool, which also has a wide selection of filters to choose from. Use Snapseed to ramp up the overall quality of your hotel images. The Details Tool allows you to adjust the brightness, contrast, and saturation of a photo. You can

remove objects from the image using the Healing Tool. Add text overlays with the Text Tool. And easily crop images to the perfect size. It even has built-in tutorials if you're new to photo editing.

Boomerang is a free app created by Instagram (which is owned by Facebook). It creates mini videos that loop back and forth by taking a burst of 10 images and combining them to make a 1 second video. Hoteliers can easily create Boomerang videos of their property; for example, someone opening the door to a guest room, a drink being poured at your on-site bar, or a guest being given their room key at check-in. The options are endless, all you need is a little movement in the shot.

Tap to Shoot
Try finding something that's moving.
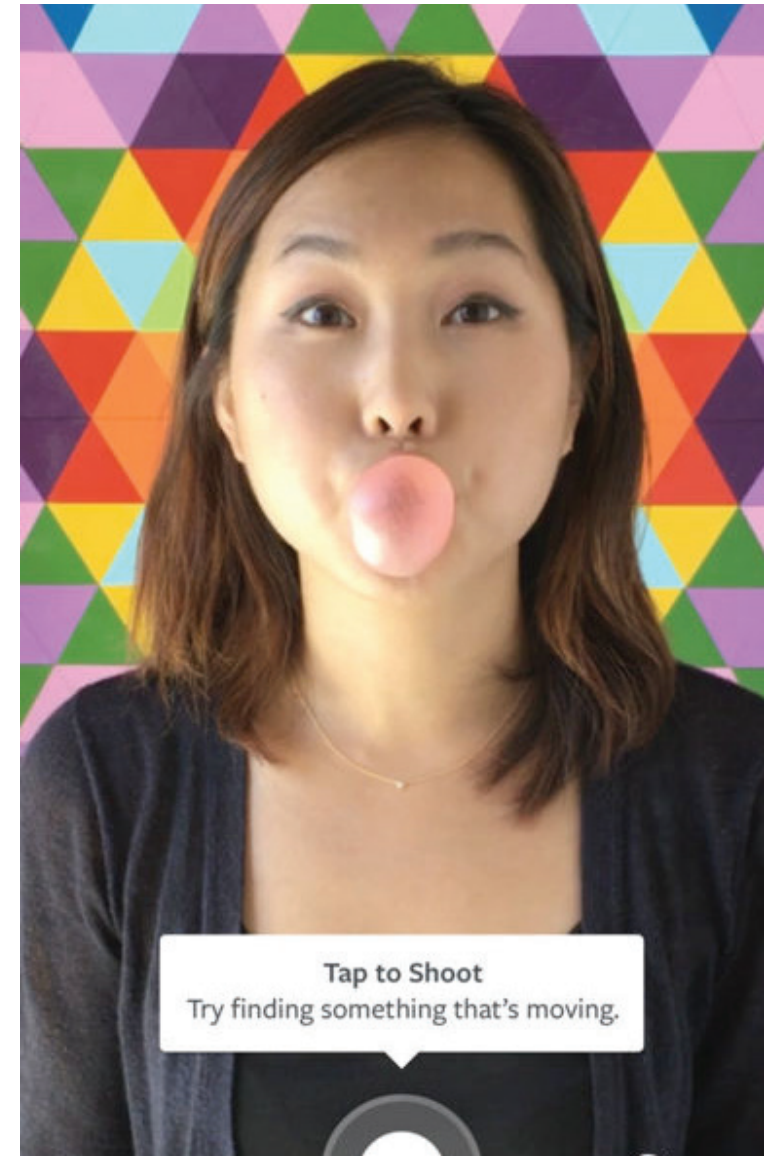
Shoot handheld time lapse videos, even while you're moving.
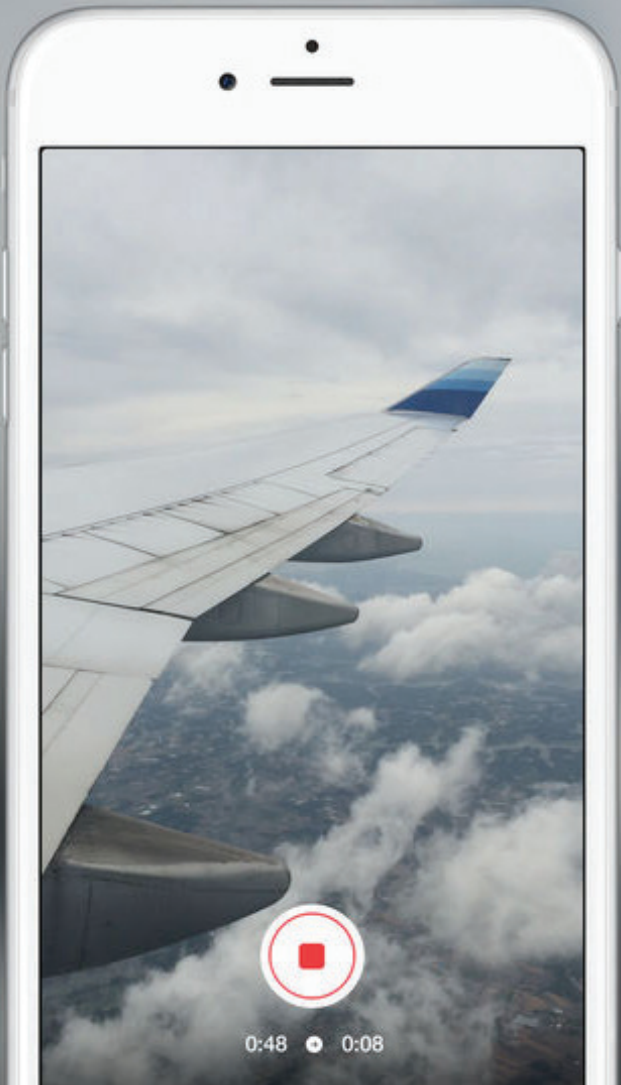
Hyperlapse is another free Instagram app that works on Facebook and allows you to make time lapse videos. Time lapse videos are great for making long videos more digestible and engaging for travel shoppers by speeding up the process. Think of using time lapses to show the setup of your event space, or how thoroughly your staff cleans each room before a new guest checks in. Time lapse videos can be created using most smartphone cameras, but what sets this app apart is its stabilization technology that makes use of your phone's accelerometer. It allows you to shoot smooth, stable video that would otherwise require a tripod or expensive equipment to not appear shaky.

GIPHY

GIFs are image files that include animation but no sound. GIFs offer many benefits for social media: they're cheaper and easier to make than video and are <u>shared more often than standard JPEG or PNG images</u>.

GIPHY is the go-to site when it comes to GIFs. You can search their massive collection, or create your own using their GIF maker, and easily share them on social media. You can create GIFs from videos hosted on YouTube and Vimeo, or by uploading your own video. You can also create a GIF slideshow by uploading multiple images to cycle through. GIPHY provides a very helpful <u>how to GIPHY</u> page so you can learn how to create and share your GIFs.
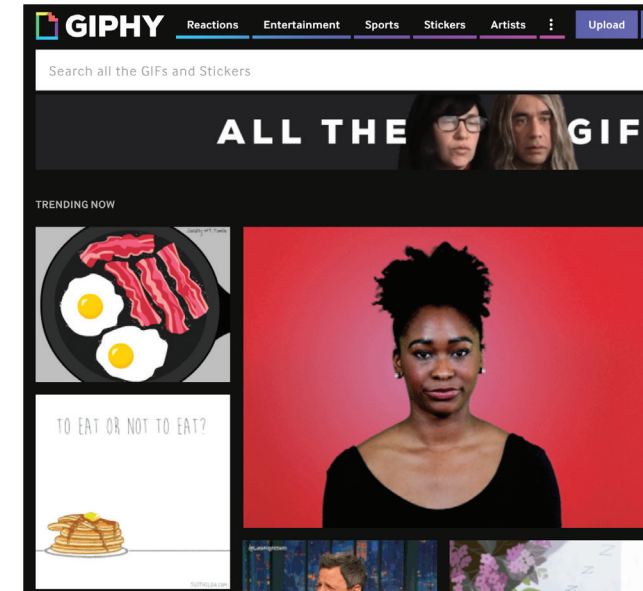
Hotels should consider using GIFs as a way to add a little fun to their Facebook page. Think about adding a cute GIF of a dog or a cat (the internet loves cute animals) to highlight your pet-friendly policy, or a GIF of people toasting to promote happy hour at your on-site bar.

# Turn Facebook Engagement into Direct Bookings

By staying up-to-date with Facebook's changes, and following the best practices outlined in this eBook, you'll increase your hotel's visibility on Facebook and get in front of more potential guests. But what then? How do you then turn Facebook engagement into bookings for your hotel? The most obvious way to do this is by directing Facebook users back to your website, to engage with your hotel further. You might have a targeted landing page for Facebook visitors, featuring a compelling special offer that either converts them, or, at the very least, captures their contact details for future marketing.

The only problem is, not all Facebook users will click through to your website. That's why it's also a good idea to optimize your Facebook page to facilitate direct bookings. Start by ensuring you have a Book Now button live on your Facebook page, and it links directly to your website.

You might also consider integrating some apps to your Facebook page which can facilitate direct bookings from within the Facebook platform. With Vizlly Facebook apps, for example, you can embed elements from your website into Facebook
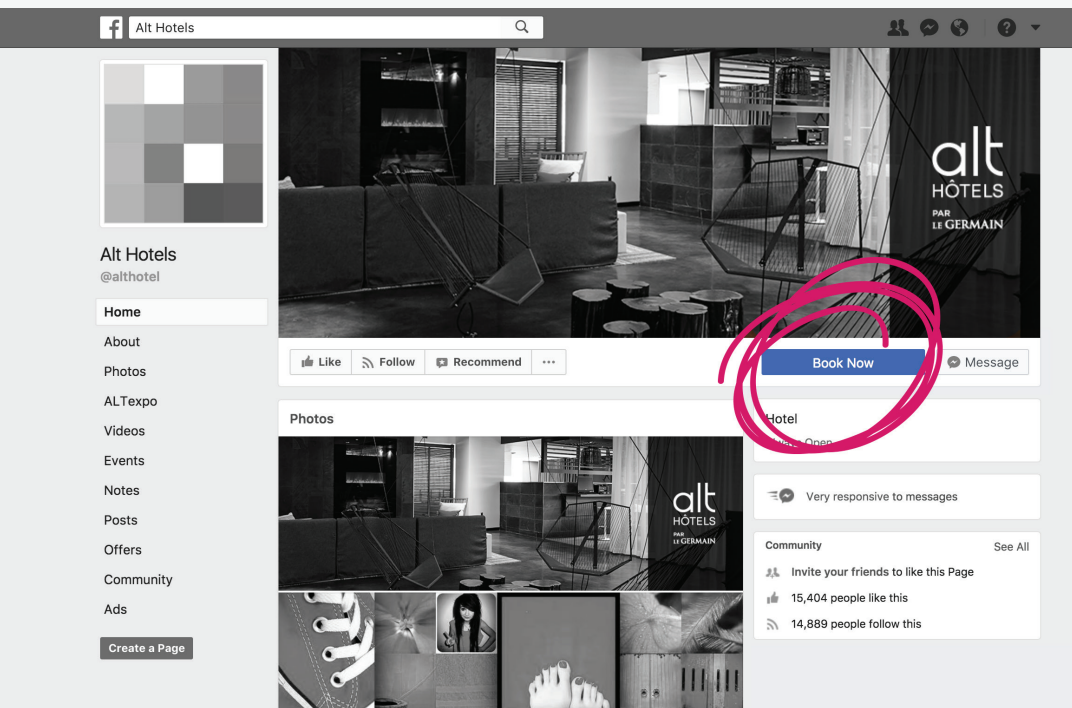
Have a prominent call to action on your Facebook page for how to book.

to showcase your property's unique features, guest rooms, event spaces, special offers and more. These apps can integrate with your booking engine, allowing Facebook users to book directly from within Facebook, without having to visit your website.

Vizlly's Facebook apps can help drive more direct bookings for your hotel, so you can finally measure ROI from your Facebook efforts. Discover why 3000+ hotels are using Vizlly to take control of their digital marketing and drive more direct bookings at a lower cost. Learn more at www.vizlly.com.

Vizlly Facebook Apps help drive direct bookings from within the Facebook platform.

leonardo

Leonardo is a technology company serving the global hospitality industry. We provide hospitality professionals at Hotels, Management Companies, Hotel Chains and Travel Websites with technology solutions that improve the way they present their properties online to travel shoppers.

Leo_eBook_Facebook_17.0337