

How to attract guests from emerging markets with tech in 2024

South Africa's natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and vibrant cities have always been major draws for tourists. However, accessibility has often been a barrier for some potential visitors.



Nels Verspui, Market Head, RoomRaccoon South Africa

As more airlines establish direct routes to South Africa, the potential for increased tourist traffic is significant. This not only simplifies the travel process for visitors but also opens up new markets that were previously underserved. In particular, the BRICS nations have been identified as a significant emerging market with efforts going towards [enhancing air connectivity](#) among member nations.

A pivotal moment in this trajectory occurred in December 2023, when Cape Town International Airport experienced an [unprecedented influx of international travellers](#), with a record-breaking monthly total of 317,000 visitors—the highest ever recorded.

This surge in international visitors from emerging markets represents a golden opportunity for South African hoteliers, as demand for accommodations is set to skyrocket. However, they must be strategic in their approach to capitalise on the influx of travellers while fostering long-term customer loyalty for the future.

Thankfully, modern hotel management technology can help to unlock the full potential of this opportunity. Here are some ways in which hotels can leverage technology to attract guests from emerging markets:

Increase your digital presence with OTAs

Establishing a strong digital presence is the first step in attracting guests from emerging markets. One approach is to consider listing your property on regional Online Travel Agents in emerging markets.

Platforms like MakeMyTrip in India, Ctrip in China, or Despegar in Latin America have a substantial user base and can play an important role in broadening your online presence. I recommend that hotels take the time to tailor their property's profile on these platforms. This means providing accurate translations, emphasising relevant amenities, and considering cultural nuances.

Streamline the booking experiences

As a hotelier, one of your top priorities is to drive commission-free direct bookings. There's a simple way to make that happen. By offering multiple language options in your booking engine, you can streamline the reservation process for your guests. This thoughtful approach breaks down language barriers that could prevent potential guests from completing their booking.

Localise marketing strategies

Companies can strategically tailor their advertising to specific audiences using platforms like Google Ads, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. It's not just about translating ad copies but also using culturally relevant visuals and themes that connect with the local audience.

Additionally, understanding the data available on a Property Management System is crucial to creating effective marketing campaigns. For instance, analysing the average booking lead time can help hoteliers plan and execute campaigns during high booking sentiment periods.

Data analytics for personalisation

Hotels should monitor data in their Property Management System to understand the preferences and behaviours of guests from emerging markets. By collecting and analysing data, they can personalise services, offers, and recommendations for guests, creating a more tailored and memorable experience.

As the emerging markets continue to thrive, hotels that adopt technology will establish themselves as leaders in attracting guests from these dynamic regions. Being willing to adapt, utilise data, and cater to the specific needs and preferences of visitors from emerging markets will not only increase immediate bookings but also lay the foundation for sustained success in the future.

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