



Jumeirah Group: Using data insights to drive the guest experience and profitability

eInsight CRM

“As a hotel industry, we collect a lot of information about our customers such as when they travel, how they make their reservation and what they do when they’re experiencing the hotel. This wealth of information is used to understand the customer and personalize the experience. However, the question arises, how do we manage all this data?”

Abdullatif Awadh, Senior Director of CRM,
Jumeirah Group

Jumeriah Group

In a recent Cendyn webinar, Data Management 101 for Hoteliers, Abdullatif Awadh, Senior Director of CRM at Jumeirah Group, shared how his company harnesses the power of data to improve the guest experience and drive profitability.

Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts is a world-renowned luxury hotel company operating 24 properties in eight countries, including its flagship hotel Burj Al Arab Jumeirah in Dubai.

Awadh’s role at Jumeirah Group is to lead the development of data-driven customer marketing programs and overall CRM strategy. He’s also responsible for reducing customer attrition and increasing customer lifetime value.

Building blocks for success

Awadh identified four key element of Jumeirah Group's CRM Strategy:

1. Data

- Data entry standards
- Data stewardships
- Data quality audit

He stressed the importance of accurate data entry and unified standards across systems within the hotel. "Two of the challenges hotel marketers face are **1) data accuracy** and; **2) the need for data to be meaningful**," he said. "It's everyone's responsibility to ensure that the information we hold is accurate. This warrants a dedicated team that includes a data steward whose responsibility is to ensure that the data entered is correct. If it's not correct, it should be corrected in a timely manner."

2. Insights

- Have a clear objective on what needs to be achieved
- Advanced analytics unfolds insights far greater than reports
- Connect all sources of customer information for better results

"In order to gather insights, there needs to be clear objectives on what needs to be achieved and the questions the data needs to answer," Awadh said. Reporting systems must be in place to measure data quality and should be communicated on a daily basis.

An example would be to characterize a customer database into actionable and multiple segments. "This is more than just segmenting customers by demographics, average spend or purpose of travel," he said. "It requires advanced analytics and building models for the purpose of answering business questions that you would probably never be able to see by looking at the data or the reports." The more sources of customer data connected for the analysis, the better the insights.





3. Commercial activities

- Relevant and personalized content
- Shift from hotel need period offers to ones created based on customer insights

“At Jumeirah Group, we place the customer at the center of all we do and understand that mass marketing doesn’t sit well with our ethos,” Awadh said. “So, we make sure that our marketing, whether it is through email or social, is in context, relevant and personalized based on the information the guest has shared with us and the insights derived.

“We use the insights to create offers or packages by customer segment,” he continued. “There needs to be a shift from offers created based on hotel need periods to offers created based on customer needs or the propensity of take-up. This requires change management as it involves several departments to buy in to the importance of data in decision making.”

4. Measuring success

- Start with something that can easily be measured
- Track all activities to enhance customer experience or revenue uplift

When it comes to measuring success, Awadh advises starting with something that can be easily measured rather than jumping into complex measurements like customer lifetime value.

“To begin with, there are basic measurements that are very useful to gauge your commercial activities,” he explained. “This may include email open rates, click-through rates and unsubscribed rates. These metrics provide an indication if your offerings and content are relevant to the segments you are trying to reach.”

For measuring and enhancing the customer experience, metrics may include Net Promoter Score™ and Customer Satisfaction Index. Other important measurements include revenue uplift and average length of stay for determining if commercial activities generate positive results, he said.

Awadh also stressed that clean data and processes are key to the success of any CRM strategy. “You can’t have an amazing platform with clean data but no processes put in place—and vice versa,” he said.



Leveraging data in marketing activities

Awadh also discussed three areas of marketing where Jumeirah Group utilizes data:

1. Package ideation

- What should be the minimum length of stay?
- Which hotels should participate?
- Which room categories should be included?
- Any added value to be included?

“When offers are created based on customer insights, questions need to be asked such as what should be the minimum length of stay, which hotels within the group should participate and what room categories should be included,” Awadh said.

“Alternatively, should there be any added value to the package or not?”

“The answers will be found in the insights and that should dictate your offer creation, especially if your targets are one or more customer segments defined through advanced analytics with email marketing.”

2. Email marketing

- Audience building
- Personalized content
- Timely manner
- Any added value to be included?

Awadh also discussed the importance of choosing the right customer to receive email communications. “The content the customer receives should be relevant and personalized to a degree,” he said. “This is more than just addressing them by name or writing content in their language. The images we use, for example, should complement the email copy as well as resonate with the customer.”

As an example, if the customer tends to stay in resorts with their family and always chooses a two-bedroom suite, the image and copy should feature these elements. “What we’re trying to do is to make it easier for the customer to make a decision by increasing the customer perceived value and reducing the total customer costs,” Awadh explained.

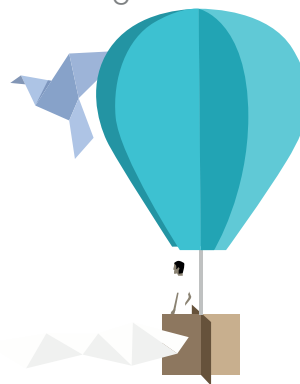
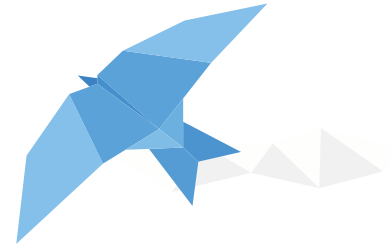
“Timing is also key,” he added. “Apart from top-of-mind marketing communications, all communications should be at the stage where the customer is researching.”

3. Social marketing

- Same messaging as other marketing channels

With today’s technology, it’s easier to connect with customers through their preferred social channels, Awadh said. “Customers are more than happy to share their social handles if they see they’re getting either value or convenience from the brands.

“It is very easy to silo this channel from your other activities which would result in having the customer seeing different messages. So, we need to be very careful about how we push our messages through different channels.”





An example of a data-driven campaign

As an example of a successful campaign at Jumeirah Group, Awadh and his team used data to identify an opportunity with weekend customers who typically stayed only one or two nights. “We had our different teams come together to create an offer that would be meaningful to this segment but would also drive incremental revenue,” he said.



“We decided to create a three-day package during the weekend that would resonate with this customer group. Emails were sent out based on their historical bookings to ensure that the timing was relevant and the customer would be receptive to the offer. So, this was not mass marketing; it was very targeted, even within that segment itself.”

The results? Increased average email open rates for this segment from the mid-twenties to the mid-forties percentage. Average stay increased from 1.6 to 3.1 nights, and the average spend per stay almost doubled.

“We achieved this by gaining insights from advanced analytics, making sure that the content was in context with the segment, and working as a team across different departments to look at solutions and drive more business,” Awadh said. “But also, by making it easier for the customer to make the decision because everything was relevant and in context to them.”

Bottom line results

1. 45% email open rate on average
2. Increased average spend per stay by 93%
3. Doubled average stay nights from 1.6 to 3.1

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