

Trends in the Utilization of Outsourced Marketing Departments by Landlords of Boarding Rooms in Ho Chi Minh City

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Abstract

In an era marked by escalating competition, the adoption of Outsourced Marketing practices emerges not only as a cost-saving measure but also as a catalyst for the enhancement of operational efficiency, and market competitiveness. The deployment of outsourced marketing strategies proves to be especially germane to the operational business of boarding-room enterprises in Ho Chi Minh City, rooted in features of operational scale, industry domain specificity, and responsiveness to evolving technological paradigms and consumer information acquisition demand. Fundamental advantages of outsourced marketing services to boarding room landlords encompass cost mitigation; revenue augmentation; simultaneously, increased time for specialized pursuits, brand equity amplification, and recognition level for the rental rooms system. This article principally discusses the trends in the utilization of outsourced marketing departments by boarding room landlords in Ho Chi Minh City, according to three focal domains: (1) The scale of outsourcing, (2) Process of managing and performing outsourced marketing, (3) The influence of outsourced marketing on the operational outcomes of boarding rooms enterprises.

Keywords: Trends, utilization, Marketing, outsourced marketing department, outsourcing, rental, boarding rooms

1. Introduction

In general, marketing operations of organizations and individuals can be executed in two primary ways:

(1) Establishing an Internal Marketing Department: Under this model, the marketing activities of an enterprise are conducted by an internal marketing department. Positions within this internal marketing structure typically offer higher job security and enable individuals to develop specialized competencies within their industry segment and target audiences (uab, 2022). This model's chief advantage lies in the workforce's dedication and deep understanding of the enterprise's products, services, and culture. Consequently, marketing practices reflect the traits of the products, and services as well as fulfill customers' direct interaction requirements. Additionally, if an enterprise has an internal marketing department alongside outsourcing activities, the internal marketing team assumes responsibility for overseeing the comprehensive execution of outsourced tasks (Greg Mischio, 2023).

(2) Outsourcing: Some businesses or individuals for which initial costs are a barrier; the need for marketing operations could be more inconsistent due to the seasonality of products and services resulting in them finding an internal marketing department inefficient (uab, 2022). On the other hand, contemporary marketing activities predominantly use digital media channels; users' needs and access trends change promptly (Musammat., T, K, 2023). Marketing has been revolutionized in recent years with the emergence of new technologies: Digital marketing. Technology has paved the way for a more creative form of marketing, with greater engagement and connectivity than traditional tools through the Internet, social media, mobile applications, and data analytics (Chris, D. B et al, 2022).

To have effective marketing activities demands considerations of time, expertise, skills, and financial resources from businesses or individuals. Developing and maintaining an efficient marketing strategy is paramount in an increasingly competitive business environment. Therefore, more and more enterprises turn to outsourced marketing to supplement their marketing capabilities and enhance marketing effectiveness at relatively low costs (Chew Min Kid & Rashad Yazdanifard, 2015).

In terms of the business model of boarding rooms, variations in the number of rooms for rent, rental area, scope, and rental prices lead to a diverse range of tenants. The real estate market in general, and the rental accommodation market in particular, face intense competition due to the influx and diverse development of various accommodations. Moreover, consumer purchasing behavior has become increasingly complex (Phung., N. T., et al, 2021). This necessitates that boarding room owners implement solutions utilizing tools and online marketing media while still ensuring effective revenue and cost requirements while carrying out marketing activities

Given the advantages of outsourced marketing and the characteristics of the rental accommodation business model in Ho Chi Minh City, it raises research questions regarding whether an internal marketing or outsourcing approach would be more suitable and effective for the boarding room business. What are the characteristics of outsourced marketing? How are the outsourced marketing trends observed among Ho Chi Minh City boarding room owners? How can Ho Chi Minh City owners exploit these tools to use them effectively in their business operations? These are the research questions addressed in the article "Trends in the Utilization of Outsourced Marketing Departments by Landlords of Boarding Rooms in Ho Chi Minh City" by the author group.

2. Theoretical Basis

2.1. Concept and Classification of Outsourced Marketing Departments

Marketing is the department that helps expanding the reach of products/services to a wider range of customers, thereby garnering a loyal customer base for businesses. An outsourced marketing department is a form in which a business rents a portion or the entirety of the marketing activities of a marketing agency. This service is a collaboration between the business and agencies to get the product to consumers as soon as possible. Similar to an in-house marketing department, outsourced marketing departments offer comprehensive marketing services that businesses require (Jennifer Y Mak et al, 2017). Outsourced marketing is a trend favored by users In the context of marketing shifting towards digital marketing (Phung, N. T., et al, 2021).

An Outsourced Marketing Department is a service provided by communication companies. Under this model, businesses/individuals do not establish internal marketing departments themselves, nor directly recruit or set up internal marketing teams to conduct marketing activities for their enterprises. Instead, all marketing activities are executed by a third party with experience and expertise in this field. When utilizing Outsourced Marketing Services, the service recipient and provider establish a business partnership through a service contract (Chew Min Kid & Rashad Yazdanifard, 2015). This relationship entails both parties having rights and responsibilities as per agreed-upon terms to enhance the effectiveness and value of the services and products provided to their customers. Based on this, outsourced marketing departments may include:

Table 1: Classification of Outsourced Marketing Departments

No.	Criteria	Classification
1	By Personnel Position	Brand communication, Sales promotion, E-commerce channel development, Product development.
2	By Job Description	Web/landing page design, SEO (Search Engine Optimization) web, Content creation, Graphic design, Advertising, Photography, videography.
3	By Hiring Duration	Short-term Long-term

Source: Compiled by the author group

By comprehending and applying the aforementioned classifications, businesses can optimize their marketing activities through collaboration with outsourced marketing service providers, thus establishing effective partnerships and delivering benefits for both parties.

From the concept and characteristics of outsourced marketing, it becomes evident that outsourced marketing services are suitable for most business subjects, especially small and medium-sized enterprises and new startups (Chew Min Kid & Rashad Yazdanifard, 2015). Meanwhile, in-house professional marketing remains an indispensable department for large-scale companies. In practice, large enterprises with substantial resources often opt for both models simultaneously, meaning that they establish their own marketing teams while renting outsourced marketing departments. The in-house team plays a guiding role for the agency, while the agency brings a new perspective to the business's marketing implementation strategies. Both entities operate synergistically, mutually supporting each other with the major aim of driving the company's development.

2.2. Boarding room for rent and the suitability of outsourced marketing for the room rental business

Boarding rooms for rent refer to houses or architectural structures built or used for leasing purposes, where tenants are required to pay a rental fee to the landlord (Wikipedia, 2021). Renting rooms is a lodging service business activity and does not fall under commercial activities requiring registration according to Article 3, Clause 1 of Decree 39/2007/ND-CP (Government, 2007). Therefore, landlords renting out rooms must register their room rental business according to regulations; however, they may choose to establish a household business or an enterprise. When renting out rooms, agreements in written form between the two parties (landlord and tenant) typically include basic details such as duration, rental price, payment methods, deposits, as well as terms regarding the rights and obligations of both parties. Landlords renting out rooms must cater for requirements related to fire fighting and prevention (Government, 2014), security and order conditions (Government, 2016), and residency procedures as stipulated (National Assembly, 2020).

In Vietnam, rental houses/rooms belong to Group A.2.8. of public service facilities according to the standard QCVN 03:2012/BXD - National Technical Regulation on Rules of Classifications and Grading of Civil and Industrial Buildings, and Urban Infrastructures. The target users of rental rooms are mainly students, workers, ordinary laborers, and low-income earners. In some places, houses have been renovated into multiple rooms, or vacant land of families has been utilized to build rental rooms. The following points indicate the suitability of outsourced marketing with the room rental business model:

(1) Suitability in terms of operational scale:

According to Catalyst's research, outsourced marketing is suitable for businesses/individuals of various scales. Larger companies utilize outsourced marketing to compensate for deficient skills with the help of marketing professionals. Meanwhile, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) employ outsourced marketing to avoid committing to the expenses of an in-house comprehensive marketing team. To optimize costs and respond to budgetary constraints, smaller-scale organizations and individuals will only establish internal marketing departments supplement them in required situations.

Research by Chew Min Kid & Rashad Yazdanifard (2015) indicates that Outsourced Marketing is competent for small and medium-sized enterprises. Most room rental businesses in Ho Chi Minh City operate on a small to medium scale; thus, outsourced marketing serves as a solution to help them develop their brand, increase market share, and enhance brand value in the market.

(2) Suitability in terms of fields and professions:

In terms of cost, outsourced marketing service packages are common and flexible, and also suited to the aim of filling rental rooms and optimizing benefits by understanding customer needs (Yaser Hosseini et al., 2021). Consequently, outsourced marketing services become a reasonable and cost-effective solution for landlords. Landlords' needs lie in understanding the factors influencing customers' decisions to rent rooms. Thúc's study (2021) identified five factors positively influencing room rental decisions: "price", "security", "facilities", "service quality", and "location." Therefore, using outsourced marketing to maximize access to potential customer groups is appropriate to not only the characteristics of the room rental business but also marketing trends and customer needs.

Additionally, making use of Outsourced Marketing helps address unprofessional management issues and seasonality of landlords in special areas like Ho Chi Minh City. The majority of end-of-year room [tenants](#) come from relocation needs, such as tenants who are young families moving from central to suburban areas to reduce rental costs; tenants who are young people tending to change different rental places, seeking low-cost serviced apartments/rental rooms or with same cost but larger-sized rooms for convenience.

(3) Suitability in terms of technology advancement pace and customer information accessibility:

Innovations continue to occur rapidly in the marketing context. By using outsourced marketing services, landlords can easily navigate, monitor, establish, and implement new marketing tools. Technology has changed the way people connect with others and the way they access and use services. Regarding room rental information search channels, according to Q&Me's (2019) statistics on Digital Marketing activities in the Real Estate sector, including the room rental market, 80% of homebuyers search online, 83% of homebuyers view product images virtually, 49% of lists of potential customer come from referrals, 91% of real estate businesses use social media, and 33% of homebuyers make their first purchase decision when searching online.

2.3. Benefits of Outsourced Marketing Department for Room Rental Landlords

According to research by M. Ahearne and P. Kothandaraman (2009), Outsourced Marketing plays a crucial role in enhancing efficiency and flexibility for businesses, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), through saving costs, reducing capital risks, and improving adaptability to business environment changes. In today's context, when consumers tend to get access through online channels, Outsourced Marketing has become more prevalent than ever. The benefits of an outsourced marketing department for room rental landlords consist of:

(1) Cost Reduction: Outsourced Marketing helps reduce overall marketing costs, with costs equivalent to the salary of a Marketing staff member, yet achieving the same work efficiency as a complete in-house Marketing department every month. By outsourcing marketing activities, room rental landlords can minimize some expenditures including:

- Fixed costs such as equipment, offices, computers, fixed staff salaries, and information technology (Y. Liu and R. K. Tyagi, 2017). Instead, businesses only pay for necessary service packages, creating flexibility in managing. Marketing expenses according to specific needs. This provides proactive control for businesses to calculate Marketing costs reasonably while regarding operational circumstances (hmaagency.com). These are usually easier to control, and marketing activities can be scaled up or down depending on the needs of the business (uab, 2022).

- Costs for marketing programs: According to Greg (Greg Mischio, 2023), on average, a blog post takes over 4 hours to produce. A high-quality marketing video may take from 4 to 8 weeks to complete. Social media platforms yielding results can take minimum 10 hours per week. On the other hand, high-quality content requires research and expert interviews. This increases costs and time for small businesses if done internally. However, when using Outsourced Marketing, these tasks are assigned to experts, which helps save time and costs.

(2) Revenue Increase: Outsourced Marketing enables room rental landlords to access expertise from experienced marketing professionals, helping to expand scale and flexibility in implementing projects of various scales and scopes (Christopher & Ballantyne, 2013). According to Aubochoon, Bandyopadhyay, and Bhaumik (2012), an outsourced marketing department ensures greater specialization in marketing activities. They possess in-depth knowledge and skills in areas such as:

- Market research
- Competitor analysis
- Marketing planning
- Execution of marketing activities
- Measurement of marketing effectiveness

This results in higher work efficiency and productivity, simultaneously helping to overcome barriers regarding the business's communication and information technology capabilities (Khan, 2014). Additionally, using Outsourced Marketing helps optimize task management by setting and measuring performance indicators, promoting efficiency, and enhancing work productivity (Macdonald, 2014).

Outsourced Marketing is not only an effective tool for enhancing business performance but also an investment that can yield high returns when executed and managed wisely and proactively. Comparing the benefits and costs of using outsourced marketing, outsourced Marketing is considered an investment, and similar to any investment, it must achieve certain results or profits compared to the amount of money spent. Therefore, it is essential for room rental landlords to conduct thorough research to select suitable partners (Aubochoon, C., Bandyopadhyay, S., & Bhaumik, S., 2012). On the other hand, results from the research

reveal that marketing directors recognize the importance of outsourcing but also feel dissatisfied with the extent, frequency, and direction of communication (Matthew Walker et al., 2009).

2.4. Trends in the Use of Outsourced Marketing Departments by Room Rental Landlords

According to M. Ahearne and P. Kothandaraman (2009), the process of outsourced marketing involves three aspects:

- Outsourced scope: Content and time scope.
- Management and implementation of the outsourced marketing process.
- Impact of outsourced marketing on business outcomes.

Since a predominant number of room rental landlords are individuals or households, rental activities vary in scale which are often small-scale, with unprofessional management. Moreover, the seasonality of outsourcing marketing services may not demand website usage. Additionally, research on collaboration strategies for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) shows that these companies tend to focus on one or a few specific outsourced marketing services rather than using a comprehensive outsourced marketing strategy (Yaser Hosseini et al., 2021). This aligns with the small and medium-scale characteristics of room rental landlords in Ho Chi Minh City. Therefore, the three aspects for analyzing trends in the use of outsourced marketing departments by room rental landlords respectively include:

(i) Outsourced Scope:

- Content Scope: Addressing which marketing activities are outsourced, room rental landlords tend to focus on one or several specific outsourced marketing services rather than using a comprehensive outsourced marketing strategy.

- Time Scope: Addressing how long room rental landlords use outsourced marketing services, according to:

(ii) Management and Implementation of Outsourced Marketing Process: Room rental landlords select outsourced marketing department based on what criteria, and how the coordination process occurs.

(iii) Impact of Outsourced Marketing on Room Rental Landlords' Activities:

- Cost Reduction: Comparing the costs and benefits of outsourced marketing versus self-marketing activities, efficiency demonstration and resource savings.

- Revenue and Profit Increase: Measuring the impact of outsourced marketing on revenue and profit of rental rooms, reflecting the ability to enhance income.

3. Research Methodology

Based on a basis of the theoretical research on trends in the use of outsourced marketing departments by room rental landlords in Ho Chi Minh City, the research team designed a questionnaire including:

- A group of questions about the benefits of outsourced marketing departments for room rental landlords.

- A group of questions about corresponding aspects to analyze trends including (i) Outsourced Scope, (ii) Management and Implementation of Outsourced Marketing Process, (iii) Impact of Outsourced Marketing on Room Rental Landlords' Activities.

After constructing the survey questionnaire, the research team conducted a random survey with 10 room rental landlords. Preliminary survey results showed agreement with the research aspects. Based on the preliminary survey, the research team completed the questionnaire and conducted a wide-scale survey via the link <https://forms.gle/14LqMAiBPMHspToE7> targeting room rental landlords in Ho Chi Minh City.

The data collection method is conducted based on the convenience sampling method and "snowball" method ("snowball" method - a method used to find the following subjects based on the suggestions of previous subjects) to ensure a sufficient sample size according to requirements. A total of 165 survey responses were collected, with 152 room rental landlords who had used or intended to use outsourced marketing departments for their rental activities.

Data were collected in the form of descriptive statistics and frequencies, and analyzed along with qualitative feedback used by the research team for discussion, analysis, and solutions proposal

4. Research Findings

4.1. Description of the Research Sample

According to data from the Ho Chi Minh City Department of Construction (2022), there are 60,470 boarding houses in the city, corresponding to 560,219 rooms built by residents providing accommodation for 1,430,068 tenants, mainly workers and low-income earners. Specifically:

- The group of boarding houses built as rows of separate, independent rooms: there are 34,800 boarding houses, corresponding to a total of 357,246 rental rooms with 943,341 tenants; mainly located in District 7, District 12, Go Vap, Binh Tan, Thu Duc, Cu Chi, Hoc Mon, and Binh Chanh.

- The group of individual houses divided into rental rooms: There are 25,670 boarding houses, corresponding to a total of 202,973 rental rooms with 486,727 tenants, mainly located in District 7, District 10, Go Vap, Binh Tan, Tan Binh, Binh Thanh, Thu Duc, Cu Chi, Hoc Mon, and Binh Chanh.

These figures indicate that Ho Chi Minh City is a large market have a tendency to develop towards better quality and more affordable boarding houses.

In theory, outsourced marketing is a solution focused on improving weaknesses in business operations (Pavlů, 2013). For room rental landlords in Ho Chi Minh City, one of the most significant weaknesses is the lack of professionalism in management, primarily relying on personal experience and the seasonality in the demand for rental housing from customers. Demand for rental housing tends to peak in February and March each year when workers return to work after the Lunar New Year holiday, and in August and September each year, which is the enrollment period for students from out of town.

To survey the trend of using outsourced marketing departments among room rental landlords in Ho Chi Minh City, the research team surveyed room rental landlords in the city. According to Article 92, Clause 1 of the Housing Law, households and individuals are allowed to register renting business activities without the need to establish enterprises or cooperatives and without the need for prescribed capital. Specifically, room rental landlords can register as individual business households without having to establish a business. Therefore, the survey participants included individuals currently renting out rooms in Ho Chi Minh City.

Table 2: Description of Survey Participants

Criteria	Percentage (%)
1. According to the scale of rental rooms in Ho Chi Minh City	
- From 1-5 rental rooms	26.3%
- From 6-10 rental rooms	31.6%
- From 11-20 rental rooms	21.1%
- From 21-50 rental rooms	15.8%
- Over 50 rental rooms	5.3%
2. According to gender	
- Male	35.3%
- Female	58.8%
- Prefer not to mention	5.9%
3. According to the area with rental rooms available	
- Inner city	41.2%
- Suburbs	23.5%
- Both	35.3%

Source: Survey conducted by the research team.

According to the survey results, 76.9% of landlords utilize outsourced marketing services for their room rental business, while 23.1% of landlords do not use outsourced marketing services due to fundamental reasons, including (1) the perceived higher cost of outsourced marketing compared to self-conducted marketing, and (2) unawareness about outsourced marketing activities.

For those who have employed outsourced marketing services for their room rental business, the survey results indicate that the majority of landlords only recently started using outsourced marketing services (69.2% began engaging with these services before 2023, while 30.8% started in 2023 or later). Regarding the frequency of utilization, no landlords reported using outsourced marketing services very frequently; 38.5% use them frequently, and 46.2% use them normally.

When asked about the reasons driving landlords to opt for outsourced marketing services, with six multiple-choice options (can choose more than one answer at the same time). The results are as follows:

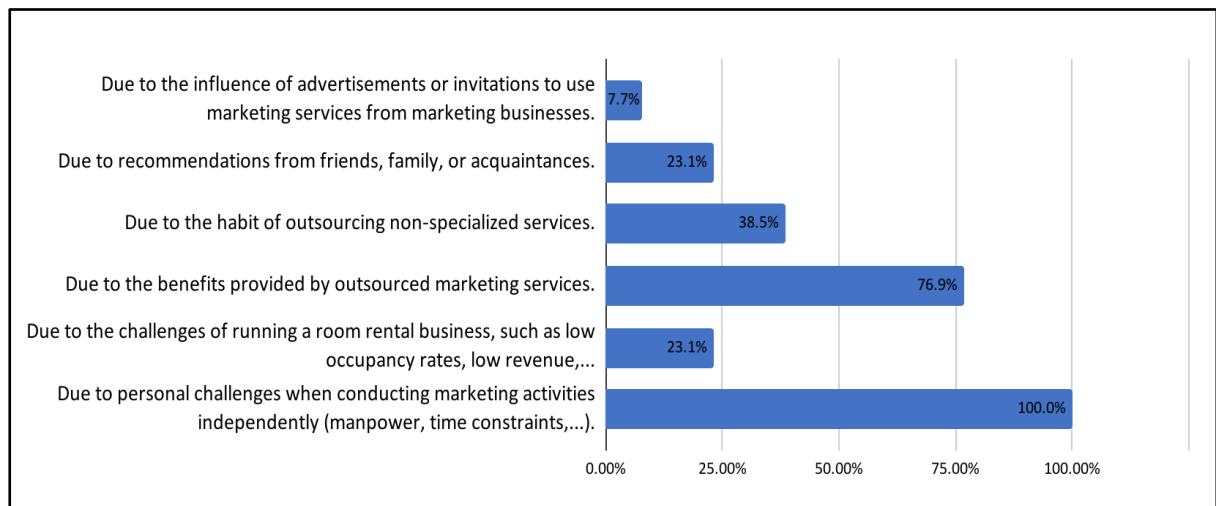


Figure 1: Reasons for Landlords Choosing to Use Outsourced Marketing Services in Ho Chi Minh City

Source: Survey conducted by the research team

All landlords opt to utilize outsourced marketing services primarily due to personal challenges (e.g., manpower, time constraints) faced when conducting marketing activities independently. Other reasons include 76.9% choosing outsourced marketing services for the benefits they provide, and 38.5% due to the habit of outsourcing services that are not their expertise.

4.2. Trends in the Use of External Marketing Services by Landlords Renting out Rooms in Ho Chi Minh City

(1) Outsourced scope

In response to the question "Which marketing activities are outsourced", the predominant trend among landlords renting out rooms is to focus on one or a few specific outsourced marketing services rather than employing a comprehensive outsourced marketing strategy. The general trend in using outsourced marketing services for room rental businesses tends to be short-term and corresponds to periods of fluctuating room demand and occupancy. With a variety of marketing services offered by marketing companies, the typical scope of outsourcing is limited as follows:

- Limited by communication channels: 38.5%
- Limited by marketing content: 30.8%
- Limited by area (inner city or suburbs): 7.7%

- Limited by time: In 2023, Ho Chi Minh City experienced the strongest increase in room rental demand. According to a report from batdongsan.com, in December 2023, the number of room rental advertisements in Ho Chi Minh City increased by 6%, while the demand for room rentals rose by 12% compared to November 2023 (Đông Phong, 2024). Consequently, the marketing activities of landlords also experience fluctuations over time. Landlords tend to only utilize outsourced marketing during periods of significant fluctuations in room demand: 30.8% (typically at the beginning of the academic year for student renters and after the Lunar New Year for workers and freelancers).

(2) Management and Implementation of Outsourced Marketing Processes

When utilizing Outsourced Marketing Services, the marketing activities of landlords are executed by a third party with experience and expertise in this field. Then, the service recipient and provider establish a business partnership through a service contract (Chew Min Kid & Rashad Yazdanifard, 2015). Consequently, management and implementation of outsourced marketing processes rely on this contractual relationship.

When implementing the contract, the outsourced marketing team must closely base on the practicalities of the room rental business, considering factors such as location, potential customers, scale, floor area, and amenities. Consequently, the marketing process requires the involvement of landlords in:

- Providing relevant information to the outsourced marketing team
- Monitoring and controlling the marketing team's execution of the contract
- Collaborating with the marketing team to maximize benefits.

Despite being service users, landlords can proactively select the outsourced marketing agency, negotiate results and coordination to optimize outcomes. In other words, the management and implementation of outsourced marketing processes depend on output measurement methods and collaboration responsibilities within the service contract.

(3) The Impact of Outsourced Marketing on Room Rental Landlords Business

The benefits of outsourced marketing, as evaluated by landlords in Ho Chi Minh City participating in the survey, include:

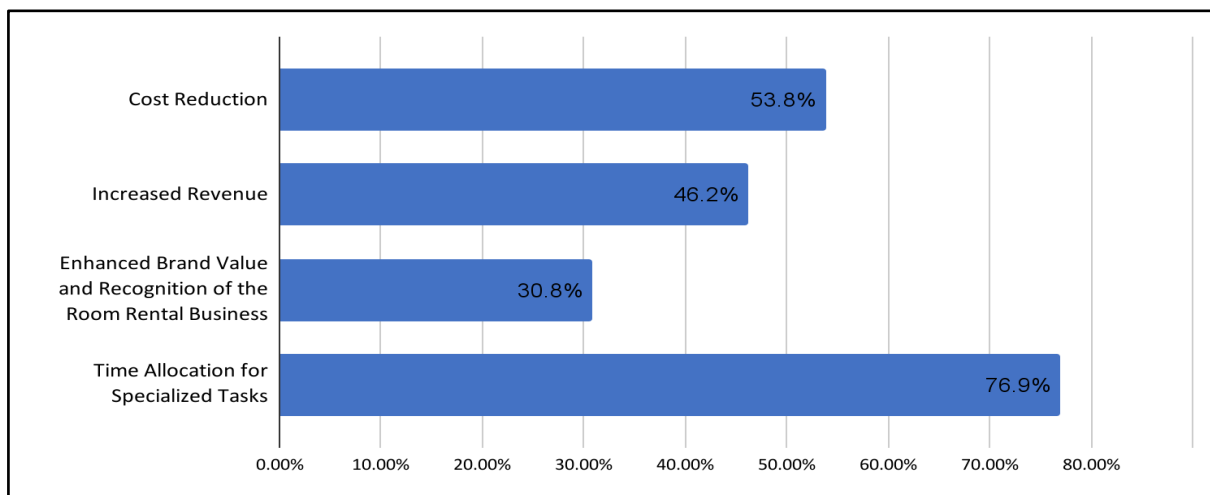


Figure 2: Benefits of Choosing Outsourced Marketing Services for Rental Room Business

Source: Survey conducted by the research group

Landlords in Ho Chi Minh City who have utilized outsourced marketing services assessed the greatest benefit of using such services as "Time allocation for specialized tasks." This stems from the nature of room rental operations in Ho Chi Minh City, which are often conducted informally and non-professionally. This model primarily arises from two groups (i) Those actively purchasing/renting houses/apartments to build rental rooms; (ii) Houses/rental rooms are unused properties rented out to generate income (Ho Chi Minh City Department of Construction, 2022).

Additionally, other benefits of outsourced marketing services include Cost reduction (53.8%), Increased revenue (46.2%), and Enhanced brand value and recognition of the rental property (30.8%). When comparing revenue and costs, 84.6% of landlords utilizing outsourced marketing services deemed it more effective than self-marketing; 15.4% did not evaluate/compare; There was no option indicating equal or lower effectiveness.

To save costs and align with the specific nature of room rental business operations, the trend of not using full-package services is also a choice for landlords in Ho Chi Minh City. Depending on the scale of rental rooms, outsourced marketing service packages can vary from full-service arrangements to specific marketing content, channels, or be reduced in scale, resulting in different average costs per package. Most costs are at a relatively low level (30.8% ranging from 1 to below 5 million VND per service package, and 38.5% ranging from 5 to below 10 million VND per service package). Based on the price list of outsourced

marketing services from several marketing enterprises in Ho Chi Minh City, these packages fluctuate from 10 to 20 million VND per month. Typically, the 20-million-VND-per-month package includes all marketing services, while the 10-million-VND-per-month package may omit some contents, such as comprehensive SEO services, alt image tag optimization, conceptualized web content, and fewer uploads compared to the full package (minhduongads.com, 2023).

Despite choosing to utilize outsourced marketing, landlords still have some concerns during the service utilization process. Based on in-depth interview results, the authors identified eight issues and suggested surveyees rank them in decreasing order of importance. The results are as follows:

Table 3: Some Concerns of Landlords When Using Outsourced Marketing Services

Issue	Rank
Need for monitoring and controlling during outsourced marketing contract execution	1
Unclear commitment to service output results	2
Need for collaboration during outsourced marketing contract execution	3
High costs for outsourced marketing	4
Not suitable for the scale of my rental rooms	5
Need to provide relevant information to outsourced marketing teams	6
Ineffectiveness of outsourced marketing activities	7
Limited offerings from outsourced marketing services	8

Source: Survey conducted by the research group

In contrast to concerns about the need for collaboration, monitoring, and control in the outsourced marketing process, the loss of control over the process is a significant obstacle to outsourcing. In many cases, once the scope of work and handover schedule is agreed upon, clients have very little say in the process. Some marketing agencies may negotiate to allow clients a higher degree of editorial control, but in most cases, they will handle the execution of all campaigns (uab, 2022). Therefore, a comprehensive, balanced process that ensures the interests of both the client and the service provider is necessary to optimize outsourced marketing services in the room rental business.

5. Some Proposals

(1) Before deciding to use outsourced marketing services.

The reality is that not every landlord has the resources or expertise to build and operate a complete marketing department. Therefore, landlords can assess their readiness to use outsourced marketing based on the following questionnaire:

Table 4: Checklist for Assessing Landlords' Readiness to Use Outsourced Marketing Services

No.	Criteria	Check
1	I do not have a comprehensive marketing strategy for my rental rooms/apartments	
2	My current room management team lacks the necessary skills in marketing	
3	I do not have sufficient tools to implement marketing	

4	I am not truly sure about the potential tenants	
5	I am unsure which marketing tools are effective	
6	I struggle with converting potential tenants into actual renters	
7	There are many outsourced marketing agencies in the area, and I do not know which one to choose	
8	I find it difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of outsourced marketing for my rental rooms/apartments	
9	We have a low occupancy rate for our rental rooms/apartments	
10	Other issues	

Source: catalyst, 2023

For the 10 checkbox form questions as described above, according to catalyst, the level of necessity for using outsourced marketing services is as follows:

If the number of checkbox selections is >5 , landlords need to use outsourced marketing services.

If the number of checkbox selections is between 2 and 5, landlords may consider using outsourced marketing services.

If the number of checkbox selections is <2 , landlords may actively carry out marketing activities for their business without necessarily using outsourced marketing services.

Regardless of the number of checkbox selections, landlords can still use outsourced marketing services at varying levels to enhance marketing effectiveness (catalyst, 2023).

(2) After deciding to use outsourced marketing services

The authors propose a 5-step process for utilizing outsourced marketing services for room rental business.

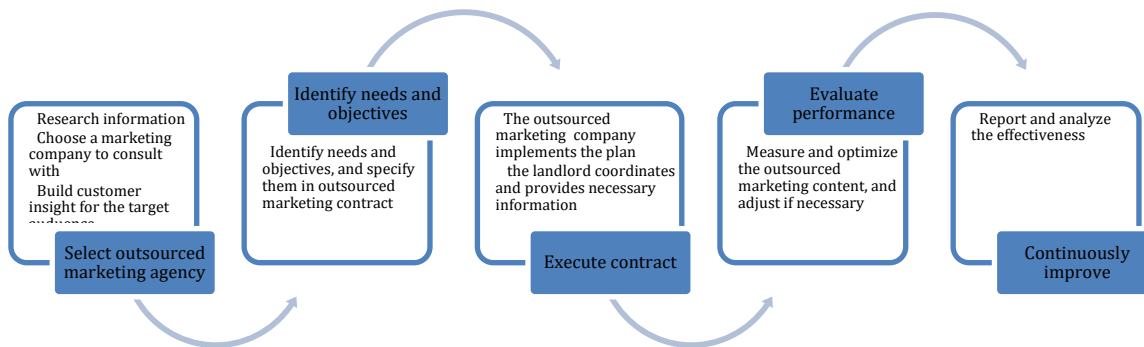


Diagram 1: Outsourced Marketing Service Utilization Process

Source: Proposal by the research group

Step 1- Selecting a Suitable Outsourced Marketing Agency: The process begins with the landlord selecting an Outsourced Marketing Partner that aligns with their business needs and goals. This requires thorough research into the services provided by marketing companies, assessing the capabilities and experience of potential partners to ensure professionalism and reliability. Criteria for selecting outsourced marketing agencies include:

- Choosing reputable agencies with extensive experience
- Selecting agencies with specific commitments to the final output and reporting frequency
- Researching the agency's knowledge and understanding of the marketing field
- Evaluating the agency's competence and work style through their pages and websites, referring to previous successful projects
- Choosing teams that are youthful, dynamic, creative, and adaptable to trends.

- Initiating a trial collaboration period of about 1-2 months to assess the agency's effectiveness.

Before signing the contract, both parties need to clearly agree on evaluation metrics for each stage and the expected outcomes. They must delineate responsibilities and clarify costs incurred during the marketing execution process.

Step 2- Identifying Needs and Objectives: Landlords must be clear about their business needs and objectives before using Outsourced Marketing Services, selecting the rental rooms' strengths to be emphasize. When not opting for a full-service package, identifying which marketing activities to outsource, mainly marketing and advertising activities essential for attracting and retaining customers, is crucial. This may include SEO, social media advertising, content marketing, and online advertising. This process helps shape marketing strategies, efficiently plan activities, and ensures that outsourced services meet specific business requirements.

Step 3- Contract Execution. The partnership between the landlord and the Outsourced Marketing Agency requires close and continuous collaboration. The landlords need to foster a positive working environment, ensure effective communication, and monitor work progress to ensure that goals are efficiently and timely achieved. To facilitate planning and implementation, landlords may proactively share internal information about the rental rooms (including strengths and weaknesses) with the agency.

Step 4- Performance Evaluation: Utilizing outsourced marketing services also entails evaluating and monitoring the performance of marketing strategies and advertising activities. This includes data collection and analysis, result assessment, measurement, and optimization of outsourced marketing content, along with adjusting strategies if necessary to ensure the fulfillment of contract commitments.

Step 5- Continuous Improvement: Finally, the process of utilizing outsourced marketing services is a continuous learning and improving process. Landlords need to continuously assess and adjust their marketing strategies to adapt to market fluctuations and customer needs, along with optimizing performance and benefits from utilizing Outsourced Marketing Services.

6. Conclusion

Outsourced marketing is witnessing an increasing trend amidst consumers' inclination toward seeking information and making purchases online. In the theoretical framework, this study reviews international and domestic literature regarding the concept, characteristics of outsourced marketing, and its relevance and benefits to the rental business in Ho Chi Minh City. To elucidate the trend of using outsourced marketing among landlords in Ho Chi Minh City, the study analyzes three content groups: (i) Outsourced Scope, (ii) Management and Implementation of Outsourced Marketing processes, (iii) The Impact of Outsourced Marketing on Room Rental activities' results. The results indicate that despite the high appreciation of the benefits of outsourced marketing in contributing to cost reduction, revenue increase, and saving time for other specialized tasks, the trend of using outsourced marketing remains limited to the scope of media channels and implementation time. Based on the trend analysis, the article proposes two suggestions: (i) Before landlords decide to use outsourced marketing, and (ii) After deciding to use outsourced marketing. Future research may focus more on specific rental areas (urban, suburban), or focus on a detailed examination of the benefits of using outsourced marketing and evaluate its effectiveness in room rental business operations.

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