

ONLINE TOURISM MARKETING

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Internet usage of which became a strategic element for countries becomes more and more important both service industries and tourism. The reason is that internet usage increases with each passing day and the internet provides its users with significant opportunities in terms of presentation. According to the data published by Internet world stats based on the research company ACNielsen, 13,9 % of the 6 billion 420 million people living in the world (938 million 711 thousand of them) use the internet (<http://www.nexum.com.tr/upload/yayin>, June 12, 2007). Increasing internet usage of consumers expands possibilities about having product information, searching different products or brands and purchasing them. Internet is preferred by consumers or travelers because it is a tool that easy to access (%82), can save time (%80), easy to use (%59) and economical (%50) (Travi Austria, 2001). On the other hand travelers use internet for learning flights, hotel rooms and rent a car prices (Ayers, 1999; Yeh et al., 2005). Therefore there is increasing number of consumers or travelers who have information about their travels by internet and use this information their travel decisions (ETC, 2006; Woolford, 2006)

Social networks play an increasingly important role in the tourism sector. The dissemination of data, messages, opinions and images via Twitter, Facebook, blogs, Flickr and other platforms, as well as new models of information management are now possible, are now an important part of the intelligence system and communication a tourist destination.

The global user, is also tourist consumes and generates four or five times more information about our destiny as a decade ago, so that destinations have to be able to learn to "listen" and "dialogue" with the new traveler in the channels and the language in which they communicate now, when they talk about our city or territory.

Furthermore, mobile devices in communication promote tourism, which are easy to transport and accessible. While travelers are on vacation or business trip, can use their *smartphones* or tablets to find and / or share information about the destination you are.

The results of the *Worldwide Travel Monitor* shows that 40% of international travelers travel with *smartphones* with Internet access, email and other functions. These users of *smartphone* , 40% use them for information on the fate and 26% of visitors and 34% of business travelers use them to change their reservations for the trip. Just over a third of international travelers use their smart phones to access the mobile social networks. This means that tourists, despite of their destination, content hanging in their Facebook pages or blogs or Twitter or Flickr photographs.

The information processing management at tourist destination, now has new strategies that leverage and segment the common information about the destination, before making decisions under the Tourism Cluster model. The new information processing through the prism of *Smart Destination* or destination smart, its make the most of online social tools to feed both the

intelligence of fate, as the interactions agents and tourist destination, can generate through social networks .

The general objectives of internet marketing are described as:

- Online activities can enhance and boost up offline effort in brand development.
- Revenue generation. Online channels do not only save advertising or promoting cost, but they also increase revenue for businesses through generating sales and supporting direct marketing campaign.
- Customer service/support. With online marketing, company has more channels to communicate with customers, understand customers' interest and the product or service development strategy can be done more correct. (Charlesworth 2009, 28.)

There is a transformation about internet usage from using it as an information source to a media or channel that can be used for shopping. Although it is important to use internet as an information source, but it is also important to sell products and services for travel and tourism marketing area (Walle, 1996). The nature of travel and tourism industry is required efficiency in communication and message transformation (Seaton and Bennett, 1996). In this sense many destination management organizations and tourism companies try to increase communicational opportunities through internet and websites (Legohérel et al., 2000). According to Ekiz et al.'s (2005: 7) literature analyzing about internet usage there is benefits and drawbacks of internet as a marketing communication tool as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The benefits and drawbacks of internet marketing

Benefits	Drawbacks
+ Accessing to greater number of customers	- Costs involved in constructing, maintaining and updating
+ Exposing the property	- Security, privacy, and confidentiality
+ Advertising and promoting	- Cultural differences
+ Communicating better	- Training, lack of knowledge, ignorance
+ Providing online reservation	- High competition
+ Identifying and targeting customers easily	- Loss of personal touch
+ Being a source of information	- Alienation of the potential customers
+ Saving costs and time	- Telecommunication infrastructure
+ Being free from borders	
+ Being inexpensive	
+ Being flexible and convenient	
+ Globalizing products and services	
+ Increasing customer interaction	
+ Allowing one-two-one marketing	
+ Being accessible 24 hours and 365 days	

Source: Ekiz et al. (2005: 7).

WEB MARKETING

Electronic (E)-Business involves both Internet Marketing and Electronic (E)-Commerce. Internet marketing deals with promoting and driving traffic to a Web site through Web Marketing (Pull Strategy) and E-mail Marketing (Push Strategy) whereas E-Commerce focus on selling products and services on a Web site.

The backbone principles of Web Marketing are:

- Giving customers a reason to come to the Web site, by the means of promoting the web site both online and offline to first time and repeat visitors, providing a compelling content that will make someone want to return, and giving free information, i.e., attract visitors to the site by giving away free information, and then try to sell products and services to those who visit the site. For a DMO this involves giving information such as on useful facts, photos and videos of the destination, how to get to the destination, and what internal transportation means are available in the destination, providing a route planner, places to stay and things to do at the destination as well as booking facilities.
- Building Trust, by selling well-known brand name products and services, by offering guarantees, by providing a customer-friendly navigation system and intuitive interface, a SSL secure server for credit card transactions, and by repeat contact with the web site visitors. For instance, a DMO should stimulate a visitor to sign a guest book and help him to create his personal brochure to build his own guidebook to the destination. This opens the opportunity to the DMO to collect visitor information like name, area of residence, email address, age and gender, source of information to visit the site, reason to visit the site, intention to visit the destination.
- Pull and Push Strategy, i.e., pull customers to the web site by its attractive content, then push quality information to them regularly via e-mail. For example, the information collected by a DMO from its web visitors can be analyzed to come up with customer profiles that may then be used to email visitors with the travel-related information most likely to be valued by them. DMOs ought to develop their own web sites for destination marketing in order to accomplish a number of purposes:
 - Brand Development, i.e., present the destination in the best possible light. Seeking to communicate an image about the destination that will register in the minds of the visitors (existing tourists and prospects) in order to achieve repeat business.
 - Revenue Generation, which considers three sources of income from the destination's online business. First, in the prospect generation model the DMO uses the Web to bring the destination leads and provide information [17, 181 to support the sale, which is closed either by phone or e-mail. A main tool is a carefully designed online response form. E-mail links allow visitors to contact the DMO, but the online form allows structuring the information, so the DMO can qualify the prospect and know how to respond. Nowadays, is already possible to automate the delivery of customized information, provide quotes via database queries and then consummate the sale online. The second model consists in completing the actual sales transaction over the Internet, which is often referred to

as “e-commerce”. The third is the referral generation model. Customer acquisition costs from an affiliate program have been found to be substantially less than paying for banner ads with CPM prices.

- **Cost Savings**, i.e., achieve maximal cost savings on the Internet. The Internet can save costs to a DMO in various ways: (1) Staffing - it is significantly less expensive and more accurate to have a visitor enter an order over the Internet than it is to take it by phone or re-key it into the computer system after the sale; online transactions dramatically cut the cost of processing a purchase order. (2) Distribution of sales materials - the web is a way to distribute great amounts of information inexpensively, and the updating of data is much simpler, too. A DMO can save a lot of money on printed literature (e.g. brochures) by having these translated and adapted to the web framework and motivating tourists to look for that sort of information on its web site. (3) Advertising costs are low since search engines do much of the work. However, to drive a high number of visitors to the DMO's web site, a combination of paid online and offline advertising should be considered.
- **Customer Support**. Providing excellent online customer the means of a , support, for instance through FAQ (Frequent Asked Questions). From a managerial perspective, the World Wide Web (WWW) is a powerful tool for assisting DMOs to perform their three major functions: (1) information provision; (2) marketing and promotion activities; and (3) market research. From a technical viewpoint, the development of a Web site for a DMO entails three major tasks, as shown in figure1 : (1) Web Design; (2) Web site Promotion; and (3) Web site Performance Measurement.

TOOLS OF INTERNET MARKETING

Within our world nowadays, Internet plays a vital role to the society. This part gives a brief introduction of different tools of Internet. Furthermore, it also introduces main types of Internet marketing used in business today.

Website

Website is for sure the most common thing when discussing about Internet and Internet marketing. Some parts of website and website management that are essential to marketers and brand makers are: domain names, website design and management and the real important matters in website management in marketers' point of view.

‘Every essence on the Internet is identified by a series of numbers – called the Internet Protocol, or IP, address’ (Charlesworth 2009, 37). The primary of a domain name is the suffix. When a name is registered, it will take the suffix of the registered naming authority. The most popular suffix is dot com, or .com. When indicating their use as the URL (Uniform Resource Locator), it had become accepted to use the prefix ‘www’ on the primary domain name. The case of second, third, fourth and more level domain basically is because there are so many names are already registered, so to prevent the identical domain name, there is a need for second, third or fourth level domain. Moreover, domain names needs to be at least three and less than sixty three characters (Charlesworth 2009, 38).

In website design and management, simplicity is the key. If a website is full of text and hard to access, visitors do not find creativity, or easiness, to approach information and interest, they will

not come again. Usages of website are to generate return on investment (ROI), brand development and support online sales and marketing. Hence, it is vital to take care of website development. Today, flash technology is well-known in website designing. It is used a powerful tool to make the websites become more user-friendly, easy to access and surf. (Charlesworth 2009, 81 – 88.)

Besides, key issues in designing a website are: download time, make things easy on the eye, font size, page width, subject of page width, respect the conventions of the web, avoid non – standard, ensure the design features of the site are appropriate to its objectives, be aware of using images on website and grammar and spelling. (Charlesworth 2009, 81 – 88.)

Search engines

Search engines, for example Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc., are used by millions of users every day to look for information they need. Search engine operates by providing services (searching, matching results, showing relevant results, etc) to users and leading users to a website or multiple websites relevant to their search. The search engine works by assessing websites for suitability in matching the search and presenting the results of its assessment. When searching on a search engine, the result page will show two types of results: organic result and paid result. Organic result, or natural result, is free results chosen by search engines by relevance, visitors' statistics, trusty level of the website, etc., while paid result is sponsored links and is paid by companies to promote their product. Both organic and paid results are presented on the same result page and relied on keywords selection. Paid result, however, appears on top, or on one side of the search engine result page to get users' attraction (Charlesworth 2009, 181).

Companies see search engine as a chance to promote their product or service to wide-range users. As a result, the definition of search engine optimization and keyword bidding were born. Search was the largest single advertising revenue generator on the Web. It accounted for 47% of all online advertising revenue, as opposed to 22% for online display advertising and 10% of classified ads. And also, over 90% of people use search to launch websites, whether they know the URL address or not (Sheehan 2010, 34).

Keyword selection is vital in search engine optimization (SEO) as well as search marketing. Keyword is the bridge to connect searchers with the businesses that have services that searchers are looking for. In order to get higher ranking on searching result service pages, website developers should figure out and then concentrate on the right keywords. It is claimed that English gives no big help in SEO because the search localization is more developed now, so local people tend to use their mother tongue for search. In some cases, foreigners use local language to search, especially for destinations' names, such as: Munich/Muchen. Also, some languages have similarities, consequently, people have the tendency to search based on what they are mostly used to and not to use English in search. (Charlesworth 2009, 181.)

Search Marketing

As mentioned above, results from search engine result pages are shown with organic results and paid results; thus, search marketing can be made on both of them. First of all, for organic results, or natural results, the process of search engine optimization (SEO) is vital. Because organic results are free links, there is a harsh competition to gain your site's appearance on the search

engines. SEO includes: choosing the right keywords and phrases that are potential, unique yet necessary; focus specific keywords for specific parts of the page; name your website with relevance and submit your sites to as many directories as possible to gain the ability to get into your site (Sheehan 2010, 37). On the other hand, for paid results, it is certainly that your link will appear on top of the search engine result page. Paid search has been one of the most growth sections among online advertising types.

For branding destination, search is a filter that gives analysts a better knowing about customers' trend and interest which will lead the business to the right direction. Naturally, places that pay more attention on building a strong base of service websites would conduct a strong brand. Consequently, they have more advantages than other destinations. (Pritchard et al. 2004, 128.)

Social networks

Not long before, people were not so aware of what social media is and how it appears to be a part of our lives. Years have passed since the development of Web 2.0, the pre-stage of tremendous advance of social media and social networks, but the implementation of social media in marketing and branding is popular just few years recently. Some common kinds of tourism development tools implemented by social media are: blog, vlog, public videos, social forums and social networks (Sheehan 2010, 10).

Sheehan (2010) claims that social media marketing is competitive because, first of all, they save time and cost. Second of all, they change the way consumers hear and learn about and decide about the products and services, which shows the synergy of social media with viral marketing. Customer relationship is tightened through social networks. Lastly, it contains the ability to gather larger groups of people to have idea about the services and the brand and get them to give suggestions to develop (Sheehan 2010, 100 - 106).

The important feature of social media is that everything is a two-way communications (Charlesworth 2009, 301). Also, the reason why social media marketing is more favored nowadays is that people are fed up with brochures, posters, billboards and advertising because they do not provide trusted and helpful necessary information. Social travel forums offer handy, useful and updated tips, experience and information on the destinations. (Social media on Destination Branding 2010.)

Social media marketing

The cooperation of social media and traditional way of doing marketing and advertising can create a much bigger influence from viewers, tourists and travelers. It is mentioned that even though the use of social media in tourism branding is increasing now, it is necessary not to forget the destination's slogan and marketing message. In short, the application of social media enhances tourism strategy in many aspects, plus, it is wise to make use of the advantages of social media in the brand marketing strategy in order to spread out the brand's image, message and information. (Social media on Destination Branding 2010.)

E-mail marketing

E-mail marketing is a basic marketing form when mentioning about Internet marketing. Almost any Internet user is familiar with this type of advertising because, everyday, uncountable number of e-mails is sent to end-customers, to potential partners, to communicate with customers, etc. with different meanings, purposes and all in order to update information for customers. Using e-mail for business improvement, expansion and updating is not new, yet it is still a supportive and efficient tool in marketing. In total, e-mail marketing can be divided into two categories lies on its aim: E-mail as a medium for direct marketing and E-mail as a medium for marketing message. (Charlesworth 2009, 255).

E-mail direct marketing represents by email subscription, announcement e-mail sending after a period of time and all. However, in order to avoid spam and junk e-mails, also confuse the customers and decrease the business's image, development the 'email campaigns that request the permission of the consumer' (Sheehan 2010, 84) is a wise choice. This campaign needs the understanding of two ways of getting the customer's permission which are: opt-in and opt-out.

Opt-in and opt-out help marketing executives receive more precise email address database, target groups and customers' interest. 'Opt-in is where the receiver chooses to receive email by taking action' (Charlesworth 2009, 258), or it is 'where the consumer requests to continue receiving the e-mailings' (Sheehan 2010, 84). While on the other hand, 'opt-out is where the receiver must take an action to opt-out of receiving e-mail messages' (Charlesworth 2009, 258), or 'where the consumer does not opt-in then they will receive nothing more' (Sheehan 2010, 84).

E-mail marketing is used widely in tourism industry with the purpose of giving both direct and marketing message. E-mail marketing is chosen because it is fast, time-saving, cost effective and wide spread. By carrying out e-mail marketing campaign, together with offline advertising to bring out the better enhancement, tourism business is active, moving and updated all the time, and finally directs to the change, the development, the improvement of destination branding strategy. (Charlesworth 2009, 256.).

Web marketing is the tool to build the image of any tourism destination. This is the way with which one can access a wide geographical area. Its various techniques like email marketing, social media marketing, website, and search engine marketing helps in developing and catering the wide area worldwide.

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