

THE IMPACT OF ONLINE COMMUNICATION IN AGROTOURISM

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Abstract. *In order to have a successful business, in the domain of agritourism, effective communication with customers is a must, whether it is direct between people, staff and tourists or online. The Internet is just another mean of communication, like newspapers or television. The ability to communicate on the Internet is one of the main skills needed in tourism. It's so easy to communicate to everyone that people correspond daily with friends, acquaintances, professional colleagues or strangers. Undoubtedly, the internet has changed the way we live, work or learn. Due to its speed, we can promote faster and easier services offered by economical agents in tourism, but at the same time, we cannot neglect that the development of internet can also lead to some negative effects such as the destruction of our traditional values. In Romania, the main reasons of internet usage are: information on tourism, agrotourism, news, books, entertainment, social networking, search for a job, etc.*

Keywords: *agrotourism, online communication, Internet*

INTRODUCTION

The communication term is connected to our existence as people, then as a society, because human beings and communication are closely connected between them. Without communication and language we as human beings that interact and relate in the most part, or even entirely through the communication act, our existence on earth would be useless or would have a negative effect.

Communication is a dynamic process, being in a constant transformation. The society exists due to the communication, it means community and it is seen as a process which involves participation from the members of a society. Communication takes various and diverse forms, from which we will glance at the advertising communication and mass communication, which is actually a form of communication, designed for some large masses of individuals and may have a subjective form, which has as a purpose the manipulation of public opinion.

Mass communication is an integral part of the media and is a relatively new concept, which has developed especially in the postwar period, as a direct consequence of the appearance of the new forms of transmission of the information, either through radio wave or through images on the small screen. Mass communication studies the way in which the individuals and entities transmit the information through the media to a large number of people simultaneously. To this type of communication belong newspapers, magazines, books, television, radio and movies, media used to disseminate information, news or advertising and last but not the least important, Internet.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

It is obvious that the new communication technologies are in the center of some economic and social changes and the bigger impact belongs to the Internet. Communication and promotion in tourism consists in a set of steps of communication which follow the permanent transmission, on various ways, of some messages designed to inform both potential

customers and tourism operators on the characteristics of tourism products and services offered for sale, with the purpose to put together a positive image and to cultivate a favorable attitude towards them and the company, to determine, buying habits of the tourists, changes in the favor of the company that offers services. Tourist promotion goes through a process of improvement and adaptation, being forced to adapt its strategies toward positioning of a product with complex characteristics and in a constant evolution. A consumer has a diverse motivation and an increased elasticity of the demand, in the conditions of a market found in a process of continuous transformation.

From product to consumer, through the specialized market, these key factors from the "trail" of tourism promotion highlights to its specificity, complexity and change trend.

Therefore, the creation of the promotional communication strategy, at the level of tourist unit, the introduction of this in global strategy, designing a promotional mix so to capitalize efficiently the instruments for promotion is formed from rigorous, coherent and interrelated coordinated actions.

Promotional activities in rural tourism require significant investments due to the large geographical extent of the tourism market, manifestation of fierce competition and of the intangible character of tourism product. From this last perspective we can state that intangible nature of tourism services led to the increase of the importance of strategy of tourism products promotion. One of the reasons of the decline of tourism demand consisted from underdeveloped product strategies, of tourism agencies who have not taken into account the evolution of internal and external market, by the increased requirements of consumers.

Romania has a significant advantage compared to other countries, due to a rich and varied tourist potential, that can provide, practically, all forms of tourism required by tourists: from the seaside, in mountain resorts, spa resort, winter sports, hunting, fishing, cultural tours.

Promoting tourism can be done also through special promotions or launching new products, sales campaigns or loyalty programs of the customers, actions that are communicated to potential clients and consumers both directly by email, letters or by telephone but also through online means of communication like Internet, billboards and outdoor signals, all kinds of publications and the press in general.

It is obvious that the Internet has surpassed the traditional media or at least has an advantage over the other media means through the fact that the communication process is done in several directions, anywhere, anytime, by anyone. The Internet is called "*fourth form of media*". The novelty brought by the Internet consists from the fact that it passes from a unidirectional communication, in which the message goes from the organization to the public, this having no possibility to respond to a multidirectional communication.

To have a successful online business it is necessary to have a performant web site. The design, the easy way of finding information, interactivity and the technology are criteria that are taken into account when one designs the online presentation.

The comfort of achieving online bookings by consumers of tourism services confirms the effectiveness of this instrument and the quality pictures, films that present the unique story and virtual tours, this aspect amplifies the impact and constitutes a factor to increase the attractiveness and the decision to purchase a product, packages, etc. in tourism industry.

Below are presented five recommendations for improving the performance of tourism site:

- Avoid using only flash design (it can be attractive visually but may not be used in finding the search engines)
- Consistent navigation (design should be done consistently throughout the site and

- both personal and business, social media is extremely popular
- Although conceived as direct communication this instrument reaches a global audience and resists in time
- The communication is done instantly and can be used on the same positioning in all pages)
- Site content must be updated regularly (to be relevant to the target audience)
- E-commerce plan (contacting customers and users regularly and giving them reasons to return to the site)
- Most important: seek professional consultants in tourism.

Social media refers to those forms of media that use technologies that allow the users to engage in the exchange of information and opinions. Social media is characterized through interactivity, not being pushy with the information offered by the seller to potential consumers, the conversation taking place at the initiative of the user. This form includes online forums, blogs, social networks and communities, actual content, sharing photos and videos and many more, in tourism being already well known TripAdvisor, YouTube, Wikipedia, etc.

Social media is included by tourism operators in an integrated marketing online campaign, this being a very important tool, with a minimal investment, to discover and learn more about customers and potential customers, to build a brand and to generate interest to a deeper engagement. Although not implying a direct cost, the efforts taken into account for monitoring, analysis and response takes time and human resources.

Five important considerations regarding social media:

- The most significant barrier in adopting this environment is not the budget but the lack of knowledge of this area
- In the world, due to the need of socializing be generated in any time
- The transparency is crucial being generated by the trust and credibility.

The Internet, this new medium of communication, becomes increasingly more into a favorable ground for advertising and as promotion means almost ideal compared to other means of mass information. The main reasons for which companies adopt online advertising are: TV audience has migrated and continues to migrate to the Internet: the Internet has a big impact on daily life, the majority of people appeals to him as first choice for information. The Internet is the medium of communication with the fastest growth from history: today, the Internet is present in everyday life.

CONCLUSION

The benefits of communication and publicity on the Internet compared to the traditional one are targeting: the possibility to contain a determined target audience; monitoring: obtaining information shortly after the launch of the campaign; visibility: advertising can be seen 365 days on a year, at any time and from anywhere; high interactivity: the ability of companies to come into direct contact with potential clients; presence of an immediate feedback of the effectiveness of the companies and changes in real time.

In achieving an advertising program regarding an agrotourism service must be followed several steps:

Setting goals of the advertising: before starting a campaign, should be fixed the objectives of its: increasing sales, increasing traffic on site, improving services dedicated to consumers, building consumer loyalty towards the brand.

Setting the advertising budget: allocate a higher percentage from the budget for online advertising, determine a high efficiency.

Selection of advertising support: email and website. Factors that must be considered for choosing the sites that do advertising are: the quality of target audience, content; the behavior and lifestyle.

Creating advertising messages: advertising message must contain the following: the message must be easily visible, legible, concise; the title to be short and attractive; must be used representative words such as guaranteed, easily, results, money, health etc.; the message should be adapted to the target audience; should be avoid the excess of banners, graphic effects, of details.

Adapting messages to the characteristics of advertising target: are provided advertising messages to a large number of receptors, are collected information about target audience, are analyzed the collected dates and the audience is grouped into different segments and thus personalized offers are made.

The evaluation of advertising campaigns online: is realized based on the number of page visited on the site, the number of advertising pages visited on the site, the number of constant clicks.

In Romania, communication and online advertising has grown from year to year due to the development of the Internet speed. The Romanian Internet is a media tool that any advertiser should not leave it aside when it comes to communication and advertising for agrotourism brands or products or services promoted.

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