Digital-Toolkit for Promoting Tourist Destinations

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Abstract: As a result of the active development of tourism in the world, an increasing number of destinations have become available for tourists. At the same time, due to the growing competition, the individuality of special places of recreation sharply decreases. In the face of global competition, when tourist destinations become easily replaceable, destination controls are included in this battle for the attention and resources of tourists. The destination is a complex product, and it is necessary to engage in marketing with the same efforts as enterprises are marketing their goods and services. Due to global digitalization, Internet marketing has long become an integral part of any effective marketing campaign. Determining the goals, methods for achieving them and choosing the right Internet marketing tools are one of the main steps on the path of promoting tourist destinations. The following digital Internet marketing tools can be distinguished: Website, Content Marketing, Search Marketing (including Search Engine Optimization, Search engine marketing), Internet Advertising, Email-marketing, Social Media Marketing (SMM), Mobile Marketing, Viral Marketing, Video Marketing, Voice Search, Audio Content, Influencers and micro-influencers, End-to-end analytics. Creating an ideal digital marketing strategy is based on the use of a specific set of digital promotion tools. Along with the classic tools, such as website, e-mail marketing, SMM, SEO and SEM, content marketing, it is necessary to implement modern, rapidly gaining popularity in recent years: chatbots and instant messengers, optimization for voice search, video and audio content.

Keywords : Digital-Toolkit, End-to-end analytics, Promoting, Tourist Destinations.

I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism destination is a crucial element of the tourism system.

It can be described as a centre (territory) with all kinds of amenities, facilities and services to meet all kinds of needs of tourists. In other words, a tourist destination includes the most essential and crucial elements of tourism necessary for tourists [1-2]. The region of tourist destinations is one of the most important in the tourist system, since the tourist destinations themselves and their image attract tourists, motivate the visit, thus activating the entire tourist system. The term "tourist destination" was coined by Leiper in the mid-1980s. Now destination is a geographic area that has defined boundaries, which can attract and satisfy the needs of a fairly broad group of tourists [3-4].

One of the results of the active development of tourism in the world is an increasing number of destinations available for tourists, while the individuality of individual vacation spots is becoming less and less, and competition between tourist centres is growing. In the face of global competition, when tourist destinations become easily replaceable, destination controls are included in this battle for the attention and resources of tourists [5-6].

In the practice of tourism management, it is understood that destination is a complex product and it is necessary to engage in marketing with the same efforts as enterprises are marketing their goods and services (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Destination as a complex product.

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II. THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNET MARKETING IN PROMOTING DESTINATION

Due to global digitalization, Internet marketing has long become an integral part of any effective marketing campaign. Traditional marketing cannot provide efficient functioning, especially for tourism companies.

The use of Internet marketing along with traditional marketing, and in some cases a complete transition to online technologies, become a prerequisite for the successful promotion of tourist destinations.

Internet marketing has a whole host of benefits:
- Unlimited amount of information
- The ability to combine text, graphic, video and audio information
- Instant information update
- File and database storage
- Two-way communication

- Unlimited users, lack of geographical affinity
- Unlimited time access
- No cost to expand the audience
- The ability to integrate a direct online sales system.

To promote destinations, the use of digital tools has an additional meaning related to the specifics of the product itself - the intangible sensations for which a tourist travels to a country, region, city or resort. The fact of the geographical distance of the product from the buyer complicates the sales process. The Internet allows you to level the remoteness of a destination from a potential tourist - in real-time, a tourist can get all the necessary information, including photos, videos and recommendations from those who have already been there.

Nowadays, neglecting digital marketing in promotion strategies is a big mistake. This is evidenced by the statistics of the tourism industry (Fig. 2).
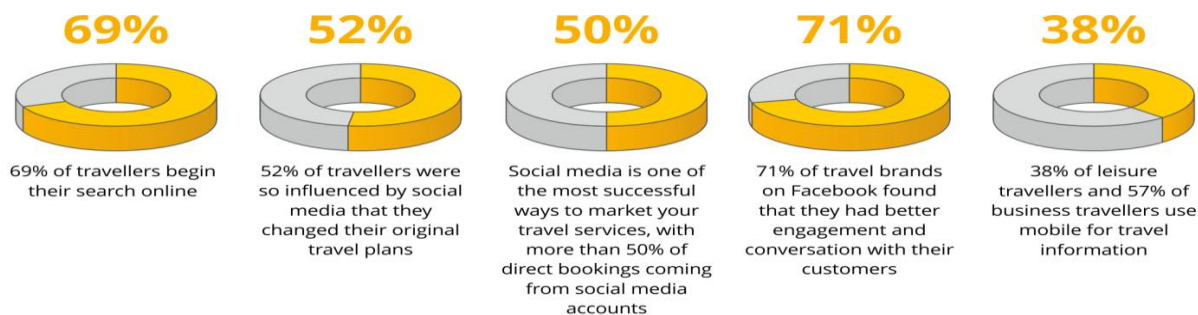
Fig. 2. Travel Industry Stats that Prove you Shouldn't be Neglecting Your Digital Marketing Strategy

III. DIGITAL DESTINATION PROMOTION TOOLS

Determining the goals, methods for achieving them and choosing the right Internet marketing tools are one of the main steps on the path of promoting tourist destinations. In Internet marketing, there is no standard turn-based strategy and a specific set of tools that work equally well for any product.

Before starting the promotion, it is necessary to determine the target audience, analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the destination, set goals. Only then can you begin working with Internet marketing tools.

Internet marketing tools are technologies and methods that allow potential tourists to learn about one place or another, share experiences, share their impressions, make purchase decisions, and book goods and services.

Currently, the list of Internet marketing tools is quite large and is expanding every year, as the resources of the global network offer more and more new opportunities and prospects.

The following digital Internet marketing tools can be distinguished (Fig. 3):
- Website
- Content Marketing
- Search Marketing (including Search Engine Optimization, Search engine marketing)
- Internet advertising
- Email-marketing
- Social Media Marketing (SMM) [7]
- Mobile marketing
- Viral marketing
- Video marketing
- Voice search
- Audio content
- Influencers and micro-influencers
- End-to-end analytics.

Fig. 3. Travel Industry Stats that Prove you Shouldn't be Neglecting Your Digital Marketing Strategy

A. Destination Website

Destination website has two main goals:

▪ generate initial interest in the destination of a potential tourist

▪ provide maximum information about the possibilities of destination for the person who made the decision to travel. To increase the length of stay of a tourist, as well as the average check of a tourist.

The site in its structure and content should correspond to the marketing strategy of the destination - whom to focus on, what to represent, how to represent.

Regardless of the target audience, the site should contain the following information:

What unique is the destination - the main product of the destination.

Presentation of tourist attractions - what you can do here (name, presentation, conditions of visit, coordinates), what benefits can you get from visiting. This is the first thing that will interest potential tourists. It is important to remember that people travel to meet their needs. The site should indicate what needs and how the destination can satisfy.

▪ How can I get to the destination (modes of transport, links to the appropriate transport companies).

▪ Locations where you can stay (addresses and a brief description of the hotels).

▪ Useful tips related to arrival at the place (car rental, currency exchange, etc.).

Standard sites as destination advertising platforms are gradually being replaced by a more complex product that allows, in addition to promotion, to solve a whole series of problems. Such systems become an instrument of promotion, sale and cooperation for all participants of the destination marketing. The figure shows the main content elements of the integrated Internet-based Destination Management System (Fig. 4).
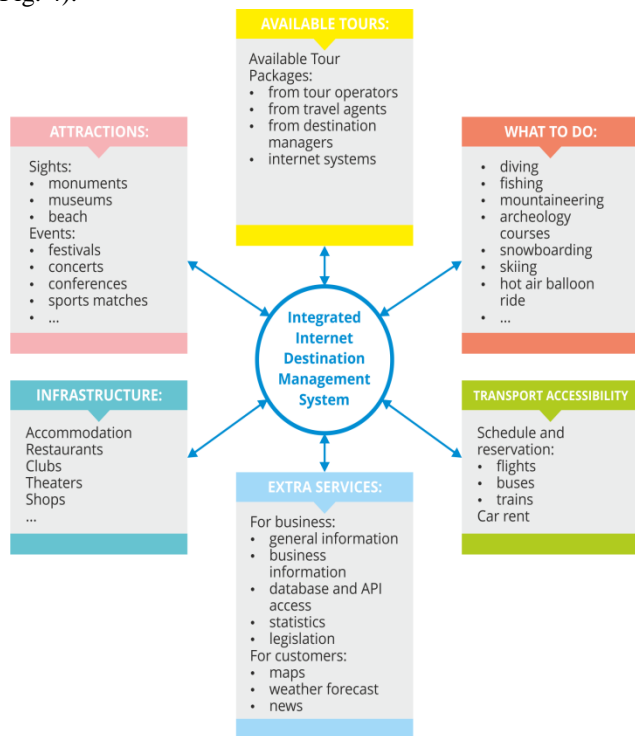

Fig. 4.Destination web portal content

Example

Destination: Buenos Aires [8]
What makes Mi Barrio (My Neighborhood), different from yours? By bringing together locals' perspectives and multi-disciplinary research teams, Buenos Aires launched a project to discover the unique features of 20 distinct neighbourhoods around the city. The project, still under development, primarily seeks to bring back to light old customs and traditions and promote the authenticity of yet unknown to the public districts.

B. Content marketing

Today, content marketing is an integral and most important tool in marketing. Content can be different - articles, infographics, photos, videos - and distributed through various channels, such as a website, pages on social networks, e-mail newsletter, video channel on YouTube. And the main requirements for it remain unchanged: quality, uniqueness and completeness of the response to user requests. The Internet is oversaturated with information, and if your article looks like an advertisement, they won't trust it. Therefore, you should always be inclined to the information style or native advertising. If the article brings usefulness to the consumer, for example, entertains or gives exciting information - in this case, the sponsored links do not cause irritation and the conversion increases.

Example

Destination: Blogville (Emilia Romagna) [9]
1200 blog posts, 1,8 million visitors, 18 million reached-users. All of that in less than 5 years.
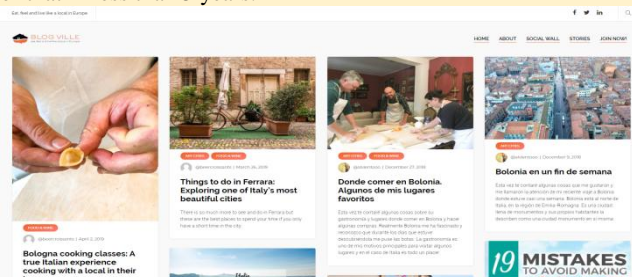
Blogville (Emilia Romagna) is a specially designed accommodation that hosts travel bloggers in Bologna. Guests have the opportunity to explore the area, live like locals, and – well – write about it.

C. Search Marketing (including Search Engine Optimization, Search engine marketing).

It consists of several categories of tools, such as SEO (Search Engine Optimization) or web resource optimization for search engines, promotion in search engines and search advertising. Search engine marketing can target various types of searches, including image search, video search, news search, and industry-specific search engines. Usually, the higher the site's position in search results, the more interested visitors go to it from search engines. Raising a website to the top for search results, for example, "Marietas Mexico Hidden Beach" is straightforward; it is a medium-frequency request with low competition. And this request will be entered by a small audience that is familiar with the destination.

It is much more challenging to carry out work to promote the site on demand, for example, "the best beaches in the world". This is already a high-frequency request with high competition.

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One of the creative and innovative examples of successful digital marketing of destination was the Faroe Islands with SheepView and Translate campaigns on social networks. Since Google did not cover the islands in its Street View program on Google Maps? The Faroe Islands began its street mapping by attaching a camera to a sheep. And also, due to the needs of the growing tourism market and outraged that the Google translator does not support the Faroese language, local residents decided to voluntarily and independently translate the texts for further communication with 80,000 people.

D. Internet advertising

Using the Internet as an advertising channel is an objective necessity for any destination that wants to develop and attract a larger flow of tourists and investments. Currently, there are several varieties of advertising on the Internet:

- contextual advertising - represents text or text-graphic modules displayed on sites located in the context of the audience of the advertising object or a specific user
- banner/media - static or animated advertising objects are aimed at attracting the attention of the audience.
- viral. The basic principle of viral advertising is the free distribution of information "from user to user". Most often, in this case, videos or graphic content act as an advertising medium.

The tourism agency of the canton of Graubünden (Switzerland) in 2015 was struck by the advertising of passengers at a station in Zurich. Random passers-by were surprised when not just an advertising character turned to them from the screen of a digital billboard, but a real person in real-time. A resident of a small village in the mountainous region of Graubünden personally talked with passers-by and invited them to visit his native corner.

- teaser. Teaser advertising is partly reminiscent of media - the same graphic advertising modules, supplemented by textual content.

E. E-mail marketing.

E-mail advertising has recently occupied the lion's share of the market. Today, it is most often just one of the areas of work with a regular client audience. However, if desired, it can be used quite effectively. The main thing is to approach the organization of the newsletter wisely, avoiding intrusive language and uncontested appeals.

F. Social Media Marketing (SMM)

Today, the influence of social networks on people's choices is quite significant, and their audience consists of billions of users. Some tourist destinations do not have their website, but some are present in one or more social networks.

SMM is one of the most significant mechanisms for creating the image of a destination since, in social networks, participants are united not only by the communication environment but also with clearly established connections between themselves.

Unlike the press, television, radio, and official websites, networks carry unbiased information that users trust, and which, with a reasonable approach, can be used for strategic and tactical purposes of tourist destinations. Currently, consumers are increasingly less likely to trust traditional forms of advertising and spend more and more time online. Newspapers and magazines are losing their audience because web portals provide this information for free, faster and in a more accessible form.

36% of online travellers visit social networking sites to influence destination selection (World Travel Market London)

G. Mobile marketing

Mobile marketing tools are increasingly being used, such as sending SMS messages, installing QR codes on monuments and tourist sites, creating and distributing mobile applications, including free and test items (guides, catalogs of interesting places to visit, etc.), sending postcards (congratulatory and with a virtual postal stamp) with views of cities and several others. For example, in Barcelona, free Wi-Fi is connected on board tourist buses, and a series of QR codes for smartphones is created, when bus passengers at stops can get information about objects, services, and special offers. The most popular mobile applications. So, in Barcelona, 9 mobile apps are offered on the TourismBarcelona website: the official city guide, restaurants, Barcelona Gaudi, Medieval Barcelona, etc. In London, 10 free mobile applications are offered on the site of the authorized company London and Partners.

H. Viral marketing

The peculiarity of viral marketing is that the leading distributor of information is its recipient, which causes greater confidence among potential tourists. Since tourist products have specific features, including intangible ones, obtaining information not from the advertiser himself, but indirectly through other customers is more effective. In addition, the tourist service is usually bought away from the tourist destination where the tourist is going, therefore the buyer receives the idea of the tourist service as a product only in the form of an information flow, and the tourist's preliminary impressions of the service are based on the content and video sequence that he receives. In other words, the decision of the end-user to purchase travel services is largely determined by the quality of information support that is available to him at the time of making the purchase decision.

In 2014, the Thai Ministry of Tourism released the video "I Hate Thailand," which gained not only viral popularity but also received numerous awards at advertising festivals. The protagonist of the video, tourist James, is experiencing all possible problems in Thailand, which makes him hate the country. But the kindness of the locals helps him comprehend the fullness of Thai hospitality.

I. Video marketing

Video marketing became one of the leading digital tools in 2019: about 80% of online content is rendered. This is especially true for the tourism industry. A variety of formats (reports, video blogs, interviews, discussions) makes it easy to tailor such content to almost any audience. The lack of processing and installation reduces the distance between the brand and users, and most importantly - it meets the request for reliability and authenticity.

Live broadcasts are watched three times longer than regular videos, involving a more significant stream of views and comments. This creates all the conditions for the development of broadcasts in digital marketing.

Video materials have the opportunity not only to demonstrate the destination, but also tourist entertainment clearly. They contribute to the development of the tourism product, which should be presented on all platforms.

Example

Destination: Iceland. Sing along to the 'A-Ö of Iceland' [13]
Created by "Inspired by Iceland", this karaoke song combines aspects of Icelandic daily-life with its beautiful landscapes. Projecting in a very humorous way Iceland's unique spirit, the song draws the viewer in – with catchy tunes – and encourages her/him to learn bits of the language as well.

Example

Destination: Estonia. CoolEst, smallEst, modEst, fastEst… just Estonishing!.
Among the many strategies implemented, **#JustEstonishing** (developed by Peter Kentie) definitely stands out. The name of the country is consistently played around with incredible creative mastery and aims at acknowledging local resources and trends.
Estonia's Stress Buster campaign is another one worth highlighting. Conducted by Visit Estonia, Stress Buster proposes the country's peaceful countryside as the remedy to stress. Using facial recognition technology to identify stressed-out individuals first, and then playing sounds from the Estonian nature to relieve their stress [12], the campaign reached a total of 50 million people.

J. Voice search

By 2020, about 30% of all actions on the Internet will be done without the help of hands, and 50% of searches will be carried out using voice commands. Brands are looking for ways to develop apps like Siri, Google Assistant, and Bixby.

As these predictions come true, destination marketers need to optimize content for voice search, which is very different from traditional. Voice queries are formulated more freely than printed ones, and their average length is approximately twice as long: from 1-3 words in a print search, it grows to 3-5 words in a voice search. The "restructuring" of content to voice may become one of the main trends of next year.

K. Audio content

Another way to seamlessly integrate the brand into users' lives is to expand and develop audio content. A year ago, a survey showed: 65% of owners of smart speakers would never want to return to life without their voice-controlled assistant. And the number of such owners continues to grow at a tremendous pace. For the same reasons that encourage people to use voice commands and messages, people are looking for content in the most accessible and convenient way.

For those who want to learn something useful along the way to the bus and not apply any extra effort - this is the most convenient option. Audio content is becoming one of the newest and most effective marketing tools to date.

L. Influencers and micro-influencers

In recent years, influencers on social networks have become a real force: now we have stars on Instagram, millionaires on YouTube, and famous bloggers on Twitter. Millions of people follow them and their messages, reviews and other content. The influence of such people has become apparent to everyone. At the same time, the number of popular influencers in the network has increased, and along with their number, the cost of their services has also increased. As a result, more and more brands are turning to the so-called micro-influences - people who exist in every marketing niche, who have a rather low number of subscribers (less than 10,000), but at the same time a very attentive and loyal audience.

Firstly, they have a more lively and responsive audience, and secondly, their services are much cheaper, and their involvement is many times higher. Thirdly, the audience is not so willing to follow the advice of celebrity, knowing that the recommendation of the hotel or restaurant is paid.

M. End-to-end analytics

An essential digital marketing tool is End-to-End Analytics. This is the most effective way to optimize advertising budgets and make informed decisions in promoting the destination.

In most countries, tourism enterprises are small and medium-sized businesses; therefore, national support is required to promote the destination in international markets. The amount of funding depends on the country's economic development, state tourism policy and the size of tourist flows.

Modern end-to-end analytics can process Big Data, as well as evaluate the effectiveness of each launched advertising channel, even offline data.

The effectiveness of tourism management is considered in two directions: economic and social.

The main and simplest are the calculations of the frequency of trips and the intensity of travel, which to some extent allows us to conclude that the use of digital tools and the development of tourism as a sub-sector of the economy as a whole in the destination is effective.

The frequency of trips shows how many trips a person takes on average over a certain period:

$$T_F = \frac{N_t}{P} \qquad (1)$$

where T_F – travel frequency;

N_t – number of trips;

P – period.

The determination of the rate of travel intensity takes into account not a person, but the entire population of the region:

$$T_I = \frac{N_T}{PS} * 100 \qquad (2)$$

where T_I – travel intensity (%);

N_T – number of tourists;

S – population size.

This information will allow us to keep statistics and form the basis for further forecasting.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The high level of international competition in the global tourism market forces states to make great efforts to attract tourists to the country, use new technologies to promote national tourism products, and invest substantial financial resources in developing tourist destinations.

To be effective, internet marketing does not have to work in a vacuum. To successfully promote the destination, the following conditions must be met:

- the presence in this territory of places of accommodation, food, entertainment and a highly developed transport system;
- the presence of attractions of interest to tourists (the presence of an attractiveness factor is one of the main factors of competition between destinations; therefore, there must be a certain highlight to attract tourists to the territory of the destination);
- availability of information and communication systems, as this is a necessary tool to inform the tourist market about destinations.

Creating an ideal digital marketing strategy is based on the use of a specific set of digital promotion tools. Along with the classic tools, such as website, e-mail marketing, SMM, SEO and SEM, content marketing, it is necessary to implement modern, rapidly gaining popularity in recent years: chatbots and instant messengers, optimization for voice search, video and audio content

Particular attention should be paid to determining the target audience and what is attractive to this audience. Based on this, focus on quality content marketing, virality and creativity of the message.

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