Chapter 2
Digital Marketing Best Practices for Management in Tourism Destinations

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ABSTRACT

This work fills a gap that has existed up to now, proposing a series of specific indicators that serve as a manual of good digital marketing practices for the promotion of tourism destinations. According to the proposed model, the variables to take into account are those related to web metrics, SEO positioning, and social networks. Likewise, the indicators and metrics proposed in the tourism destination Malaga (Spain) are applied. In this way, the model can serve as a guide for the managing institutions of tourism destinations that wish to measure the results of their efforts. This analysis facilitates the identification of the strengths of the strategy followed, as well as those that need to be improved. It can also be used to verify the positioning of tourism destinations with respect to their competitors.

INTRODUCTION

The current tourism sector can be considered a unique market in which each country, region or city competes with others to attract tourists (Manhas, Manrai, & Manrai, 2016). This is due to the phenomenon of globalisation. This fact worries the managers of the different tourist destinations, who are pressured to generate an attractive image that allows the destination to be in a competitive position within the tourism market. One of the most effective ways of promoting this competitive position is the construction of a recognised brand that can represent its identity in an attractive way for potential clients (Gallarza, Saura, & García, 2002).

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Tourist destination websites play a decisive role in this competitive and global context (Fernández-Cavia et al., 2013; Fernández-Cavia, Rovira, Díaz-Luque, & Cavaller, 2014). This implies that it is not enough that tourist destinations have a competitive image on the Internet. The large amount of information that the user can currently find on the net complicates the task of capturing the attention of tourists, who are increasingly demanding in terms of user-friendliness, speed and website design. This has given rise to a tendency of the different tourist destinations to give greater weight to the work of improving the website, in order to meet the demands and expectations of users and thus ensure that they have a satisfactory experience during their interaction with their portals. web (Martinis, Papadatou, & Kabassi, 2019; McCartney, Butler, & Bennett, 2008). That is, tourist destinations want to offer a promotional website that not only offers information about the destination, but that it is presented in the appropriate way so that it is useful and simple for the user who is looking for information or intends to plan a trip.

On the other hand, since the Internet began to increase in popularity and search engines were born, the volume of information has continued to grow. For this reason, techniques that aimed to classify and prioritise information according to its quality began to appear. This set of techniques is called SEO (Search Engine Optimization). As stated by Yalçin and Köse (2010), SEO techniques allow a website to appear in the main search engine result lists for some specific keywords. Due to the large volume of information available on the Internet and, consequently, the difficulty of being in the top positions of search engines, SEO is strictly necessary for content to reach target users.

Finally, in this era, it is essential to consider the role of social networks in the promotion of any company and also of tourist destinations. Social networks have not only changed the way in which companies exercise communication, but also the lives of people. These media are all those tools that allow us to speak, listen, dialogue and interact with other individuals, companies and institutions; those that put us in touch with a community made up of people with similar interests to ours or those of the company we work for; and those that destroy the traditional sender and receiver scheme and encourage interaction between all users, proposing a new communication paradigm (Gil, 2017). That is why social networks allow people to communicate with companies or institutions and vice versa. For companies, social networks can represent a window of communication with the user. In this way, you can easily reach people who fit within the profile of the company or institution, know what they like, have fun or dislike. It also allows to transfer different types of content related to the activity of the organism and to find out which one they like the most. Therefore, it is essential to develop a model of good practices for digital marketing of tourist destinations that serves as a guide for managers of tourist destinations and companies that want to take advantage of the opportunities offered by this new context.

BACKGROUND

The Web as a Basic Marketing Tool for Tourist Destinations

Certainly, the web is one of the most important marketing tools today. The main reason is the visibility it provides to any company or institution. If a company is not online, it does not exist. According to Álvarez, Pérez and Solana (2013), the use of web tools favours the reduction of marketing costs, increased sales and allows access to new market segments. In addition, it favours the improvement of service and customer service, which allows increasing customer loyalty and satisfaction. Specifically, according to these authors, the benefits can be summarised in three aspects: (1) The web can be a perfect means of