Online Marketing Challenges of Tourism Products in Albania

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Abstract

Customer communication in a virtual environment is gaining more and more a new dimension. The globalization of markets made it necessary to use more sophisticated methods to convey product attributes and its target market, despite the difficulties that may be in terms of vulnerability test or tests for specific products. By reducing communication costs, technological changes have encouraged tourism companies to move from mass communication to specific communications.

The spread of internet has given a large number of people, judging methods to better products and services. This has made it possible to determine the circumstances when a consumer is more informed about the real value of a product on the market than the suppliers themselves.

The purpose of this article is to show marketing online tourist products, the challenges he faced and the strategies that should be used in order to meet the needs of a target market and creating competitive advantage either through differentiation satisfying needs better target market, or whether through lower cost to serve this part of the market, or through both.

The study involves the use of secondary data and interviews with professionals in the field of tourism and leading tourism enterprises in Albania, in order to help travel agencies and managers of tourism to adapt the strategies of differentiation to meet the profile of the tourist services that offer their web-sites in the target market of tourists.

Key words: Online, marketing, customer, strategy, competitive advantage, target market, tourism.

Introduction

Nowadays, online information and its content has become the most important resource for individuals because globalization of markets seek to get more information from the environment in which they are interested. In Albania Online marketing is an innovation, which this communication last decade has become a very important issue that helps companies and consumers to communicate easily and share data without being forced to have direct meetings although in some cases they reluctant because of privacy of their data.

Albanian companies are starting to realize the importance of the Internet, where communication customers in a virtual environment is seen as the only possibility for their survival in a market that changes with dizzying speed. For this reason, the number of those seeking to have a website to offer is growing. Another way is the distribution of e-mail messages in the target directions of customer / potential customer. Today, forms of online marketing are in fact so sophisticated, that professionals are able to learn the market orientation of their casual visitors, who sent a simple e-mail.

For this reason various companies use online communication must not only create more sophisticated methods more confidence to make their web sites, but also to convince the audience about the safety of their privacy.

The focus of this study is internet marketing and evaluation of electronic services in the sector of travel agencies. The main purpose of this study is to explore the field of internet marketing and electronic services offered on the websites of travel agencies in Albania, therefore, provide a better understanding of this phenomenon for electronic services in the sector of travel agencies not are a lot of study area, therefore requiring further study

In addition, marketing communication is increasingly seen as an interactive and multidimensional dialogue where different scholars have given their contribution in developing new marketing strategies, aiming to bring the message to their target customers. The study of literature and the research of various authors who have

contributed to the marketing strategies shows that we are dealing with the definition and implementation of the best marketing strategies by manufacturing, but remains to be done in the service sector .

Rapid developments of internet as a new platform of communication and its impact on the delivery of services targeting a new research field. "Modern marketing strategies, can not be effective without integrating online". Nowadays, online presence and low prices should be alternated with modern communication marketing strategy to ensure the safe success.

In small and medium enterprises, which have limited resources, there is an acceptance growing marketing online, where web-represents the best way to reach customers and to distribute products or tourism services through transactions online by creating a sense of depth and a specific context of this fenomeni. The latest electronic service trend setting an profile and usable appropriate to evaluate services on the websites of agencies, they have transformed it into a differentiation strategy.

Over recent years, excellence services is paid a great attention to management, but now it is important that a part of its focus on distributing them via electronic channels. Studies have shown that the service is a critical component for customers and in general he is poor. To encourage repeat sales and to honor Domestic Customer loyalty, agencies should shift focus to electronic services to all efforts before, during and after transactions online. Tourist product unlike other products have special features and therefore, the quality of services is a critical success.

New marketing strategies have not the intention to sell, but by successful marketers, the goal of marketing is to make selling unnecessary with the main aim to recognize and understand consumers as well as the product sold itself

This article aims to contribute to the orientation and sensitization of acts of the tourist businesses and mainly towards modern methods of communication and marketing strategies. The main goal is finding more sophisticated methods to preserve the privacy of virtual communication through the application of modern marketing practices, such as blogs, E - consumer, etc. Using such strategies, it will bring to increase the flow of users (tourists) and awareness about marketing on the internet and the role of the electronics services, and will increase not only the ability to use new technologies but will increase the benefits offered by this technology.

Methodology

For the realization of paper are used primary and secondary data. Secondary data were collected from study literature by the different Albanian and foreign authors in the field of marketing and marketing strategies in order not only use the appropriate strategies to enhance the quality of tourism services, but also maintaining the privacy of website them. Primary data was collected through surveys through questionnaires prepared to the staff of tourism businesses of the South Coast (Region of Vlora) and in-depth interviews (50 with leader of the tourism businesses), with the aim of extracting data on the different modes of communication and marketing strategies used. The study also contributes to the awareness of businesses and the different researchers the importance of defining and implementing successful marketing strategies for long-term sustainability of enterprises in the market. In the following section we will look at the challenges facing the online marketing today.

Information asymmetries for selling the touristic products

In practice the sense of the internet marketing and quality of electronic services remains limited and still poses a navigation problem. Researchers have not yet reached common points about the type of services to be provided through websites and how their impact varies by customer, industry or special produktve. By (Pedersen and Nysveen, 2003) "There is still a difference between consumer preferences and the services provided in the websites of travel agencies". This leads to the formulation of the research problem.

With the increasing role and importance of web-sites as from the perspective of customer (contact point) as well as from the perspective of tourist agencies (virtual offices of agencies), the latter should have a good understanding of the strategic importance of it, as a tool to guide the customer in an electronic environment. Raise the users of social networks and the widespread use of the Internet around the world, has resulted in the success of various companies depends primarily on marketing online

Marketing online offers: cost that fit any business, many opportunities advertisement, targeting the audience, access to marketing and management company, promoting the smooth and successful, and the combination of different forms of marketing such as banners, sponsored articles, pro-motion in social media, etc. (http://telegrafi.com/benefitet-e-marketingut-in-internet/ benefits of advertising on the internet.

Tourism has long described as asymmetric market information. In such a situation, we know that consumers have difficulty assessing the quality of a product and space high-quality products is significantly reduced. The large websites and advertisements that appear in different, has given hope to solve this problem, however, this expectation has not always been satisfactory. However, the spread of internet has given a large number of people, judging methods to better products and services. This has made it possible to determine the circumstances when a consumer is more informed about the real value of a product on the market than many suppliers, which requires the adoption of possible strategies, not only the buyers but also by the sellers in order to to rebalance the pleasure to (consumers); and proceeds to (suppliers).

It is known that the "experience" (from the perspective of a customer) is an important factor that affects the growth (or even survival) of a firm. This is even more important in markets where information, more than tangible objects, play a vital role. Information flows are essential in many economic activities and represent the main factor for the stability and efficiency of markets. Many of these are characterized by incomplete information and, in particular, by asymmetric information, where sellers know the characteristics of a product and its true value, while potential buyers not. As mentioned at the outset, tourism has long been regarded as an asymmetric market information, (Cohen, 1979; Smeral, 1993). Tourists are able to assess only partially characteristics and quality of the touristic package who choose before a tourist trip, based on the information made available by providers and brokers.

Using the Internet raised the idea that this asymmetry can be reduced (in some way), providing customers more opportunities to collect details not only about their tourist destinations but also and products and services offered; (Werthner, A; Klein, W. 1999: 67). Currently it seems that asymmetry is not reduced, as hoped and powerful presence online intermediaries, but somehow has perpetuated the situation known (Chen, I. Schwartz, D. 2006: 89). Promise to reduce the asymmetry, through the use of technology easily accessible to all, did not indicate whether it brought the desired results. Environment known as Web 2.0 has modified the situation by making available a large amount of information in virtually every aspect of human life.

For a long time an individual connections and opportunities to share experience and information about products and services have been limited to a small number of friends or close relatives. The usefulness of this type of information is reduced due to the small probability of meeting someone who had the same (or similar) experience.

In tourism, virtual spaces have created the opportunity to consult a number of sources, where destinations, providers, products and services are discussed, compared, commented and evaluated. These resources have rapidly changed the way individuals cope with the problem of collecting information about tours to make choices or provide experience and facilitate. These opportunities created by expanding significantly the concept of friendship and by multiplying the amount of information resources available to any single individual.

Also, these resources have changed rapidly how individuals cope with the problem of gathering information about the tours, who before making choices should refer to other people's experiences, thus proving that buyers are expressing more informed than themselves sellers of products or services.

Asymmetric information still exists, although somewhat changed. The authors describe as a *"mechanism to reverse unfavorable"*.

However, in addition to technical and theoretical characteristics (Krishna, A. 2009: 98), this road seems to have attracted many of the tourism industry. Public sales are mainly used as an instrument of marketing and promotion to raise awareness in the event of new products or services. The real solution to this issue lies in the improvement of the efforts to get a better understanding and deeper market and their customer's preferences, beliefs, and behaviors. Under certain conditions, a buyer can achieve better results by dealing with an individual seller than with mass procurement (Manelli, F; Vincent, A.1995: 34). In a sense, this is what happens today, when buyers make extensive use of online resources in order to select the best offer for a product or service.

A large number of applications are now available that allow tracking of emotions passengers tourists, said that virtually every aspect of their journey, offering incredible wealth of information about the features, characteristics, equipment, and services provided. Moreover, these tools may provide a better estimate of intrinsic value (surface) of a product when the product is included in a particular context, even beyond the core values of the product itself.

A good use and real these means, given the fact that it may be the only viable option to communicate better with their customers about destinations, companies or organizations will bring insurance increased awareness of values their specific proposals and increase the value perception by tourists. Although difficult and still under study with uncertain results, the complex issue of promotion activities in electronics has begun to give some initial guidelines (Clemons, 2009: 45). The literature indicates that a fair assessment of the quality of a product offering allows producers proper positioning of their product on the market.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that tourist destinations should focus not only on improving the satisfaction of current customers, but also to improve customers' perception about the overall quality. This allows proper positioning of the tourist destination, particularly when information on increased offers the high quality and negligible cost.

This study helps travel agencies to use differentiation strategies to meet all of the services they provide their web-sites in order to increase customer traffic and potential users. The study will also help tourism planners by providing a basis for re-evaluation of the services provided at the site when necessary.

Moreover, the results of the study will provide data on consumer satisfaction, helping to determine further work on completing the development of electronic services and online marketing. Knowledge and the results of this study will assist in the practical implementation of drafting a profile of electronic services from the perspective of consumers online and their perceptions on electronic services, which can be applied in practice by managers of tourist agencies for evaluation of websites and to determine what needs to improve. Tourist agencies need to understand how consumers evaluate the electronic services and then to use this as a basis to improve the their web-sites. Good knowledge of the needs of online consumers is a vital issue for managers of tourist agencies to make decisions to improve electronic services.

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