

The implementation of digital marketing in promoting for tourism –a showcase of local and global experiences-

L'implémentation du marketing numérique dans la promotion du tourisme – une vitrine d'expériences locales et mondiales –

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Abstract:

This study aims to identify the reality of implementing digital marketing on companies in the tourism industry and the effect it has on them by highlighting the Algerian experience locally and a collection of global experiences mainly focused on the continent of Asia and how tourism companies there depend on digital marketing strategies and tools to promote for tourism and attract more tourists.

This study concluded that digital marketing has become essential for the success of the tourism industry, and it is necessary for tourism companies to be able to efficiently make use of the digital marketing tools in order to promote for their services.

Keywords: digital marketing, tourism, digital marketing tools, social media.

JEL Classification Codes : D72, M32, O33.

Abstract :

Cette étude vise à identifier la réalité de la mise en œuvre du marketing digital au sein des entreprises du secteur touristique et son impact sur celles-ci, en mettant en lumière l'expérience algérienne au niveau local ainsi qu'un ensemble d'expériences mondiales, principalement axées sur le continent asiatique, et la manière dont les entreprises touristiques y dépendent des stratégies et des outils de marketing digital pour promouvoir le tourisme et attirer davantage de touristes.

Cette étude a conclu que le marketing digital est devenu essentiel au succès de l'industrie touristique, et qu'il est nécessaire pour les entreprises touristiques d'être en mesure d'utiliser efficacement les outils de marketing digital afin de promouvoir leurs services.

Mots-clés : marketing numérique, tourisme, outils de marketing numérique, médias sociaux.

Code de classification Jel : D72, M32, O33.

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Introduction:

The rapid development of technology, and the widespread use of the Internet all over the world has produced insightful changes in the recent years, one of those changes came in the shape of digital marketing which is known to be faster and more efficient compared to traditional marketing.

Digital marketing has made a huge impact on many fields in economy and marketing, especially dynamic, volatile and time-sensitive industries such as tourism which is highly affected by the ongoing development of technology and digitalization. Now, the tourism industry tries to adapt to this revolution of technological development, by attracting customers using digital platforms and social media to promote for their products and services and offering their customers multiple choices to fulfill their needs.

So, what is the reality of implementing digital marketing in tourism locally and globally?

The importance of this study lies in highlighting the importance of applying digital marketing technics and strategies in tourism, and how tourism companies use it to improve their services and promote them to attract more customers.

The objective of this study is to recognize the role of digital marketing in tourism, while also showcasing examples of global and local experiences in applying digital marketing in tourism and the benefits it has on the tourism industry.

I. Digital marketing:

1. Digitalization:

Digitalization involves the use of digital technology in order to change the business model to provide more revenue and create more efficient and profitable processes and create further value-producing opportunities. The change towards digitalization has affected the way in which companies operate, from analyzing marketing information to dealing with customers' various needs and interacting with them (Hadjielias, 2022).

2. Definition of digital marketing:

Digital marketing (also known as internet marketing, e-marketing, web marketing) revolves around the different operations that take place before, during and after the production process of goods or services, which is done through various digital technologies (2019, ابراهيمي), digital marketing facilitates interactions between companies and customers as well as interactions between customers so that emotional and psychological bonds between customers and companies are maintained (Masrianto, 2022). Digital marketing is also known as the promotion of products or brands via one or more forms of electronic media (such as social media, websites, email...) combined with traditional communications to achieve marketing objectives. The difference between digital marketing and traditional marketing is that the former uses channels and methods that enable the company to understand what is working and what isn't working in the market usually in real time, which means that digital marketing allows companies

to track consumer behavior and analyze the market in real-time (Kaur, THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY, 2017).

The first definition mentioned the time in which digital marketing can be applied without mentioning any tools or channels or the effect it has on companies and customers, while the second definition completes it by mentioning that effect, and the last definition added the role of traditional communication in digital marketing and how it can be combined with digital communication.

The thing that these definitions have in common is that they all agree that the use of digital technology is the key characteristic in digital marketing.

In accordance to our analysis of these definitions we're going to try and project it on the tourism industry and say that:

“Digital marketing is the use of internet and different types of digital technology and tools (such as the internet, social media, email, websites...) in conjunction with traditional communication, to promote tourism products and services via different channels, in order to facilitate communication with potential tourists and among them while also providing them with the information they need using real-time communication.”

We can also say that digital marketing is not only about the adoption of digital marketing technology, but also about how companies can plan, implement, and manage their digital marketing. So, companies must have a digital marketing capability in order to apply it. (Masrianto, 2022, p. 2)

3. Digital marketing capability:

In order for companies to use digital marketing successfully they need to have a number of base structures that are considered essential for adopting this type of marketing, they're job is to facilitate in-depth customer interactions and through these interactions, customers gain access to company resources and information, while the company learns more about its customers (Masrianto, 2022, p. 4), those structures are summarized in the following:

- 3.1. **Solid infrastructure:** it includes all cellular ground installations and connections, hardware and physical information technology (such as computers, wired and wireless communication cables, internet...) which are necessary to practice digital marketing. In developing countries information technology seems to be less effective compared to advanced countries due to many reasons, such as the weakness of communication infrastructure that often the convergence and communication process falters whenever the power goes out or when the phone and network lines are damaged for a long time.
- 3.2. **Soft infrastructure:** it is represented in the set of services, information, expertise and software of the technical systems of networks and applications through which digital marketing operations are carried out, and it consists of websites, electronic databases, network services, self-digital products for users and trade services...
- 3.3. **The human infrastructure:** which includes a set of scientific and technical acquisitions, skills, and competencies that qualify to provide services related to digital marketing, whether is it related to hard infrastructure (wires, connections,

networking, repairs...) or soft infrastructure (providing software consulting services and electronic applications, ect). (سليم، 2022، الصفحات 691,692)

4. The stages of digital marketing: The companies' relationship with customers through digital marketing has five stages, which are:

- 4.1. Attraction:** It is how the company pulls customers and attracts them to its website on the Internet, that attraction marks the beginning of the interaction with the customer, it requires the customer to voluntarily visit the website or interactive application of the advertiser which can reach the customer through advertising on websites or advertisement windows or other channels and that is in order to attract customers, create an audience that can become loyal to the brand and pays attention to advertising.
- 4.2. Engage:** after attracting customers to the company's website, the company need to engage them in the marketing process, learn about their opinions by communicating with them, and learn about their views and preferences to achieve an interaction that contributes to the completion of the business process, companies can benefit from innovative programs in providing interactive media of value to customers. The company's web site, virtual communities and forums also provide direct interaction with the customer and customers among themselves.
- 4.3. Retain:** It means keeping the relationship with the customer and that is by ensuring the return of customers to interacting with the company again by visiting its website. Retaining the relationship with the customers can happen through developing it and contacting him on a continuous basis, this requires engaging with the customer and understanding his needs and making sure that the customer will not return again without reason which helps build a positive relationship with the customers and maintaining them.
- 4.4. Learn:** learning about the customers' preferences through interactive media to get more information about them such as their trends, behaviors, attitudes, which can be achieved by doing surveys and questionnaires. Most companies support chat systems to get a view on the interactions and discussions that helps them to know customers' purchasing preferences.
- 4.5. Communicate:** it is the process of transferring information and common understanding from one individual to another, so after the company has obtained customer information it will move towards the next phase in the digital marketing process, and that is to communicate with these customers and to provide them with added value, this will give the company the ability to launch the product, and to learn the feedback about it as soon as possible, it is one of the most important marketing opportunities that contributes to the value added of customers. It is used to focus the interaction on a particular market, to learn more about the target customer. Communication is the most important stage of digital marketing as it is best to specify the interaction and marketing effort to more than one customer at the same time. (إيمان، 2022، الصفحات 446,447)

5. The 5Ds of digital marketing:

Digital marketing uses multiple digital tools to achieve marketing goals, these tools help the customers interact with the company and comprehend the company's goods and services, they also helps the company in reaching customers and interacting with them. Those tools which are known as the 5Ds of digital marketing are essential for handling digital marketing interaction; we can summarize them in the following:

- 5.1. Digital devices:** users interact with companies' websites and mobile apps typically through a combination of connected devices including smartphones, tablets, computers, Televisions, and gaming devices.
- 5.2. Digital platforms:** most interactions on these devices happen through browsers or apps from the major platforms or services, which includes: Facebook, Instagram, Google, YouTube, and Twitter...
- 5.3. Digital media:** it includes different media channel that are used for reaching and interacting with customers, digital media can be paid, earned and owned, it involves advertising, e-mail and messaging, search engines, and social network sites, it is essential for companies to use the right channel to connect with their customers.
- 5.4. Digital data:** When a company interacts with a consumer, it collects data that helps the company develop, evolve, or offer new products or services to the customer, that data needs to be protected by law in most countries.
- 5.5. Digital technology:** in involves the marketing technology that companies use to create interactive experiences, from company to customer and from customer to company, it can be through websites and mobile apps or in-store kiosks and e-mail campaigns. (George, 2021, pp. 371,372)

II. Digital marketing in tourism:

When it comes to the tourism industry's use of digital technology and information and communication technology, it has been one of the earliest adopters. Travel agencies for example, use digital technology for booking, accounting and other tasks, and travelers and tourists' use of digital technology has been continuously increasing, they use it to research, explore, interact, plan, book and ultimately share their travel experiences (Madoui, 2021, p. 1313).

So, before talking about the use of digital marketing in tourism we're first going to define the concept of tourism and tourists.

1. Definition of tourism:

We're first going to give a definition of tourists,

"A tourist is that person who moves and travels to a place outside his usual place of residence for a period of not less than 24 hours, whether inside his country (local tourist), or outside his country (foreign tourist)." (ابراهيمى، 2019، صفحة 4)

When it comes to the definition of tourism it has been going around many researches and academic writers over the past few decades, some define it as "the activity in which people travel away from home for leisure purpose and for a limited amount of time."

(George, 2021), this definition failed to mention the time and distant traveled for the person to be considered a tourist, it also limited the purpose of tourism to leisure and fun and didn't consider other types of tourists that travel for other reasons than leisure. Another definition was given by the United Nations World Tourism Organization which says that tourism is "the activity where people move and stay outside of their usual environment for a period of time that doesn't go over one consecutive year for the purpose of leisure, enjoyment, and other reasons that are not related to the practice of an activity with the aim of earning from it." (الحليم، 2022، صفحة 321)

So, we can say that tourism is *"the act in which tourists travel and stay out of their home for a period of time that goes from one day and is limited to one consecutive year, tourists can travel outside or within their country for various reasons which can be cultural, religious, for business reasons or for leisure and entertainment, and not for the purpose of residing in that place."*

2. Tourism promotion:

Tourism promotion performs one of the functions of tourism marketing, it works to stimulate tourism movement and influence directing tourists to an area or a specific location. The tourism promotion includes every activity aimed at defining a tourist area and achieving a response to the target audience, and the digital tourism promotion can be defined as using modern technologies in presenting tourism products and convincing the tourists of buying them. (غضبان، 2022، صفحة 592)

Tourism promotion can be done through many digital tools which will be described in the following part.

3. Digital marketing tools for the tourism industry:

It is essential for companies to carefully pick out the digital marketing tools that they will use to promote their services and to communicate with potential customers to attract them, especially the tourism industry which started considering digital marketing as something crucial for achieving success. In the following section we are going to mention the most important tools that are used in the tourism industry:

3.1. Website:

websites can be perceived as the face of a company it uses it to engage directly and get closer to existing and potential customers, the websites content need to be target-oriented, relevant, easy to understand, and it should be regularly updated (Chamboko, 2021, p. 715), the company must design a site that attracts customers at first sight and encourage them to repeat their visits. (Pitanatri, 2016).

The website of a tourism company is a special web page created by it, and is provided with information by text and photos, allowing customers to visit this website to inquire about reservations and services available 24 hours a day, where it helps in the process of marketing faster. Through the establishment of its website, the company can offer services of all kinds and provide the visitors with their specifications and prices, its distribution

channels and methods of electronic and traditional payment, the tourism company must also prepare distinct content on tourist trips and traveling and provide the customers with more attractive information through its website. (الصادق، 2022، صفحة 58)

3.2. Chatbots:

Thanks to technology's effect the customers' demands have been continuously increasing and now they look for instant gratification which can be provided by the instant response that is given by chatbots. Chatbots are machine conversation systems developed to evoke humanlike interactions, they can be considered as virtual service agents and can be used as mobile travel companions, their role is to provide reliable information and real-time interaction, it also offers different interaction languages which can be helpful in the tourism field which requires people to travel to different places with different languages, (Chamboko, 2021, p. 716) it also provides tourists with answers to issues such as knowing the baggage allowance, nearest business lounge, gate numbers, and how long it can take to the airport (Hassan, 2022, p. 28).

3.3. Mobile travel applications:

Mobile phone marketing's importance has been rapidly increasing and the number of mobile internet users is continuously growing, for tourists, having a mobile travel application provided to them by the tourism company is considered as a convenient and low-cost option, it helps tourist to easily plan their holidays through their smartphones and can cause them to make spontaneous decisions, the tourism company can reach out to its customers through push-notification or in-app messages in order to attract them and get their attention, the mobile travel applications can have many functions such as geo-tracking services, climate and weather forecast, Multilanguage translator, currency convertor and many other useful options. (Chamboko, 2021, p. 717)

3.4. Display ads:

Display ads are small, rectangular boxes containing a text or a picture that companies pay to place on relevant web sites. The larger the audience, the more the placement costs (Pitanatri, 2016, p. 117), it helps the tourism company promote its services and reach out to customers and become known to them.

3.5. Search engines:

Through search engines located on the Internet, the customers can search for the products and services they desire. The search engines provide them with a large number of alternative options which helps the customer make comparisons and choose what suits him the most (الصادق، 2022، صفحة 58). Increasing visibility on search engines includes two aspects. One, Search engine optimization (SEO), it is based on the creation of a permanent advertising model on the basis of reaching more new customers by managing the traffic on the internet pages, it's considered an advertising model that the tourism company can use to direct the consumer to the desired site or to the content of

that site which is the main purpose (Yılmaz, 2021, p. 9), it can determine the online popularity and increase website visits. It is necessary for tourism companies to know that SEO takes time to show results as it's an ongoing process. (Kaur, THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY, 2017, p. 74). Another aspect is paid advertising on search engines, it refers to the practice of paying for user clicks when a query is typed into a search engine and an ad is displayed along with the search results. (Jafari, 2016, p. 380)

3.6. Opt-in e-mail:

It's an email that's only sent to subscribers who willingly provided their email address to join the company's mailing list, it is a form of direct communication and it's essential that e-mail is opt-in, otherwise it may be considered as illegal SPAM and in most cases it will cause the customers to ignore it. (CASTRO, 2017, p. 88)

3.7. Social media:

Social media is the most important tool that is used in the promotion of tourism, it refers to online platforms where people connect and communicate (Kekea, 2022, p. 2581) these platforms enable the tourism companies to reach out and talk directly to their users, this can provide insights on customers' likes and dislikes and help the company know what their opinions are. The most relevant social media platforms for a tourism business include the following: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube (Kaur, THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY, 2017, p. 75).

III. Local and global experiences in applying digital marketing in the tourism industry:

1. The Algerian experience (SDAT 2025):

The Algerian experience begun when Algeria sought to develop the tourism sector and put in place a plan to support it called SDAT 2025, which seeks to organize the work of tourism companies to improve the general situation of the tourism industry.

This plan aims to activate digital marketing of tourism services through three stages, the first is to digitally link national tourism departments so that they coordinate with each other on the presentation of information and the electronic referral of tourists to tourism companies that adopt digital marketing as a marketing method for their tourism offerings, The second stage is the creation of a structure that enables Algeria's tourist enterprises to complete commercial transactions and settle the financial implications, in addition to enabling tourists to buy offers and pay the value electronically, The final stage is the application of integrated digital marketing where the entire tourism sector can benefit from e-tourism services and terminate financial transactions electronically and coordinate them in addition to linking e-tourism with other business and economic activities in different countries (عمار، 2007) .

This plan is based on information and communication technology, especially the Internet, through the signing of a bilateral agreement between the Ministry of Tourism and Handicrafts and the Ministry of Post and information and communication technology in order to create a tourist site which represents the digital portal for tourism in Algeria, through which the Algerian tourist destination will be promoted and marketed for all foreign tourist markets in addition to the local tourist market (محمد، 2017), so the Ministry of Tourism and Traditional Industries has set up a website (www.algeriatours.dz) containing numerous data on Algeria's tourism sector in order to familiarize the visitor with the tourist destinations in Algeria, as well as a list of certified tourism companies (عمار، 2007), this website has many options such as:

Online booking of tourism services, digital tour management, and digital hotel management and reception for the Algerian tourist destination by connecting e-tourism sites with hotel establishments, tour operators, tourism and travel agencies to the digital tourism portal in Algeria (محمد، 2017)

Since this experience mostly targeted internet users we're going to give some statistics that involve the number of internet and social media users in Algeria.

According to www.datareportal.com there were 27.28 million internet users in Algeria in January 2022. Algeria's internet penetration rate stood at 60.6% of the total population at the start of 2022. Internet users in Algeria increased by 1.8 million (+7.3%) between 2021 and 2022.

When it comes to social media there were 26.60 million social media users in Algeria in January 2022, that was equivalent to 59.1% of the total population, but it's important to note that social media users may not represent unique individuals, that means that social media users in Algeria increased by 1.6 million (+6.4 %) between 2021 and 2022.

2. Global experiences:

2.1. The Malaysian experience:

In order to keep up with the continuous growth of the tourism industry, Malaysia tourism decided to go online to attract more tourists, this was achieved through their international campaign called "truly Asia" which is a slogan that's been launched in 1999 and is still being used to attract tourists and show the attributes this country has to the world (Razak, 2020, p. 50), it marked the start of Malaysia tourism digital promotion experience, it was a huge success with multiracial, multiethnic, and ecotourism attractions which offered all the aspects of Asia (Hassan, 2022, p. 61), from then on there have been big yearly tourism promotions campaigns such as "Visit Malaysia Year" (VMY), we're going to talk about the VMY 2014:

The VMY 2014: the minister of tourism and culture in Malaysia YB Dato' Seri Mohamed Nazri decided to integrate a digital marketing program to the VMY 2014 campaign, he said that it's important for them to follow suit and keep up with the global shift towards the digital world, and that tourism in Malaysia has been leveraging its digital assets to optimize presence in the digital sphere, while increasing and

maintaining a strong relationship with fans and followers and ultimately converting them into actual tourists or repeat visitors. According to him the statistics up to September 2013 show a record of 18,756,476 tourist arrivals, a 3.3% increase compared to the same period last year.

This digital marketing program included the following:

- ❖ YouTube Brand Channel
- ❖ Web TVs – TrulyAsia.TV & My Tourism TV (MyTTV)
- ❖ Social Media - TM Official Facebook (Local/Domestic & International)
- ❖ Twitter – TM Official Twitter
- ❖ ShareMY – travelling via Social Sharing
- ❖ TM Official Website & TM Official Mobile Travel App – The Malaysia Trip Planner

The digital marketing program has also shown impressive results:

- Tourism Malaysia recorded over 12.5 million total views across all their YouTube video content and over 2 million view on Visit Malaysia Year 2014 Promotional TV commercial.
- TrulyAsia.TV uses videos and the Internet to show entertaining videos and live events on Malaysia, reaching out to potential visitors who want to have a preview of what Malaysia offers.
- The travel app for tourism Malaysia “the Malaysia trip planner” gives travelers personalized, inspiring and practical information on Malaysia, and all you can see and do. The application organizes travel plans into an itinerary that has all of the visitor’s trip details in one place. Moreover, it provides extensive information on Malaysia’s various attractions and enables quick and easy sharing with friends via Facebook and Twitter. (CULTURE, 2014)

2.2. A collection of digital marketing application experiences in Asian tourism:

2.2.1. China:

China National Tourism Administration has deliberated to offer online booking services, electronic excursion guides, and free Wi-Fi to all travelers. One of the most important inn groups in China, Huazhu Group, is making fewer contact payments and check-in/out with facial detection and even orders robot deliverance of products from outside the hotel with “check-in in 30 seconds” platform that verifies.

2.2.2. Maldives:

Maldives is considered an ultra-luxurious destination for tourists, this is what drove it to the promotion of tourism through 360-degree videos, augmented reality videos, influencer marketing, and mobiles, also the big impact of word-of-mouth, false news, and storytelling.

2.2.3. Indonesia:

Foreign visitors try to book their travel packages in Indonesia ahead through digital applications, together with the payments, through their gadgets. Tiket.com is one of the leading online travel agencies in Indonesia for train ticket booking, hotels, and flights.

2.2.4. United Arab Emirates (UAE):

Dubai has instigated several new fashions, styles, and technologies in tourism together with integrated mobile apps, audio tours, digital reputation animation, and more. The “Visit Dubai” mobile application is developed for tourists to explore Dubai itinerary. In Dubai, the Emaar Hospitality Group was one of the foremost to initiate in-room iPads for guests to do the whole thing from booking a dinner to controlling their atmosphere and even drawing the curtains (Hassan, 2022, p. 12).

Conclusion:

we have concluded that digital marketing is counted as one of the ways to promote for tourism whether it's locally or globally, and that is because of the huge role that internet and technology play in tourism industry, especially when it comes to making it easier for tourists to collect information and plan for their next travel, that is why it is necessary for tourism companies to make use of the different digital tools such as social media, companies' websites, and mobile applications, which are counted as the most used and most visited platforms that can help tourism companies attract new customers and promote their services.

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