



A Study on Relevance of Digital Marketing on Tourism In Kerala

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A Study on Relevance of Digital Marketing on Tourism In Kerala Abstract In this new era of powerful internet tools and technologies reaching out to potential customers has evolved exponentially. These days digital marketing has become very critical path of every type of business; small or large. Business these days has been largely affected by the increase in relevance of digital marketing in brand promotion and customer acquisition.

ABSTRACT

In this new era of powerful internet tools and technologies reaching out to potential customers has evolved exponentially. These days digital marketing has become very critical path of every type of business; small or large. Business these days has been largely affected by the increase in relevance of digital marketing in brand promotion and customer acquisition. With increase in tech-savvy nature of tourists and their capability of getting information on latest offers and best prices, the relevance of digital marketing has increased like never before. Nowadays success of a business in tourism industry is largely depends on efficiency of digital market campaign. This study aims at examining the basic determinants of digital marketing and its relevance on tourism industry.

KEYWORDS

Digital marketing, Internet marketing, Tourism, Websites, SEO, E-mail marketing, Social media.

INTRODUCTION

The norms of marketing have been revised all around the world since the introduction of Internet technology. The internet has changed the way people interact with brands. It is reshaping marketing economics and rendering many of the function's old strategies and tactics obsolete. The old manner of doing business is unsustainable for marketers (Edelman, 2010). Digital marketing today has become one of the most important focal areas for organisations all around the world. It began as a means of communication and has since expanded into more than just another source of income. It helps to build and sustain long term partnerships with many stakeholders and parties

that are involved in the market. the internet core feature, interactivity, has permitted a level of connectivity between all market participants (Batani, 2015). Today's internet users interact not just with one another but also with their favourite brands. This has given brands the option to speak directly with their customers and get to know them better. One of the key reasons of digital marketing's success over traditional marketing is that it allows companies to watch customer behaviour in real-time. Every digital campaign may be measured in terms of reach, engagements and conversion. This has given marketing research a whole new meaning allowing business to better understand their clients demands than ever before. As a result including digital marketing into a companies overall marketing strategy can only help the company reach its overall marketing and commercial objectives by allowing companies to obtain insights into customer behaviour and better meet their demands.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To look into the characteristics of a successful digital marketing campaign.
2. To assess the role of digital marketing on tourism industry in Kerala.

Characteristics of a Successful Digital Marketing Campaign

After figuring out what digital marketing is all about, the following was identified as the top 6 qualities of successful digital marketing campaign:

Quality website

A good website is now a requirement for starting a business, it not only allows the company to attract new customers across geographical boundaries, but it also serves as a digital destination for the audience who can assess it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Strong Social Media presence

Business can communicate directly with their customers via social media websites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram. Not only can having a presence on social media platform helps a firm to establish trust and improve customer service, but it also gives insight into what customers are up to.

Search Engine Optimisation

Today SEO is an important aspect of digital marketing. The online popularity of a business is determined by its rating on various search engines which aids in increasing website traffic. There is a widespread belief that SEO efforts would lead instant return. It is critical to comprehend that SEO is a long-term process that takes time to bear fruit. Business must make certain that a specialised crew ensures that on the page and off the page SEO strategies are carried out.

E-mail marketing

E-mail marketing isn't just about flooding the audience's inbox with messages. To get the best results, it must be well planned and performed. Sending customised e-mails to users enhances the likelihood of receiving immediate responses while also demonstrating that a company cares, adapt, offers and communicate for different user groups depending on whether they are in the business relationship cycle.

Engaging content

Increased engagement rates should result from content that is shared among several internet platforms. Business must post relevant content on a variety of platforms at the appropriate time. Blogging is a great method to connect with audience and do more than simple sell stuff.

Mobile-friendly

Everything a company does online these days should be mobile-friendly. The majority of online users currently utilises their mobile phones to access the internet which should be reflected in all aspects of online marketing consideration.

Digital Marketing and Kerala Tourism Industry

All persons, activities and organisations involved in providing service for visitors on vacation, such as hotels, restaurants and tour guides are considered part of tourism sector. Prior to the introduction of digital marketing, the functions of those who provided these services was critical to the achievement of company's goals. Newer means of marketing diverse services to target customers has evolved since the internet's inception. With the rapid expansion of internet the tourism business in particular has been impacted. Users can acquire tourism related services online with the touch of a button while comparing prices from business all around the world. The most important digital marketing actions to compete and flourish in the digital world are:

Quality website

Marketing specialists must create appealing websites, discover a means to entice visitors to visit the site, keep them there for a while and encourage them to return regularly. (P. Kotler, T John Bowen and C James Makenes, 2010). This is particularly true for the forms that exists solely online such as the tourism industry. Websites serves as a digital location for audience where a company may define the experience of their brand. Its critical to keep the website material short and sweet, with the USPs prominently displayed. All of the services as well as the pertinent information should be properly stated on a reputable website. Users will be able to make more informed decisions if high resolution photographs of various services such as hotel room and spas are included. Users prefer to read webpages as a compare to mentalised parts of information by swiping their eyes from left to right, then moving down the page in an F shaped pattern, skipping a lot of material in the process. Long content should be broken up into sections so that the users may simply skim down the page. Its also crucial to leave enough breathing room between various images, texts and buttons on the page. Appropriate space between items on a page makes reading more enjoyable and allows users to focus on specific pieces of a page without getting distracted by the rest of the page. To prevent disrupting the visitors experience, many websites open price lists, menus and packages in a new window. The website must be designed in such a way that the customers may make purchase without needing any assistance. It must be updated on a frequent basis to reflect the changing demand and taste of customers. To avoid an increase in bounce rate, the navigation tab must contain a clear option for deals and packages. A good website reflect the high quality that a company stands for and thus it should be designed and maintained with the industries functioning in mind. Kerala tourism department has created its own website in order to promote and spread awareness among potential tourists of tourist destinations in Kerala, Hotels and resorts in Kerala also have their own websites in order to do the same.

Strong Social Media Presence

Social media is a new marketing tool that allows us to learn more about customers and prospects than ever before. Respect, Trustworthiness and honesty must be exchanged for this information and knowledge (Marjorie Clayman). The following are the most relevant social media networks for a tourism business:

- i. Facebook
- ii. Instagram
- iii. Twitter
- iv. LinkedIn
- v. YouTube

Its much more than nearly promoting the latest packages and services when we are on these networks. Because a user will not utilise the services on a daily basis, it is critical than a company joins the dialogue that customers are having on these platforms. Focusing on posting materials that provides value to the life of audience can help to increase the engagement. Ixigo posted a basic video about

travel tricks, which turned out to be one of the most effective digital marketing initiatives. Both Kerala Tourism Department and private organisations that are involved in tourism industry use social media platforms to boost their sales and improve their brand image. Finally, a company should not treat all the platforms as if they were one, each one has its own set of unique selling points. The top 2 platforms for a tourism business should be Facebook and Instagram.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO)

The importance of SEO in influencing website traffic cannot be overstated. Business must guarantee that both on the page and off the page SEO operations receive equal attention. The first step towards good SEO is to use tools like keyword planner to determine the most relevant keyword from tourism business because Google, the world's most popular search engine, recognises synonyms, keywords must be carefully picked. Rather than simple increasing the number of back links the focus should be on developing high quality ones. Long tailed keywords such as best holiday packages in India are more likely to convert than short tailed keywords.

E-mail marketing

“Using e-mail marketing allows any potentially interested guest to arrive at the correct moment for the lowest possible price and the result of such efforts must be measurable, providing a foundation for future marketing decisions” (P Kotler and K L Koller, 2008). Users can learn about the latest hotel discounts, unique holiday package deals, membership groups, room availability and much more through E-mail marketing. Users receive transactional e-mails informing them the status of their bookings. E-mails are also an excellent approach to maintain contact with customers after a transaction has been completed. Customers receive special mails on their birthdays and anniversary providing a discount on services. Customers are entitled to make a purchase while browsing competitors as a result of this.

Content

Digital marketing is all about content. Content of high quality must be interesting and give value to the viewers daily life. “There is no magic formula for successfully engaging with the audience on social media”. According to socialmedia.com “But implementing the 80/20 rule should always be a key element of any social media strategy”. Its as simple as this: utilise only 20% of material to promote business and devote the other 80% to content that genuinely interest audience and engages them in dialogue. Videos and infographics are interactive content types used in tourism sector to be noticed and engaging users. Content creation has become very popular in recent days in Kerala as more and more youngsters are creating highly watchable contents and most of these contents are related to travel within Kerala showing different destinations which are affordable for most of the public. Most of these contents are either free promotion for the product or service. But organizations under tourism industries also pay people to create contents based on their product or service.

Mobile-friendly

With the emergence of smartphones people all around the globe use it to buy everything online so it is essential that all of the above digital marketing techniques should be mobile friendly putting it in a different context we should know that Only 3,5 billion people on Earth use a toothbrush. But 4 billion people have a mobile phone. In todays world, having a mobile-friendly website, app, social media updates, E-mails, SEO or any other component of digital marketing is a must.

CONCLUSION

Today, digital marketing is all about using internet technology to reach out to and engage with existing and new audiences. Digital marketing has transformed the ways firms communicate with customers and disrupted sectors. The ability of digital marketing to track data regarding user behaviour and campaign performance in real-time is a key difference between traditional and digital marketing. The upheaval in the tourism industry began a few years ago and has changed the way the firms

communicate with their customers. The above 6 points- quality websites, SEO, e-,ail marketing, social media presence, content and mobile friendliness play a critical role in any business's digital success in tourism industry. Digital marketing has also revolutionised the way in which business under Kerala tourism industry promotes its products or service. So we can conclude by stating that digital marketing has contributed to drastic change in marketing strategies and is relevant for development of Tourism in Kerala.

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