

ADVANCED TOURISM MARKETING: BUILDING SUCCESSFUL PR THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

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Business battle fiercely, making an enormous variety of products to meet different customers' needs. In many businesses, promotion is the key to a new product success. Promotion is any technique designed to sell a product to a customer. To sell a product, promotional techniques must communicate the uses, features, & benefits of the product. [1]

Nowadays travel and tourism public relations play an important role in both tactical and strategic marketing activities and in many cases are integrated with marketing communications. The tourism industry has its own specific major sectors such as hotels and lodging, restaurants, establishments, tourist destinations, and transportation service. Each mentioned sector of the travel and tourism industry has its own messages, public relations tools and audience. For instance, meeting planners are the most important to hotels, as well as travel agents; but they are of less importance to restaurants and airlines.

It is very important to create visitors' positive perceptions and feelings about holiday destination because success in the field of travel and tourism industry depends on it much. Hotels, restaurants, destinations, attractions and transportation modes - they all need strategic and effective public relations to be successful and popular among tourists. PR department creates favorable impressions of each and every sector of the travel and tourism industry.

Building good PR in tourism demands a particular amount of attention, ideas, energy, intelligence, & surely a good quality many mediums.

A fairly recent but really fast-becoming popular method is the proliferation of marketing through various social media. A huge part of modern life nowadays is the growing & near-indispensable requirement to be always "on-line". Nowadays it is difficult to survive without a phone, constant checking of e-mail, social networking web sites, news flash, etc. Everyone must be updated- fast- and right away. With this prerequisite to be always connected, it is important also to take advantage of such means to be able to be in contact with a target audience for marketing and PR purposes. [2]

There are new marketing programs that have come out as a consequence of these realizations. Among these are web-marketing or e-communication. Through the higher number of people going online and using the world-wide-web, this has become a new-fangled breeding ground and stage for internet marketing & promotions. The success of independent shops, artists, musicians, writers, bloggers, graphic designers, photographers, etc. through marketing on the

internet in particular through social networking services such as Facebook, Multiply, MySpace, Chictopia, Youtube, etc. is proof of the power of internet marketing.

When it comes to advertising for a good quality PR in tourism, this medium is certainly very useful and powerful. It is far easier and faster to distribute news, ads, announcements, press releases, promotions, and the like through the web, where linking, tagging, posting, re-posting, blogging, tweeting, stat messaging, instant messaging, forwarding, etc. is achievable. Some even program their adverts to go viral and this literally ups the chances for the advertisement to be seen by more people at a quicker much more massive rate.

By using as mediums these very prolific means of communication in tourism marketing, it would be a lot easier to promote the certain destinations & plans offered by the region. Pictures & movies could be posted & linked to their respective places, along with hyper links to respective authorities as well as connection details. [3]

What makes this kind of marketing even more all-inclusive & inclusive is that a few internet sites used for promotion even have a page for the notes and ideas section where customers can post constructive commentary, concerns, critiques, proposals, advice, etc. not only for the business itself to peruse but also for other potential customers interested to try the destination out. Links to other websites and picture albums regarding the tourist spot can also be offered to provide extra information about the destination.

Another technique that could be used in marketing for tourism will be to send a weekly, monthly or bi-monthly e-newsletter throughout e-mail to keep updating the objective market with the latest developments in the tourist spot being marketed. New packages, perks, local shops, buildings, establishments, sources of entertainment, etc. can without doubt be announced & spread through this medium. This is extremely convenient since people typically check their e-mail anyway & possessing this e-newsletter sent regularly would add to the chances of the advertisement being really read and the tourist destination actually visited by the customer.

The internet has indeed become a new stage for these new method of advertising and marketing. The plane of marketing is a ruthless & fast-paced, highly-stressful world where in this internet-savvy age group, it has become harder and harder to get and maintain an individual's awareness.

With these new procedures for developing PR in tourism through internet marketing, the industries are trying to keep up with the movement of the target market and so far, the idea still looks pretty effective. For example, PR in Kazakhstan is developed well. I just want to focus on nowadays situations. As 2010 draws to a close and Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) winds down, the country is shifting the focus of its image-shaping efforts from politics to sports. The country's next big project – hosting the seventh Asian Winter Games, starts from January 30 to February 6. Kazakhstan has in recent years worked hard to project a global image of an up-and-coming nation [4]. Hosting high-profile international events gives it the platform to sell itself to the world. —The formation of a national brand for Kazakhstan as a country aspiring to be among the leading countries is a key task,|| Zhanat Zakiyeva, an official from the Kazakh Foreign Ministry, told a roundtable at the Institute of Political Solutions (IPS) in Almaty in October [5].

In addition to chairing the OSCE and hosting the Asian Winter Games, the country seeks recognition through other projects. It is the home to the Congress of World and Traditional Religions and RK chair the 57-member Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in 2011.

Analysts say this is all part of a deliberate strategy to cement a regional leadership role. —It demonstrates that Kazakhstan has emerged as the key power in the Central Asian region. ... President Nursultan Nazarbayev's proven himself to be a very skillful politician and diplomat and part of his domestic legitimacy rests on his perceived success in the international sphere,|| Rico Isaacs, a lecturer in International Studies at the UK's Oxford Brookes University. —The fact they've lobbied hard to get all these prestige events is illustrative of the fact that not only have they emerged as the key power in Central Asia, but also that they're seen as the focal state in the region that it's possible for major powers to do business with,|| Isaacs added.[6]

Astana is still basking in the glow of hosting the OSCE summit held at the beginning of December - despite disputes that prevented any meaningful achievements at it. The games give authorities another opportunity to garner positive PR. The Asian Winter Games are the biggest sporting event ever to be held in Kazakhstan, and bring together over 1,000 athletes from 27 Asian countries.

Irbi, the games' mascot, has become a ubiquitous presence around the host cities, with the cheeky snow leopard grinning down from billboards inviting people to the games.

Sport has played an important role in Kazakhstan's promotion abroad. The Astana Cycling Team, sponsored by Kazakhstan's state asset holding company Samruk-Kazyna, has brought wide recognition to Astana via back-to-back Tour de France victories for Alberto Contador, although it has also brought controversy in its wake with doping scandals.

In the hockey world, Barys Astana, sponsored by the state railroad company Kazakhstan Temir Zholy, competes in the Continental Hockey League, which features teams from Russia, Belarus and Latvia.

The Asian Winter Games, which played out at 10 separate sites, prompted the construction of new sporting venues and the upgrading of existing facilities. The state has invested more than \$1 billion in developing the infrastructure to host the games.

Astana, Kazakhstan's glitzy new capital, hosted the hockey, speed skating, and figure skating competitions, as well as the opening ceremony on January 30 in the state-of-the-art Astana Arena. At the foot of the Tien Shan Mountains, Almaty welcomed ski jumping, downhill skiing and the closing ceremony.

One of the aims of the games' organizers was to make it easy for ordinary citizens to attend events by keeping ticket costs down: tickets for the opening ceremony were relatively pricey, running from \$50 to \$100; but tickets for individual events were more affordable, costing between \$5 and \$15. [7]

There was also be a torch relay. The flame arrived from Kuwait on January 12 and toured all the regions of Kazakhstan before arriving in Astana for the opening ceremony. Running concurrently with the games was a cultural festival, with Astana hosting exhibitions of ice sculpture, music and dance and circus art.

The games leaved the country with a legacy of world-class sports facilities for its athletes to train in, which also attract winter sports tourists. The games could also act as a springboard to a bigger prize - the Winter Olympics. Having failed in a bid for the 2014 Olympics, a successful Asian Winter Games may enhance future chances. Kazakhstan is already mulling a bid for the 2018 or 2022 games.

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