



Continuous issue-9 | July- December 2014

The Role of E-marketing in Travel Agency Business

Abstract ::

Internet regards as the third wield revolution subsequent to agricultural and industrial revolution. As per report of Ministry of tourism -2013, approx one-fifth population of India are regular Internet user. As per report 165 million frequent users of Internet in India. Tourism is a service industry. To reach the customer, range of channel for online promotion like E-mail, Face book, Linked In, Various social networking sites are heavily used by travel agent and tour operator. Travel industry experts find e-marketing as the most effective tool for promotion and creating awareness of travel products. In financial terms, it is considered as best ROI – Return on investment.

Mobile marketing provides easy and fast access to large quantity of travel seeker. Mobile marketing is on the rage by travel agent now a day. E-mail and SMS are most effective tools of marketing, and many travels agency has separate department, whose work is to send mailers and message for domestic and international packages to the customer.

Key words: E-promotion, Mobile marketing, Travel Agent, Travel Products, Overseas Packages.

Introduction :

E- Marketing tricks have increased by major companies including travel industry in India, and the trend is growing faster. Major company has their websites, and put all information including all travel products and service offered by them. While it is a industry where the buyer has different purchase power, and many company offer the products and service at aggressive prices, still in economy terms, there are limited access barrier for fresh player because of partial supervision control and less initiative to operate separate division the this activity. Big Players from the Industry adopted online promotion and marketing in India for vibrant growth of the business. E-marketing has facility of taking online enquiries and orders, provides online client service, take online pre and post tour feedback etc.

More than enough reasons are there to prove important to discuss about tourism. Tourism is considered as global service sector which has direct impact with interrelated services and suppliers. As per WTO - World Tourism Organization, Travel and Tourism contributes 11% of the world's GDP. A range of marketing tools, marketing strategies, marketing mix, e-marketing strategies for promotion of tourism products and service under chaotic marketing environment used by travel agent. Organized marketing mix strategy would highly recommend and required in today's competitive environment. As discussed, tourism is a mixture of variety of services like Accommodation, Transfer, Food, and Sightseeing. A common E-marketing tool has to develop for easy promotion of all travel service on one single click with use of internet. Overseas tourism is growing with the common rate of 10% every year. India desires to develop tourism sector for overseas travel, industry has to plan intentionally and re-energized internally to supply accessible travel to meet the diverse needs of overseas traveller. Deep research and understanding is important to get required attention and success in online marketing. Tourist pay for product and service all the way through social medium.

Scope of E-marketing:

There Scope of E-marketing can be defined as below:

- Promotion on social networking sites
- E-mail to the exciting and potential client.

- Provide Information on the World Wide Web
- Product sales and services on the Company web site
- Payment with use E- banking
- Give confirmation of the service on the internet
- Provide Pre and Post purchase service online, even to the customer located at different area.

Expert claims that today's customers are highly authorized and number of internet websites are there related to tourism. Other devices like smart phones permit purchaser to interact with the enormous people and to talk about availability and worthies of travel products. Big travel agency, which has branches across the country and in some case agency has overseas branch, they provide a facility of booking the travel package from any branch office and is eligible to get service from any of branches in case if the traveler go to different area than his usual residence. Brand factor affects the decision of customer. Travellers prefer to go with major brand among the various option available in the market to book for domestic and international tour package. Lipsman, Mud, Rich, and Bruich (2012) stated that "brands increasingly are interested in establishing a social presence and engaging with their fans, helping shape their customers' experiences, and even leveraging their voices for greater marketing impact". To deal with the client, the travel agencies need to understand the effective use online media of promotional strategy to attract the potential tourist.

The company's mission and objective need to match with marketing strategy in social media. It is necessary to be successful in online marketing. The travel agent use internet to satisfy the traveller's needs and desires. The expectation of the customer from the organization must be fulfilled while client is using online media to take service of the organization.

Schlinke and Crain (2013) suggest the objective of the company to use social media initiatives could be as per below:

- To create positive image and good status in related area,
- To become the source of providing latest news and current affairs of the industry.
- To build the comfortable relationship with the industry member and customer.
- To create easy and free relationship with current and potential client.
- To expand the existing product in more than one demographic area.

National department of tourism, linked departments and associated agencies are developing various e-marketing policies to create tourism awareness, provide necessary information of destination and local culture to the tourists. The high involvement of government is appreciated because Indian tourism industry has faced some problems especially with foreign visitor. Misbehaviour, cheating, crime, terrorist attack has officially reported in the past few years. Many destinations are suffering for good image and safe travel image. To make effective reputation of travel destination, effective marketing strategies required to attract and motivate tourist to visit the destination. The 'Incredible India' is the part of promotional strategy and succeeded to catch attention of foreign tourist which helps to boost inbound tourism.

Types of E-Marketing:

- B2B (Business to Business) E-Marketing: Travel agencies do business with each other like, small travel agent take package from big tour operators and in revert get TAC – Travel agent Commission. Commission is based on number of booking and it is negotiable which depend on terms and condition of both the party.
- B2C (Business to customer) E-Marketing: Tour operator directly sell the tour package to the general public with use of different source of marketing and selling. Walk in client purchase products of agency. Sales person are there to guide and convince the client to but their products and service. A special scheme like EBD – Early Bird Discount, Pay in Installment offer by agent to attract the potential customer
- C2C (Customer to Customer): There are many local agents in the city who offers tour package. In the tourism terms there is difference between travel agent and tour operator. Travel agent are not the tour organizer, they are customer of tour operator. Tour operators prepare tour itinerary and book from suppliers. Tour operators prepare the travel package, decide the prize and sell the same to travel agent. Agents add their mark up and sell to the client.

Advantage of E-Marketing:

- Most Cost effective medium for promoting the products as one promotional e-mail can send many people at one time.
- Reduce cost to company in purchasing service from the supplier with use of on-line order.
- Minimize overhead costs, time and minimize error with easy information processing.
- Increase satisfaction level of buyer with providing information easily on single click.
- Minimize inventories and files, with saving all data in soft copy and forward the same when required.
- Most effective tool to get speed in receiving enquiries and convert it in final booking.
- Effectively create and enter into new market and get potential customer.
- Initiate Automation in organization work system.
- Very Cost-effective way of document transfer. Like scan copy of passport, air ticket, hotel voucher is considered as valid document.
- Efficient way to collect and save client database.
- Variety of options available for customer, as very beneficial for client as they can make comparisons before purchasing the products.
- Help the industry to do product, service and market analysis with use of available secondary data.

Tourism is a services industry. Constant communication and follow up with customer database is necessary. Tourist book for service from the agent, and travel agent take the service from travel service supplier, like hotel, air lines, transfer company, sightseeing provider at each local destination for both domestic or international. Direct communication between all the parties is essential for smooth sales process. As service suppliers has always limited inventory, they prefer booking confirmation on request and also avoid overbooking. For example, one hotel has fix inventory of the room, and also demand is seasonal. During the season, they sell on high rates and in low season rates would be lower. Regarding rates, latest update need to be mention on the website.

To implement the marketing and promotion activities, especially to sell tour packages and other services like hotel confirmation, currency exchange, book air ticket, rail ticker, Eu rail (European country) ticket etc. the below technology are widely used by travel agents and tour operator.

- **World Wide Web** : Official websites of the travel agency. It shoes major travel packages, other services, Agency detail-address and contact person, number of branches of the agency etc. For example : www.thomascook.in
- **Official E-mail ID** : Most of the company has their one common mail id, display on their websites. The access of this mail is done by key person of the company. It is used for sending and receiving the e mail. Outlook is installed with the agency computer, and major communication is in written with e-mail. For example : info@thomascook.in
- **Social Networking sites (Face book, Twitter, Linked Inn,)** : Major travel agency has their business account in Linked Inn, Face book, and Twitter. Companies share the experience of traveler on these sites. Share photos of the tour, and take feedback and suggestion for future tour planning.
- **You Tube videos**: Video showing the on tour experience, various activities during the tour, sightseeing of the destination, local food and culture, with pleasant face of the traveler share on You tube by travel agent. With watching live videos customer motivate to go and personally visit the tourist destination.

Conclusion:

Promotion and Marketing is an essential activity for travel agent and tour operator. Online marketing is an important part of marketing activity. Internet supply speedy information to tourist across the world and it efficiently fulfil the desire of tourist. The competition in travel agency rapidly increase with universal tourism market which demand the travel agency to make brilliant hard work and do expense in marketing, promotion, create awareness and provide quality facility to gain reasonable growth. Because of that, now a day it is essential for tourism industry to pursue latest technology in respond to face the comprehensive competition. To implement online marketing for travel agencies, it is required to understand the basic requirement of the potential tourist, and required to satisfy the same to attract more visitor to visit the agency websites. For example, if client wants to book for overseas package, then the departure dates, tour itinerary, food detail, hotel detail, price and climate detail of visited destination should be provided. With effective use of Internet, social media travel

industry can achieve the fast online communication system which is highly required for tourism industry as it is a service industry. E-marketing is the most effective way to make direct contact with existing and potential tourists.

REFERENCES :

1. www.knowledgeplanet.com
2. www.ejtr.vumk.eu/
3. www.ajer.org/Research-Journal
4. www.alhea.com/E-marketing+Articles
5. www.eajournals.org/journals/...journal.../application-e-marketing-tools
6. www.thomoscook.in
7. www. mytravelresearch.com/are-tourism experience.
8. Journal of Travel Research, 50(4), 378–391. Geiger, S., & Martin, S (1999). Theinternet as a relationship marketing tool
9. Ran oliver, Quality assurance and E learning : Blue skies and Pragmatism. ALI-7, Research in Learning technology, VOL.13, October2005,175-190
10. Koelzer, W., Cox, B. (2005). Internet marketing- za hotele, restorane i turizam, Zagreb, M plus.
11. S J page and J Connell(2014), A Modern Synthesis, 4th edition Cengage Learning, 67-89.

AUTHOR INFORMATION:

Khyati Patel

**Gujarat Technological University
Ahmedabad**

Copyright © 2012 - 2016 KCG. All Rights Reserved. | Powered By : Knowledge Consortium of Gujarat