



# An Overview of Social Media Marketing and the Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media Marketing in Online Travel Industry

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**Abstract:** While Web 2.0 refers to the technological foundations of the Web, such as programming languages as well as protocols, social media corresponds to the websites and networks that produce and distribute content. Thus, social media are therefore Web-based applications built on the conceptual and technical foundations of Web 2.0 that allow the production and easy dissemination of knowledge. User-generated content (UGC) or consumer-generated media refers to the text, photographs, videos, and audio files created and posted via social media (CGM). Social media marketing is described as the practise of promoting a company and its products through social media channels. The primary difference is that the marketing message audience not only consumes but also actively contributes to the production of marketing content. Since opinions/reviews make up a significant portion of consumer-generated content, reputation management is important for social media marketing. Because of the emphasis on conversation and reputation, social media marketing is somewhat similar to public relations. As a result, rather than serving as a replacement, social media marketing strategies should be perceived holistically and as complementary extensions of other marketing activities.

**Key Words:** Social media marketing, User-generated content, Online travel industry

## INTRODUCTION:

The term "social media" refers to a series of technical applications and websites that were initially created to facilitate interpersonal social interactions. The recent increase in the number of expandable communities (e.g. virtual communities) has led to the need for a concept summary to be devised and for a deeper understanding of their potential. Enticed by the vast numbers of people who can be reached by these media, and spurred on by technology pioneers who integrated advertising-based models to draw investment, these businesses soon discovered the commercial possibilities of social media. In general, messages don't need the significant investments in marketing dollars that are typical of banner ads and sponsored search engine positions because the viral components make them more prominent. Nevertheless, this has not been studied out in sufficient depth to decide which channels have the greatest capacity for social media marketing and to an advanced state of society as of these websites are yet. In order to see the broad aspects of social media, as well as it is, one must first look at the basic values and other relevant behaviours that stem from those principles. Doing so would help you in defining your target market, informing your marketing practises, and showcasing your strategies. Interactive media, which means specific strategies for promoting products and services through computer-based media systems (which can respond to the different preferences of each individual consumer), offers the utmost flexibility to businesses, allowing them to vary their content at will to meet different needs (Schlosser

& Kanfer, 2000). For both of these forms of new media, marketing has to be in favour of the interactivity. In other words, it requires that the media must encourage interactivity from the perspective of the user, not just provide it (Day, 1998). The authors Parsons, Zeisser, and Waitman, all of the research on effective interactive marketing explain why this concept by detailing what kinds of things work require successful marketing. 1) Loy development; 2) engaging the user in the site; 3) retaining the user; 4) understanding their interests and 5) integrating these needs into custom experiences. Gretzel, Yuan, as well as Enliven (2000), already identified the critical outcomes of such marketing approaches with regard to online tourism in terms of more intimate relationships and more highly individualised customer choices. Two out of three of the most important factors in the increasingly competitive travel sector are necessary for being competitive.

Before blogs, websites, the existing models of mass media engagement (advertising, marketing, PR, etc.) relied on the principle of interactivity. The idea of using a single channel as an all-purpose vehicle has now expanded to include multiple kinds of interactivity, which integrates various kinds of interactivity. It is basically active marketing "on steroids" with a much greater emphasis on partnerships and greater involvement of the customer. The increasing support for social interactions is supported by digital media, enabling people to create their own content and content as well as well as sharing of the collective output that numbers and users from all over the world. With that in mind, eMarketer (2012) estimates that around 1.5 billion users will be on social networking sites in China and the United States in 2012, while North America's increase will be much smaller, at half a billion and somewhere about half a billion people in India and Indonesia will use them. Given social media's widespread acceptance, it's likely that social media marketing will soon become a common method for advertisers to engage with customers. This implies a profound change in communication strategies across all media platforms and in the nature of business-customer relationships. To prepare for this change, it's important to grasp the fundamentals of social media marketing. This chapter will include a summary of social marketing concepts and techniques, focusing on the premises and promises of social marketing in the context of tourism. The product and background of interactions generate unique opportunities for social media marketers, but also immense challenges.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING:**

The debate surrounding social media marketing is replete with acronyms that are often used interchangeably but sometimes apply to slightly different items or perspectives. Additionally, although in-depth knowledge of the technology that powers social media marketing is not needed, it is critical to understand the technical foundations of these marketing campaigns and how marketing methods are entwined with the Internet's growth and resulting cultures. This chapter defines terms and discusses the underlying concepts that underpin social media marketing ideologies.

### ***Web 2.0, Consumer-Generated Marketing, the Social Web, User-Generated Content and Social media:***

Web 2.0 is a term that refers to Internet technologies and applications that allow users to participate actively in the creation and dissemination of Web content (Gillin, 2007). Although the Internet and the Web have always placed a premium on content development and sharing, Web 2.0 technologies (e.g., XML, Ajax, APIs, RSS, and mash-ups) make data exchange much simpler. The content is much more mobile and the interactions are much more accessible, resulting in what is often referred to as the Writable or Social Web (Gillin, 2009). As such, the word "Social Web" refers to the phenomenon in its entirety, which includes technology, information, and connections. According to Safko and Brake (2009:6), the Social Web is comprised of "activities, practises, and behaviours among groups of people who gather online to exchange information, knowledge, and opinions." Thus, the term "Social Web" highlights facets of the Web that contribute to its status as a networked conversation space with a strong emphasis on social dynamics.

While Web 2.0 refers to the technical underpinnings of the Web, such as programming languages and protocols, social media refers to the websites and networks by which content is generated and shared. Thus, social media are Web-based applications built on the Web 2.0's conceptual and technological foundations that enable the creation and easy transmission of information (Safko & Brake, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The text, images, videos, and audio files produced and shared via social media are referred to as user-generated content (UGC) or consumer-generated media (Gillin, 2007). (CGM). The latter term is somewhat problematic because it fails to account for the increasing volume of content created by corporate users. Both terms emphasise, however, that, unlike websites built on Web 1.0 technology, social media sites contain material created by individuals rather than the site's immediate owner/publisher. Social networking platforms are all about people sharing their perspectives, insights, skills, and fascinating connections, among other things. (2009) (Gillin).

It is critical to understand that the word "social media" refers to a diverse range of distinct forms of media, including blogs, message boards, review sites, and social networking sites. According to Safko and Brake (2009), the phenomenon

is best described as a social networking eco-system. This acknowledges that social media does not reflect a unified species of technology applications, but rather a slew of interconnected networks and sites performing a variety of functions. According to Constantinides and Fountain (2008), social media can be classified into five broad categories: blogs; social networks; content communities; forums/bulletin boards; and content aggregators. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) divided social media into six categories based on their level of social presence/media richness and self-presentation/disclosure. They classify social media as blogs/microblogs (for example, Twitter), social networking sites (for example, Facebook), and virtual social worlds (e.g. Second Life), Collaborative ventures (for instance, Wikipedia), content communities (for instance, YouTube), and virtual game worlds (e.g. World of Warcraft). The social media landscape is complex in the sense that new social media forms appear on a regular basis (e.g. Pinterest), some types become obsolete (e.g. Friendster), and the popularity of a particular medium can fluctuate (e.g. MySpace evolving from a dominant social networking platform to a niche medium). Certain of them also coexist, for example, tweets can be viewed on Facebook pages. The various social media platforms each provide distinct advantages in terms of the type of content that can be generated and shared, as well as the manner in which that content can be shared. Additionally, they have established their own standards for what is acceptable and desirable. The various social media platforms attract a diverse range of users (Gretzel et al., 2011) and are defined by distinct cultures. Additionally, they offer marketers a variety of options for presenting and promoting content, engaging with and developing relationships with current and potential consumers, and gathering market intelligence.

### ***The Social Media Marketing Paradigm:***

Social media marketing is described as the practise of using social media platforms to promote a business and its products (Barefoot & Szabo, 2010). The primary distinction is that the audience for marketing messages not only absorbs but also actively contributes to the creation of marketing material (Evans, 2008). Step 2 of the interactive marketing process (engaging users' attention and participation) is therefore important in social media marketing strategies (Parsons et al., 1998). Indeed, engagement is a buzzword often used in social media marketing. It is one of three pillars defined by Evans (2008): commitment, action, and loyalty. It presupposes an engaged audience of prosumers (Toffler, 1980) who desire to communicate with advertisers in ways other than the immediate purchase transaction. Additionally, it recognises that in social media, loyalty cannot be presumed, but must be actively fostered (Kozinets, 1999). Thus, social media marketing fits within the new marketing logic defined by Vargo and Lusch (2004), which emphasises intangible resources, co-creation of value, and relationships over tangible resources, embedded value, and transactions.

Social networking marketing is fundamentally about relationship building (Barefoot & Szabo, 2010). To foster such relationships, it must facilitate and form conversations (Safko & Brake, 2009). As a result, social media marketers are conversation managers who devise strategies for strategically influencing conversations (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). As a result, social media marketing is concerned with the methods for initiating, promoting, and monetizing conversations (Safko & Brake, 2009). Consumers are willing participants and co-creators of value in these conversations, sharing resources and knowledge with advertisers (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). It's important to remember that advertisers cannot monitor these conversations; they can only attempt to manipulate them. User-generated content can either bolster marketing efforts or outperform marketers (Evans, 2008). Additionally, it means that marketers must have a thorough understanding of how context is created in a specific social media type and the resulting usage norms in order to handle communications in a way that is valued rather than perceived as invasive by customers. Although social media marketing is focused on conventional marketing, it takes a radically different approach to structuring interactions with potential and current consumers. According to Birch (2011), social media marketing is based on four R's rather than the conventional four P's (Table 1). Gunelius (2011), likewise, advocates for well-planned, proactive, and ongoing interaction with influential customers. This necessitates in-depth awareness of the social networking platforms and their users, a long-term commitment, and ongoing interaction through engaging content.

Reputation management is critical for social media marketing, since a large portion of consumer-generated content is composed of opinions/reviews. Due to the focus on conversation and reputation, social media marketing bears a strong resemblance to public relations. It would be naive, however, to limit it to that. As Yoo and Gretzel (2010) demonstrate, social media marketing works in all facets of marketing (Table 2). As a result, social media marketing campaigns should be viewed holistically and as complimentary extensions to other marketing efforts, rather than as a substitute (Evans, 2008). It is critical to note the significantly increased focus on science. This is not only due to the participatory culture and high trackability of social media interactions, but also to the increased need for informed targeting in order to cut through the clutter and promote viral dissemination.

Diller (2000) defines relationship marketing's fundamental components as the "6 i's" (Figure 1): 1) knowledge about customers; 2) investments in customers; 3) uniqueness for customers; 4) contact with customers; 5) incorporation of

customers; and, 6) purpose of a unique relationship. These concepts remain valid for social media marketing, but their definition and implementation are radically different. Customer information is a critical component, but it now contains not only simple demographic and transactional data, but also a vast amount of opinion and social data that is readily accessible to businesses. Marketers must still choose the consumers to invest in, but customer value must be redefined and customer perceptions about what constitutes a "investment" in them have shifted. Additionally, the massive quantities of data available enable diverse segmentation methods, and the design of social media enables unprecedented behavioural targeting. Individuality through personalization and the creation of an atmosphere of exclusivity are critical components of conventional relationship marketing, while consumers are more concerned with relevance and social sharing of deals in a social media context. Customer engagement and incorporation into value development processes have been elevated to new heights in social media marketing, with interaction occurring continuously and consumers more than happy to contribute in a number of ways (Sigala, 2012). Both are fundamentally based on the details, segmentation, targeting, and personalization that comprise the relationship marketing pyramid's foundation. Additionally, social media marketing is about stimulating and promoting customer-customer connections, a strategy that is often referred to as tribal marketing (Pace, Fratocchi & Cocciola, 2007). If there is always an intention to develop a long-term partnership, businesses cannot assume that this would prevent consumers from developing similar relationships with rivals. Additionally, these relationships are now available to other consumers and rivals (for example, a customer's Facebook "like" of a business is visible on their timeline).

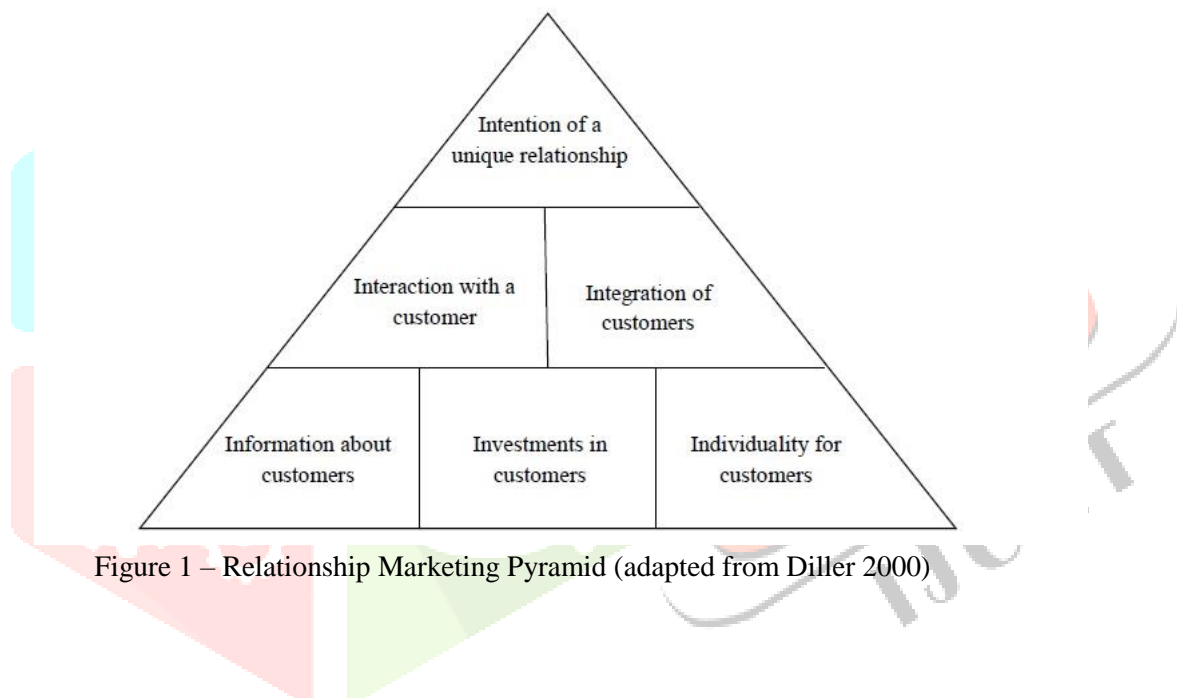


Figure 1 – Relationship Marketing Pyramid (adapted from Diller 2000)

To plan and execute effective social media marketing strategies, it is critical to understand the community that underpins social media interactions. Democracy, culture, teamwork, honesty, and openness are central to the Social Web (Barefoot & Szabo, 2010). By aggregating and making accessible the mutual experience and subsequent interactions of users, social media content contributes to informed consumption choices (Evans, 2008). In the pre-marketing era, social media sites were platforms where customers turned to one another for impartial information, avoiding advertisements and sales pitches. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) emphasise the importance of understanding that social media marketing is primarily about engagement, sharing, and cooperation rather than pure advertisement and sale. This places advertisers in an uncomfortable and slightly awkward position, prompting others to pose as customers in an effort to blend in with the rest of the social media users and their conversations. Numerous these attempts have backfired due to their violation of the principle of accountability. Marketers must engage in honest discussions on social media in order to be respected and listened to.

Confidence is essential for any type of social interaction on the Social Web (Evans, 2008), and it must be won. While consumer-generated word-of-mouth is generally regarded as credible, marketers must work diligently to build credibility in the social media room. This is only possible through transparent and authentic communication aimed at establishing genuine relations. According to Meerman Scott (2007), the social media marketing model is as follows:



- Authenticity over spin
- Participation rather than propaganda
- Bring the sale to a close and continue the discussion

Thus, it becomes apparent that while social media marketing is still fundamentally based on traditional marketing concepts aimed at profit maximisation, the emphasis and tools are fundamentally different.

### **STRATEGIES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING:**

The paradigm shift in fundamental assumptions necessitates the creation of novel marketing tactics to succeed in the new conversation space. Strategic marketing questions to consider include how social media can be used to add value to the company and how it can aid in customer acquisition and retention (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Regrettably, there is a dearth of scholarly research that examines marketing strategy in the sense of social media. As a result, this portion of the chapter summarises strategy ideas learned primarily from social media marketing experience.

One critical strategic choice to make concerns channel presence. Hamill, Stevenson, and Attard (2012) define "high" as "present in two-thirds or more of the available networks," "medium" as "present in half to two-thirds," and "low" as "not present at all" (presence in less than half). Numerous networks can now be related (for example, Twitter notifications and Pinterest posts appear on Facebook, and YouTube videos can be embedded in other social media posts), allowing for significant synergies. The channel presence strategy is determined by the target audiences and their unique preferences for particular social media platforms. It is important to emphasise that the social media environment is complex and that channel presences must be changed on a continuous basis.

The other component is the profile of interaction. It refers to the breadth and scope of interaction with a particular social medium (Hamill et al., 2012). Indeed, Hamill et al. (2012) convincingly argue that simply being present on social media is insufficient for success. Other than that, it involves engaging in interesting discussions with the appropriate audience. As channel presence and interaction profile are combined, four distinct forms of social media strategy emerge (Elowitz & Li, 2009): 1. Mavens (high level of engagement across a variety of social media platforms); 2. Butterflies (use of a wide number of social media platforms but low to moderate level of engagement); 3. Selectives (increased interaction with a limited range of media); and 4. Wallflowers (small number of channels and only low to medium engagement).

In general, a social media marketing plan must address two critical issues: 1) the social media platform to choose from the multitude of available options; and 2) how to interact within a particular medium. Due to the variety of social media platforms, it is difficult to be present on all of them and selection must be made based on relevance to particular marketing objectives (Gunelius, 2011). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) also emphasise the importance of carefully selecting social media channels and using pre-existing apps rather than reinventing the wheel. Additionally, they make a clear case for maintaining behaviour alignment across social media platforms and for ensuring that staff completely support the company's social media participation. This indicates that internal marketing plays a critical role in social media marketing.

It's important to remember that social media marketing and search engine optimization are inextricably linked strategies. Social networking platforms improve an individual's online exposure (Barefoot & Szabo, 2010). Social media's nature makes it appealing to search engine spiders, raising the probability that it will be regularly indexed and appear at the top of search results (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). By providing interesting content on a website or blog, users are enticed to share it through their social media channels, increasing the number of incoming links to the page on which the content is located. Marketers, on the other hand, must ensure that their social media material is discoverable. To efficiently spread messages across a social network, they must first enter central (influential) nodes (Pan & Crofts, 2012). This, in turn, necessitates an understanding of the influencers in a social network and the most effective ways to reach them through social media platforms.

Culturally responsive social media marketing strategies are essential. To begin, the availability, penetration, and popularity of specific types of social media vary significantly between countries (Gretzel, Kang & Lee, 2008). Second, even the same social media platforms are used differently across cultures. For example, Lee, Yoo, and Gretzel (2009) discovered significant differences in the way US and Korean travellers communicate their tourism experiences through blogs, with US blogs focusing more on documenting and sharing personal experiences, while Korean bloggers focus on making suggestions to influence the experiences of others. Thirdly, some social media outlets place a premium on particular modes of communication, such as recreational, informational, transformational, and relational modes (Kozinets, 1999). This results in the formation of engagement cultures unique to particular social media platforms. According to Gunelius (2011), social media marketing needs an understanding of how customers interact with a particular form of social media and the meaning they seek from their interaction.

Whichever approach is chosen, its implementation must represent the company's values. Given the importance most social media users place on confidence and credibility, approaches must be sincere and backed up with the requisite resources. Hiring a public relations company or advertising agency to execute the overall plan seems to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. Certain elements of social media marketing, on the other hand, might have to be outsourced due to the resource limitations of smaller organisations and the extreme and constant degree of interaction demanded by certain social media initiatives.

### **MEASUREMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING RESULTS:**

Relevance can only be ensured by constant monitoring of social media and accurate tracking of the results of marketing campaigns. Fortunately, social media experiences leave digital traces that can be monitored and quantified. The issue is determining what should be monitored and how that data can be transformed into indicators that can be used to explicitly influence strategic marketing decisions. This segment discusses social media tracking and how it can be used to guide social media marketing strategies.

According to the social media concept of discussion spaces, tracking entails attempting to decipher who is conversing with whom and what they are saying (Evans, 2008). One of the issues to address when monitoring social media-based interactions is the fact that user interaction varies (Tedjamulia, Olsen, Dean & Albrecht, 2005). The majority of consumers are passive observers, while only a small number are active content creators (Yoo & Gretzel, 2011; Gillin, 2009). These content creators have distinct demographic and personality characteristics and do not reflect the company's traditional target market. Another issue is that the majority of content shared is optimistic (Gillin, 2009; De Ascaniis & Gretzel, 2012). Overall ratings of experiences, such as travel reviews, often do not reflect the review's actual content (Jiang, Gretzel & Law, 2010). This means that superficial metrics may be very deceptive, and that general brand opinion might not be particularly informative. It is important to include not just the interactions these customers have with advertisers, but also the interactions they have with one another. This includes knowledge of the locations of certain conversations.

Influence is the currency of social media marketing. This suggests that social media marketing campaigns' success can be calculated in terms of impact. This is not only a matter of the type of power exercised, but also of who exercises it. The objective is to meet those who are likely to assist in spreading the word. Social media influencers are a distinct breed of opinion makers that should not be confused with conventional influencers (e.g. celebrities, etc.). Influencers can be classified according to the degree and form of interaction they have with a brand, as well as their willingness and ability to influence others (Gillin, 2009). Influencers are important in determining the direction of conversations. In the social media room, there are growing attempts to recognise those with greater influence than others. Klout is an example of such an initiative (<http://klout.com/home>).

Social media marketing success is not measured in terms of return on investment, but rather in terms of return on interaction (Frick, 2010). According to Harden and Heyman (2009), the "mathematics of interaction" require a focus on click depth rather than simply clicks, loyalty (number of visits), recency (return visits within a specified time period), visit length, interactivity (consumer behaviour such as comments, retweets, and so on), and commitment (e.g. subscription). These outputs must be compared to marketer-side interaction inputs, such as the number of posts, the type of content shared, and the frequency of posts. Social media marketing's relationship-centric approach means that its importance is in its network, i.e. the relationships formed with customers and other stakeholders (Gillin, 2009). Not all relations, however, are created equal. Thousands of Facebook "likes" and Twitter "followers" are only valuable if they reflect real connections. Though research exists on consumer motivations for contributing content to virtual communities (Yoo & Gretzel, 2009), very little exists on consumer motivations for participating in virtual communities. There is information available on why customers may want to engage with businesses. Gretzel (2010) discovered that the majority of customers on Facebook describe their relationships with businesses as functional and beneficial, rather than emotional. It is important to understand what motivates customers to engage with advertisers in order to provide value. The strategic imperative for social media monitoring has resulted in the emergence of social media monitoring tools, which are applications that facilitate monitoring through several social media channels by indexing relevant information, allowing marketers to search for information (e.g., by keyword, date, etc. ), and allowing for further analysis and data visualisation (Stevenson & Hamill, 2012). Stevenson and Hamill (2012) listed over 200 such resources as being available at the moment. Their primary applications are to facilitate active listening to consumer-driven interactions and to assess the efficacy of social media marketing initiatives. Tools for tracking social media are complemented by general web analytics tools.

In summary, new marketing assumptions necessitate new success metrics. As indicated previously, social media monitoring is a young area that has yet to develop sound metrics and evaluation methods but places a premium on the

ability to assess performance beyond proven marketing effectiveness metrics such as impressions and conversions. As a result, it is reasonable to expect that researchers and clinicians will continue to pay greater attention to social media monitoring.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN TOURISM: DIFFICULTIES AND OPPORTUNITIES:**

Conversations are critical components of the information-gathering and decision-making processes in tourism. The sharing of experiences via personal narratives, photographs, and other media is also a vital component of tourism experiences (Gretzel et al., 2011). Individuals' personal experiences serve as a resource for those planning vacations or as inspiration for the future. As a result, it's unsurprising that travellers have become increasingly reliant on social media to track and communicate their experiences and to inform their decisions (Yoo & Gretzel, 2008; Fotis, Buhalis & Rossides, 2012). Tourism content is intrinsically experiential and highly interactive, making it an apparent natural match for social media. Additionally, there is frequently a clear sense of unity among fellow travellers and an understanding that information about experiential tourism should be exchanged with others in order to help enhance their tourism experiences and support those providers who provide exceptional service. Some of the earliest virtual communities were originally linked to tourism (e.g., the Lonelyplanet thorn tree forum) and merely mimicked the networking behaviours already prevalent in other media (e.g. comments left on bulletin boards in hostels). This will lead us to believe that tourism is an ideal candidate for social media marketing efforts. However, marketers must realise that many of the channels were created with the express purpose of avoiding conversations with marketers and a general lack of confidence in travel company details. Couchsurfing.com is the pinnacle of the commercial travel industry, attempting to exclude all businesses from the picture entirely. On the other hand, tourism items are often viewed as status symbols and critical elements in the creation of identity (Lee et al., 2009). Associating with a travel company or destination through social media can be a critical component of developing a social traveller identity. However, travellers would almost certainly exercise extreme caution in selecting companies and destinations with which they wish to publicly affiliate.

Another element of tourism that must be remembered is the need for variety and low purchase frequency. The central issue is whether visitors are willing to commit to long-term relationships with travel companies or destinations if they only use their goods occasionally or even once a lifetime. While a strong relationship can be beneficial during the planning stages, during the flight, and immediately after a holiday, the importance of a relationship beyond those points must be challenged. Although much attention is paid to social media's "rules of engagement," there is clearly a need to address "rules of disengagement," especially in tourism. User disengagement is, of course, highly dependent on the type of social media platform used and the types of interactions it fosters, with some platforms being more "pushy" than others. The question is whether continuously pushing content toward users who have lost interest in the business will potentially have negative consequences. Tourism social media marketers must consider carefully how to reach users who may have lost interest in travelling to a particular destination or using specific services. Thus, tourism social media marketing needs a very holistic view of the consumer lifecycle.

There has been much discussion about how different social media platforms need distinct strategic approaches. Given the industry's complexity and variety of players, one must also note that strategies must be tailored to the particular type of provider. Gretzel and colleagues' empirical research (Gretzel, 2010; Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2012) suggests that relationships established on Facebook with destinations are fundamentally distinct from relationships formed with travel companies such as hotels, airlines, and restaurants. While relationships with travel companies are established in order to receive exclusive offers, relationships with destinations are more concerned with sharing knowledge and expressing emotional connection. Such distinctions must be understood and incorporated into strategy formulation.

Numerous small tourism businesses and destination marketing organisations (DMOs) lack the organisational capacity to conduct labor-intensive social media campaigns. Although social media offers enormous potential for levelling the playing field by providing low-cost marketing opportunities with potentially enormous scope, there are obstacles to adoption due to a lack of expertise and human capital. Continuous interactions necessitate someone engaging with future and real customers. Hamill et al. (2012) applied the Elowitz and Li typology to national DMOs in Europe and discovered that only one DMO was truly a maven, deeply engaged through a variety of social media platforms. Shao, Davila Rodriguez, and Gretzel (2012) demonstrate how some DMOs have leveraged social media (e.g., by hosting polls on Facebook to introduce potential travellers to a destination's various attractions) and experimented with novel approaches (e.g., by connecting the destination's YouTube channel to Google Maps and encouraging sharing through a variety of social media platforms). However, the study acknowledges that social media is not being used to its full extent in the realm of destination marketing.



**CONCLUSION:**

Social media marketing necessitates an awareness of the Web's social dynamics as a large networked space, as well as adaptations to marketing strategies to take into account the technical capabilities and engagement cultures that have evolved in different social media forms. Social media marketing campaigns are often viewed as inexpensive and often poorly performed. The hidden costs come from the need to reach customers in far more meaningful, authentic, intimate, and continuous ways than conventional media allows. In the social media space, consumer expectations are strong, and negative word can spread quickly. Making strategic decisions about where to develop a presence and how to enable and form conversations are critical. Additionally, social media marketing cannot occur in a vacuum; it must supplement overall marketing mix strategies. For tourism advertisers, social media opens up a new world of opportunities to interact meaningfully with current and prospective clients. However, for social media interaction to be meaningful, it must be carefully planned and controlled. This involves not only financial commitments but frequently a complete transformation of organisational culture, especially in terms of how the tourism organisation manages customer relationships.

Social media marketing is a diverse area that is continually evolving with new technology and advertisement models. This means that the social media environment is constantly evolving, necessitating the constant adjustment of social media marketing strategies to new and often fleeting realities. This makes prescribing rules on how progress can and should be done exceedingly challenging. The dynamic existence also emphasises the importance of study in this field and clear theoretical foundations for comprehensively describing, explaining, and possibly anticipating new phenomena. While researchers are paying increasing attention to travellers' general use of social media and motives for content creation (Yoo & Gretzel, 2012; Cox et al., 2009), little is known about how travellers view and respond to specific marketing tactics implemented online, or how they would like to connect with and communicate with travel companies and destinations through social media. Additionally, while significant research is being conducted in the sentiment analysis space, these efforts are often led by computer scientists with little understanding of the nuanced nature of tourism. Additionally, the theory-practice divide is particularly pronounced in social media marketing in tourism, as many tourism businesses have yet to embrace the data-driven approaches that underpin effective social media marketing. As a result, there is an urgent need to develop theory in this field as well as effective methodologies that will allow the acquisition of the necessary insights from both a theoretical and marketing practise perspective.

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