**PROMOTION OF TRAVEL PRODUCT IN SOCIAL NETWORKS**

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**Konoval B. A., - Promotion of travel product in social networks.** The article explores the role of social networks in the development of travel agencies and the pros and cons of using this type of marketing. Social networks have long been immersed into the daily life of every average person. In recent years, it is also a universal means of running business, expanding the client base and improving the image of the firm. Given this, it can be concluded that introduction of social networks in the activities of a travel company may have a positive impact on the growth of the company’s share in the travel services market and its competitiveness.

 **Keywords:** competitiveness, image, marketing, social networks, travel product.

**Коновал Б. А. - Просування туристичного продукту в соціальних мережах.** У статті досліджено роль соціальних мереж у розвитку туристичних фірм, а також переваги та недоліки використання цього виду маркетингу. Соціальні мережі вже давно вкоренилися в повсякденне життя кожної пересічної людини. В останні роки це ще і універсальний засіб для ведення бізнесу, розширення клієнтської бази та покращення іміджу підприємства. З огляду на це, можна зробити висновок, що впровадження соціальних мереж в діяльність тур-фірми може позитивно вплинути на зростання частки компанії на ринку туристичних послуг та її конкурентоспроможність.

**Ключові слова:** імідж, конкурентоспроможність, маркетинг, соціальні мережі, туристичний продукт.

**1. Introduction**

The object of the article is the study of the role of social networks in the activities of a tourist enterprise. The subject is the pros and cons of using social networks in the marketing strategy of a travel company. The purpose of the study is to identify opportunities for promoting a travel product and improving the image of the travel company in social networks. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to determine how social networks help to increase sales of travel services, analyze the existing problems and consider possible solutions since using social networks in activities of a travel company may have a positive impact on the growth of the company’s share in the travel services market and its competitiveness.

 **2. The current state of Internet marketing of a travel product**

Nowadays, it stands to reason, that when planning an upcoming vacation, people receive the necessary information either from the Internet or from friends. Social networks combine these sources of information. In addition, they are becoming increasingly popular every year (Fig. 1). As of 2021, Facebook had 2.797 billion users, Instagram – 1,287 billion and these numbers continue to grow [1].



Fig. 1. Global social media users over time (Digital 2021: global overview report)

On average, each person spends about 2.5 hours a day in social networks [2]. All these data are indicative of their mass use, and, accordingly, favorable conditions for business development. There even exists a separate type of marketing which is focused exclusively on social networks – Social Media Marketing (SMM) [4]. We should also mention the globalization of the market. The Internet provides access to the markets of those countries, access to which with the help of standard tools is impossible or very difficult [5]. Also, one of the key advantages of promoting a travel product on social networks is targeted advertising. This is a promotion channel in social networks, aimed at a specific target audience according to clearly defined parameters. Targeting shows advertising messages based on location, age, gender and even interests, that is, only to those users to whom they will be useful [8]. That is why, nowadays, this type of advertising is the most effective one. Thus, the use of social networks as a means of promoting a travel product is low-cost and makes it possible to reach a wider audience and form a demand for travel services.

**3. Difficulties of business development in social networks**

At first glance it may seem quite easy to create a page and fill it with content. However, this is not entirely true. Just posting profile information and advertising company services is not be enough. It should be understood that people use social networks mostly in order to relax, unwind and spend their free time but not for the sake of buying something [10]. That is why the content for business promotion is quite specific and if this is not understood, difficulties may arise. The wrong approach to dissemination of information can cause negative consumer feedback, create negative publicity and cause reputational losses [3]. Another problem is that sometimes you have to spend a lot of time monitoring trends as they change too quickly, and in order to have a good image you need to follow them [7]. The unpredictability of advertising tools is another drawback. It is not possible to determine exactly the cost and results of an advertising campaign. To understand which advertising gives better results, it is necessary to test different types of ads for different audiences, which time-consuming and expensive [11]. Ignoring these details while using social networks is more likely to cause reputational damage than attract new customers.

**4. Travel content as a mean of successful marketing**

First of all, as it was mentioned above, people use social networks to relax but not to buy. That is why the content of the page should be more entertaining, without emotional stress. Creating a welcoming atmosphere without turning into a travel blog is quite simple. It is enough to properly design your profile, fill it with interesting content and, most importantly, communicate with your followers. Establishing contact with the audience promotes trust, which means that more people will want to use the company’s services [6].

 It should be emphasized that the posting of new content should be on a very regular base. This way a travel company will get the potential customer to give it preference when planning their next trip. Avoiding monotonous page content is also a must. Social networks provide an opportunity to constantly diversify posts by providing interesting facts about different countries worldwide, offering videos with breathtaking views or photos of clients’ holidays followed by their favourable reviews etc [12].

 Providing real-time information on client support for holidaymakers in difficult situations while traveling will make potential customers realize that their support is guaranteed whatever circumstances might be. It should be remembered that the content of a tourist enterprise should not aim to sell the product, but cause a desire to buy it [10].

 Using the English language for posts does not pose a serious problem for users since social networks have a function of automatic text translation into the user’s language. However, it should be remembered that this feature is not available for photo and video materials, so in this case the language should be customer-friendly.

 The next extremely important point is to understand your target audience. It is necessary not only to build up rapport, but also to use advertising tools and targeting more effective. Launching an advertising campaign for the wrong audience will not yield positive results; moreover, the funds allocated for promotion will be spent in vain. For more effective development, it is better to hire an SMM specialist who has all necessary knowledge and skills and will be fully responsible for the image and promotion of the company in social networks [9].

**5. Conclusions**

Social networks are a favorable environment for business development and promotion of a travel product because people are spending increasingly more and more time online. SMM-marketing is a powerful modern tool for promoting tourist services for both large enterprises and small travel agencies. Build up stable and friendly relations with your audience can significantly improve the image of the company, increase its profits and expand the customer base. With the right approach, advertising tools help to promote a travel product only to the target audience which improves the effectiveness of advertising and reduces costs. The above makes social networks an important tool for improving the performance of the tourism enterprise, monitoring the company’s reputation and analyzing competitive marketing strategies.

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