

Digital Tourist Marketing: The Latest Developments and Recommendations on How Mykonos Can Take Advantage of Digital and Influencer Marketing



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Abstract Tourism is a wealth-producing sector, the exploitation of which has a significant impact on the economic and overall development, especially in the islands of the Aegean. In order to achieve the desired results, it is necessary the controlled exploitation of a destination, the acquisition of knowledge about the market, the analysis of competition, but also the correct promotion of the tourist product. The purpose of this work is to highlight the island of Mykonos as a tourist destination and to make proposals on how it can take advantage of the latest developments on the Internet and social media. For this reason, the proposals made are indicating that the island shall focus on improvements on its internet presence. For this reason, it is strongly recommended to focus not only on making a better digital marketing strategy but also on utilizing the tens of well-known personalities that are visiting the island. Hence, influencers can have an important role on the promotion of the island.

Keywords Mykonos · Digital marketing · Social media · Influencers

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1 Introduction

It is obvious that the island of Mykonos presents advantages and important tourist resources, such as its strong brand name, its beaches, its nightlife, and a global coverage on the events which occur on the island. The professionals of the island rely mainly on classic and only marketing and promotion techniques, without following the modern trends. It is obvious that it is necessary to modernize the means of promotion and promotion of the island, achieving the maximum possible attraction of visitors (Skagias et al., 2021).

The purpose of this paper is to make recommendations for a tourist destination and to promote it, using the internet and social media with modern ideas and techniques. The current literature focuses on the fact that tourists are mostly influenced by digital marketing activities rather than the traditional ones (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017; Tham et al., 2020). Hence, the island of Mykonos should invest in modern marketing techniques, so that it can reach potential visitors more effectively and positively influence their market decisions. The identity of the island, its proper promotion, as well as the search for ways to attract visitors most months of the year, will certainly bring results in the economic and social development of the island, especially to attract younger tourists (Setiawan et al., 2018). For this reason, this paper will investigate the related literature while it will end up with recommendations for the case of Mykonos. It is important to stress that this is a literature review and thereby it will rely on recent publications but also on the author's personal view on how Mykonos can take advantage of digital marketing.

2 Methodology

The methodology used in the present paper is the thorough literature review, followed by its critical analysis. The sources of literature review are derived from high-quality scientific journals, books, conference proceedings, business reports, etc. The authors have used a variety of sources based on their accessibility provided by the affiliated institutions. The selection criteria of these literature sources were based on the relevance to the topic of the paper, the date of the publishing (focusing on the most recent research), and the validity of the bibliographic sources.

Therefore, this paper aims on producing a research into the existing literature review. For this reason, it will make a thorough examination on the papers that have been produced on this issue and to examine their outcome so as to make recommendations for future research. The criteria used for the selection of the papers are based on the topic and the year that were published (after 2016).

3 Literature Review

3.1 *The Evolution and Popularity of Digital Media*

We are undoubtedly living in the age of the digital world, where social media has over 1 billion users. The impact they have on our lives is great. This is an area that now plays a key role in the social interactions of recent years.

Social networks have become very popular in recent years—there are over 200 social networking sites—but they appeared many years ago. It all started in 1971 when the first e-mail was created. In 1985, TheWell, the first online chat room community, appeared. Other similar communities were Theglobe.com and Geocities (1994) and Tripod (1995). Immediately after the same date, Yahoo and Classmates were founded, where their primary goal was to communicate with old classmates. Then, in 1997, Six degrees was created, the first social network that combined everything, i.e., creating profiles, sending messages, and searching for people. In the same year, AOL was founded, the first social network to enable its users to communicate via real-time messaging, as well as Asian Avenue, an Asian social networking site. Entering 2000, blogs make their appearance, as does Black Planet (2001), an African-American social networking site (Hanson & Kalyanam, 2020)

Shortly afterwards, in 2003, LinkedIn, a professional social networking site, Myspace, and the well-known Facebook (2004) appeared. In 2005, YouTube appeared and in 2006 Twitter focused mainly on information with over 500 million users. Finally, in 2010 comes the huge wave that shaped the world of social networks, Pinterest and Instagram, which has now been acquired by Facebook. So we see that social networks are constantly evolving to meet the needs of users (Hanson & Kalyanam, 2020).

Social media is now an integral part of our lives. We use them to stay connected with friends, to meet people, to be informed and so on.

If we had to guess what is one of the most popular social media, surely many of us would choose Facebook, as it is the one with the most users worldwide. But the world is very big and everyone uses social media a little differently (Chen & Lin, 2019; Kyriakou et al., 2015) The most popular social networking page is undoubtedly Facebook. Founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg, it started as a website for Harvard students. It now has more than 2 billion users. Facebook provides users with features such as

- Be able to communicate with friends through messages
- Participate in groups and exchange information about their interests
- To update their status
- Upload photos, videos, music
- Receive and send invitations to events
- To be informed and to publish ads through the Marketplace service, etc.

YouTube is a platform where a user can search, save, and play videos. It was founded in February 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim. In 2006,

Google acquired YouTube for \$1.65 billion. Registered users can watch and save as many videos as they want, comment, and like, unlike ordinary users (Kannan, 2020).

In 2006, Jack Dorsey founded Twitter. It is considered a microblog, as its posts are limited to 140 characters. Registered users can post, like, and repost tweets. Unregistered users, however, can simply read posts. What sets Twitter apart from other social networks is that it is used primarily for the exchange of views and news and not for community building. LinkedIn was founded in 2002 by Reid Garrett Hoffman. It is a social network that is oriented towards entrepreneurship and employment. It has over 600 million users in 200 countries and is available in many languages. Members can create profiles, upload their CVs, present their work experience in detail, seek career opportunities, and share knowledge (Kannan, 2020).

Instagram is a social network that focuses on the image. Founded in 2010 by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, it has been owned by Facebook since 2012. It is a social networking application where it works exclusively on mobiles and tablets. This application allows users to upload photos and videos, which can be edited with filters, and organized with tags and location information. Finally, WhatsApp is a free messaging software that also belongs to Facebook. Founded in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan Koum, it allows users to exchange text and voice messages, etc. Those are just some of the social media that have dominated our lives and they changed the way that businesses are interacting with their customers (Kannan, 2020).

3.2 *Social Media Marketing*

Internet marketing is now one of its key areas marketing of products, services, and businesses.

A business or organization through internet marketing can achieve key goals such as

- Increasing revenue through exploring new markets.
- The reduction of marketing costs, through the creation of online stores without intermediaries.
- The upgrade of the services offered and the improvement of the customer satisfaction, through the constant communication with the customers.

Before starting an internet marketing program, the goal of the business through this activity should be determined. Objectives should be set through the SMART model. This model says that goals should be specific, measurable, realistic, and timely (De Pelsmacker et al., 2018).

It is now well known that if a business or organization does not integrate social media into the marketing strategy it uses, it is back in time but also in competition. In general, marketing is one of the most important costs for a business—but using social media, this cost is significantly minimized. Social networks provide the ability for businesses to stay informed about business matters, to build friendships and

partnerships, and to identify people and other businesses with related interests (Saura et al., 2017).

Social networks have now created great economic growth, offering openings to new markets and plenty of free advertising opportunities to a global audience.

It is obvious that they are an excellent tool for promoting a business, which in addition to promotion, also offers the opportunity to learn from others.

Social Media Marketing is aimed at all types of businesses, small and large, organizations, as well as destinations. Well-known brands through social networks attract new customers and increase their reputation by targeting a global audience. In the context of an integrated Social Media strategy, it is necessary to set the appropriate goals, plan, develop, and implement the necessary actions in order to obtain the optimal benefits. The most appropriate social networks should be selected for each case and then the presence of the company in each one should be strategically established. Some services are Facebook campaigns, Facebook applications, Facebook Ads, etc. (Kaur, 2017; Belias et al., 2017a, b).

With the increase in marketing budgets on social networks, it seems that companies are interested in their online presence, building relationships with customers, and promoting their brand. The factors that contribute to the transition to social networks are presented as follows (Alves et al., 2020):

First, the existence of a constantly growing population, which due to the development of technology, manages to use online platforms very easily. Second, the majority of this population is young and middle-aged, which means that they prefer the internet for their information. Third, consumers seem to trust more the opinion of friends and other users about a product or service, more than one advertisement. Finally, the key element that social media has reached the top of the media is cost. It is known that the cost of an advertising campaign on social networks is much lower than the cost of a TV ad (Alvers et al., 2020).

Furthermore, one of the most effective ways to share information is through Word of Mouth. Traditional WOM has now been eliminated from eWOM online offering a new way of effective communication. According to research by Suryaningsih et al. (2020), consumers tend to copy each other as well as talk to each other. They also claim that consumers through WOM share opinions that guide consumers to buy specific products. Regarding the above claim, Bu et al. 2021 support him and suggest that WOM is the communication between consumers about a product or service.

The advent of Web 2.0 has had a significant impact, as more and more travelers have started using the internet to search for information about a destination. Thus, a channel of exchange of views and information has been created, from business to consumer and vice versa.

Social networking platforms enable users to interact with each other. Businesses therefore become users of these platforms, making it easy to interact with consumers. EWOM is essential for tourism businesses, as the consumer can have an opinion about the product or service after trying it (Bu et al., 2021).

4 The Use of Social Media by a Tourist Destination

The evolution and dominance of social media has enabled internet users to communicate and share content. Social media users need the information to help them make decisions about choosing a tourist destination. They make sure to read relevant reviews about the destination, because now every traveler is looking for the best for him with the best value for money.

Most of the time the tourist packages, products, or services bought by the travelers are far from their place of permanent residence. That's why travelers rely on descriptions and information provided by the destination. Word of mouth advertising is very important for choosing a tourist destination. Therefore, all travelers are very confident in the views of their family and friends and are wary of mass advertising. Potential travelers to a destination choose a destination among other competitors, and are often willing to pay more for a better service easily accessible (Királová & Pavlíčka, 2015).

Social media is now a key tool that can significantly increase the reputation of a tourist destination. They allow visitors to communicate with other guests who have already experienced the experience and to exchange views about the destination. Sites that specialize in collecting and sharing information about tourism and visitor experiences are shown in Table 1 and are as follows (Canovi & Pucciarelli, 2019):

The content of these sites is one of the most important sources of information in the tourism sector.

According to a study by Ge and Gretzel (2018), social media offers higher levels of performance than traditional advertising and communication tools. If a tourist destination wants to dominate the tourism market, it has a moral obligation to distinguish itself from the competition. To do this, he must develop his communication strategy, focusing on social media. The primary purpose of promoting a tourist destination through social media is to increase its competitiveness. The increased use of social networks, the development of technology, and the low budget required in marketing make tourist destinations a pioneer in their strategies. The ever-increasing number of tourist destinations has shifted from traditional radio and television-based strategies to other media such as the Internet and social media.

Communication through social networks is designed to promote the destination globally, to strengthen its image, to perceive its strengths, and to change the perceptions of visitors if necessary, in order to support its brand name.

From the above it is understood that the internet and social media have revolutionized the tourism industry, providing a new way to "gain" the destination experience by watching pictures and videos, as well as user comments, who tend to share their impressions with the public. duration of their vacation. The internet and social media make it easy for potential travelers to plan their trips and search for the best travel

Table 1 Most popular tourist websites

Gogobot.com	Trippy.com	Wanderfly.com
Tripit.com	Tripwolf.com	TripAdvisor.com

products for them, based on their wishes. This is one of the main reasons why businesses are now working on the promotion of tourist destinations (Destination Management Organizations-DMO), to make tourist tour easier before, during and after the trip to a destination (Katsikari et al, 2020).

Social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube offer great tourism opportunities, providing a way for an image or video to reach millions of people instantly and at no cost. Social media enables people to talk to other users about a destination, travel agent, hotel, etc., allowing them to be informed based on real experiences and not on the elements of an advertisement. When the tourist is preparing to choose his destination, the most important information is obtained from the online influence of the brand, eWOM, which was mentioned in a previous chapter. In the age of Web 2.0 and Social media, people are easily influenced by constantly changing their decisions—50% of them download travel apps before their vacation even starts (Siregar et al., 2020)

According to a survey by Booking.com, citing the online newspaper Tornos News (2019), 54% of the Generation Z generation choose to be inspired by posts and images on social media before choosing their final destination. In fact, 40% of them, according to social media, are their main source of inspiration. The same survey also states that 40% of respondents are influenced by influencers on social media, such as Instagram, and trust the destinations they suggest.

An example is the social media campaign launched by the digital marketing company Overron in 2015. In the midst of capital controls where Greece was in a suffocating climate, the company tried to reverse this situation. Started posting posts and images specifically for the islands of Mykonos and Santorini with great success. Thousands of likes and comments accompanied each image, declaring their support for Greece. The interaction of the users was so great that in a very short time the page of Santorini on Facebook reached 385,000 likes, while the page of Mykonos was 205,000, respectively (Tornosnews, 2019).

It seems, therefore, that social media plays a very important role by directly affecting the psychology of users. They therefore increase the brand awareness of a destination, enhancing its reputation. The presence of Greek Tourism on social media is vital, continuing to offer a quality product, Greek tourism can reach the top.

5 The Latest Development on Social Media and Tourism; The Role of Instagram and Influencers

After 79 years of presence, with more than 500 million users who share 80 million photos daily, Instagram is proving its power to redefine travel, revolutionizing the tourism industry. A typical example is that, Wanaka, a small town in New Zealand, in 2015 decided to include Instagram in the destination promotion strategy, hosting people with many followers on Instagram, seeing significant results and in particular a 14% increase in arrivals throughout the country (Kourelou, 2018).

The power of Instagram is sweeping, as people spend 10 times more time on it than on Facebook. The reason is that on Instagram the image is the message! Users' photos evoke desires. That is why some users, by sharing beautiful images, have gained a very large number of followers, exerting a significant influence on their followers.

According to Booking.com, 80% of millennial bookings are made online. Similarly, a survey by TechRadar magazine showed that 70% of millennials use their smartphone extensively during their travels to search for information about attractions, restaurants, etc.

Millennials are the generation that holds the reins. Employees, familiar with technology, well-traveled, seeking authenticity. They chase the experience of those they admire. They search for information and places on Instagram using hashtags. Hashtags show the way for new experiences. Somehow, in the last two years, 842 million posts have been made using the hashtag #hiddengem (hidden diamonds) related to travel. At the same time, according to Instagram statistics, almost 1 million users search for hashtags related to travel every day.

Instagram holds an important place in the planning stage of a trip, when the traveler is in the dream phase. It causes the user the desire to live the experience captured in the photo he sees. Especially when the photo shows idyllic landscapes of exotic destinations, places, and beaches of unique beauty, then the user wants to be a part of it (Barbe et al., 2020).

Apart from the travel experience that one wants to live through Instagram, there is also the hunt for likes. Users are constantly looking for more and more likes for the content they share. Many times the photos of the users are of a very high level, thus not allowing the travel experience to be degraded (Kourelou, 2018).

Of course, this phenomenon also has its criticism. A study by the Razak and Mansor (2021) that the way we now view tourist destinations and attractions has changed. Before the advent of social media we used to travel to admire the place and its sights, now we travel for a selfie. Examples of such destinations are Santorini and Mykonos.

At the same time, at the peak of travel desires, unknown destinations appear until a few years ago, such as the island of Exuma in the Bahamas, where one can swim with pink wild boars, respectively, Aruba, where one can swim with flamingos, the natural swimming pool Blue Lagoon in Iceland, etc. The sharing of photos by visitors to these places has played an important role in the arrival of arrivals (Kourelou, 2019). So Instagram plays an important role in promoting destinations—with the right actions and synergies

Influencer Marketing has also an important role in the promotion of destinations. Both ordinary tourists, who contribute to the formation of a tourist destination by sharing posts, photos, and stories, as well as professional influencers acting as “trust agents” for businesses and consumers can be considered as opinion guides (Harrigan et al., 2021).

In recent years, the boom in social media has changed the rules of marketing. Businesses now, through the internet and in particular through social media, have managed to reach the market they are interested in more economically and efficiently.

One such method is influencer marketing. Hotels and tourist destinations work with Instagrammers and YouTubers, restaurants invite food bloggers to visit their restaurant for free, fashion companies make deals with fashion bloggers, etc. (Ki et al., 2020).

Simply put, influencer marketing seeks to influence the buying public that an influencer has “created”. Companies and destinations no longer directly target their target market, but target it through people with online influence. Influencers are invited by partner companies to share content, such as photos and stories, at regular intervals, in order to gain the trust of their followers, so that they can promote their products and services more easily.

Influencer marketing is not a new fad, as it has always been. Companies and firms have always used celebrities (actors and athletes) to promote their products. But that has changed, and now “ordinary people” with large online audiences can influence with great success.

People spend a lot of their free time surfing social media. As social beings, they “follow” users with great influence, considering them trustworthy (Ki et al., 2020).

Finally, we must not underestimate the influence of an image or a video. Instagram seems to be the dominant force, as its influence seems to be huge. Social media users enjoy seeing beautiful images and videos, something that has been noticed by tourist destinations. Last year, Athens invited a group of German influencers, with very strong results. Indeed, video marketing has dominated as a trend since 2018, with more and more companies promoting their products and services, trusting them to YouTubers (Hudders et al., 2021).

6 Suggestions On How Mykonos Can Improve Its Online Presence

The most important element for the promotion and promotion of the island is its website, where Mykonos seems to have an average website. The website of a business or a destination is its identity in the online market. It is necessary to create a website for the destination with modern features and well-written content. It is important that the destination website is compatible with mobile phones, as a very important number of people use only their mobile phones to be informed (Chung & Koo, 2015)

An important and value for money promotion method is to advertise the destination through Google using Google AdWords. Google AdWords is a paid ad that gets the website in the first place of the results. This is achieved by specifying keywords that the user is likely to enter in the search bar. Google is essentially a channel of communication between the customer-tourist and the destination website. Selecting the destination to advertise through Google AdWords enables “access” to a large online audience. A big advantage of this method is the way the services are charged. The billing method is done through the PPC (Pay Per Click) model, which means that the charge is made only when someone clicks and is directed to the website.

Thus, the destination will not have to invest a large amount from the beginning for promotion. Google AdWords also allows you to select filters such as demographics, nationality and interests to make your ad more targeted. Thus, the destination can more easily approach the target markets it has selected (Solidcube, 2018).

In conjunction with Google AdWords, the destination should invest in SEO (Search Engine Optimization) for better website ranking. SEO means optimizing the website in order to rank well in the top positions of Google, that is, right after the Google AdWords ads. According to Google, 92% of users do not look beyond the first page when searching. For a successful SEO, it is necessary to research the appropriate keywords, the website declaration on the platforms Google, Bing and Yahoo, the research in terms of keywords and the continuous monitoring of the results (Solidcube, 2018).

Banner ads are a very common method of online advertising. They are small advertising messages, which usually display small slogans of a business or a destination, which encourage the user to click on and be taken to the advertiser's website. Hence, Mykonos should look for the right websites to place the banner ads.

This will be done either by purchasing space on the websites, or by exchanging space on the destination website. The charge is made via CPU (COST per thousand impressions), depending on the positions that the ad will collect. In this case, a choice will be made on the websites of travel agencies, tour operators, airlines, etc. For a banner ad to be successful, it must display compelling images representative of the destination with interesting content.

Within the destination website of Mykonos, a field called "3D Virtual Tours" will be created. The modern technological equipment enables us to project 3D tours in places, dynamically increasing the presence of the destination on the internet. Through this service the user will be able to tour all the points of interest of the island, the cultural and religious monuments, the museums, the sights, the beaches and the old town. It will be in the form of a map with all the points of interest pinned and the user, by simply clicking on a point, will show him a field with information on the point of interest. This action will amaze potential customers and make the destination more attractive to them. For all this to be successful, however, there must be the appropriate photographic material, both on the website of the destination, as well as in the banners and social media that we will mention below. Photography and video are a means of communication between the customer-tourist and the destination. Collaborations should be established with specialized photographers and videographers, who will focus on the comfort and unique features of the island, allowing it to live a unique virtual hospitality experience. The projection material will include high-resolution photos, digital videos, commercials, 3D Virtual Tours, and panoramic photography (Harrigan et al., 2021; Belias et al., 2017a, b, 2019).

After all this, it is very important to monitor and analyze the traffic to the destination website. This can be achieved through Google Analytics. Thanks to this tool, the destination can have a complete picture in terms of website traffic. Data such as navigation time, website return rate, and visitor demographics are available. The analysis of such statistics is important for the optimization of the website (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Besides that, it is important to take advantage of the fact that Mykonos is a destination which attracts a large volume of well-known personalities such as sportspersons and pop artists who have a tremendous influence not only in real life, but also in the digital space. Hence, Mykonos can use influencers. More precisely no one can survive in the world of internet marketing if they do not adapt to the new data. At the top of Content Marketing is now Influencer Marketing. As we saw in the primary survey, 90% of Mykonos tourism executives agree with the promotion and promotion of the island through Influencers. According to research by Google Trends, in the last decade Influencer Marketing has grown rapidly by up to 100%. Influencers create an excellent range of photos for social media, have an extremely large and loyal audience, share creative descriptions of their travels and are now the ones who create the trends (Ki et al., 2020).

Therefore, Mykonos should follow an Influencer Marketing strategy in order to get the most out of it and face the competition. Once the objectives have been set, the destination should conduct a thorough research in order to make the appropriate collaborations. Influencers in their field should be selected who share a similar culture and interact with the target markets of the destination. The initial research will be done on Instagram and Facebook, in order to find the profiles that best fit the destination profile. Particular attention will be paid to how competitors are projected. There are tools on the internet that specialize in Influencers search. These are Deep.social, Discover.ly, and Podbay.fm. They are Influencers classification and analysis tools that provide detailed information about their audience (demographics, nationality, etc.) and the influence they exert.

Mykonos' collaboration with Influencers will include photo, video, and live broadcasts sharing their experience through their own digital media. It will also include daily stories promoting the sights of the island, its gastronomy through the restaurants they visit, as well as the natural beauties of the island, creating original content, in the form of storytelling. A special basis will be given to the hashtags of the island. Influencers should constantly promote the island's hashtags. The hashtags will help to establish the recognition of the destination and to acquire their own online status. One way to increase engagement with the destination, and not just with Influencer, is giveaways. Giveaways are a great way to boost your Influencer marketing campaign. The rules of these contests will include tag other users and follow the destination profile. This means that more people will learn the destination in a short time. Contest prizes will include accommodation in destination hotels, airline tickets and in some cases complete holiday packages. Influencers are the ones who influence the tourist flow by creating new trends. The most important thing for a successful Influencer Marketing is to set the goals of the destination, something that will help in choosing the right Influencers.

7 Conclusion

The internet has taken by storm the tourist industry as more and more people search and book for their next vacation online. The future of the tourism product requires the presence of every destination on the internet more than ever. The role of social media in the future of the tourism product is important. More and more people are turning to social media to search for information about a destination. Internet users have high demands, preferring destinations and businesses that can answer any of their questions and provide them with any information. Social media allows internet users and prospective customers to exchange views with others about a destination that others may have already visited. It is important to invest the destination in a Social Media Marketing strategy to promote the destination, targeted and low cost, as social media provides flexibility in targeting achieving the best-desired result. Social media and the internet have taken over most of the population. Proper use of these depending on the interest of each destination, choosing the right strategies, can bring very positive results.

In this paper, the suggestions made for Mykonos focus on two areas. The first one is to develop and improve its web presence with a rebranded website that will fully utilize all of the multimedia and other applications that digital marketing may offer today. The second one—and more effective—is to focus on influencer marketing. As a matter of fact Mykonos attracts tens of well-known personalities so why not to take advantage of this. Mykonos shall collaborate with well-known personalities so to use—mostly on Instagram—their profiles so to leverage its brand image and awareness.

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