Chapter 11
Cruise Customer Loyalty Improvement with Social Media

Imke Heinze, Nadine Guhr, and Michael H. Breitner

Abstract Social media become more and more important due to growing Internet usage, enhancements of information systems, and more and more spreading of smartphones. Social media offer various opportunities and chances for cruise operators like advertising, distribution, public relations, human resources management and customer loyalty. To enable and enhance customer loyalty, it is important to be competitive: cruise operators save money in advertising, target focus groups, are interactive and respond to needs of customers directly. For cruise operators it is important to know which social media are available, what kind of advantages and disadvantages exist, how they can use social media to enable and enhance customer loyalty and which social media correspond best to a cruise operator's goals. A decision must be made between moderated and unmoderated social media. Our research is based on a literature review, an Internet search and an illustrative case study with two cruise operators. It shows that Royal Caribbean International (RCI) and AIDA Cruises (AIDA) already use many different social media such as You Tube (YT), Facebook (FB), HolidayCheck (HC), Cruise Critic (CC) and also their web pages. Both cruise operators are well present on FB: but, RCI still has to improve its involvement. Furthermore, our research shows that it is necessary for both cruise operators to follow long-term social media strategies and to measure success quantitatively and qualitatively. They have to consider critical success factors of social media like authenticity, personalization, openness, honesty and transparency for their long-term social media strategies. Moderation of social media is essential to supervise and "control" content, to answer questions seriously and to interact with consumers timely.

Keywords Customer loyalty enablement and enhancement • Social media • Cruise operators • Case study

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11.1 Introduction

Social media become more and more important due to growing Internet usage, enhancements of information systems, and more and more spreading of smartphones. Within the last years, use of mobile Internet and thereby social media via smartphones highly increased (Statista 2014a, b). The foundation for this development is e.g. improvement of performance, digitalization, cost reduction of information transfer and software development (Laudon and Traver 2004).

Internalization and globalization were assured, competition for cruise operators grows, business environment changes and therefore, cruise operators have to alter to save competitive advantages. Social media offer various possibilities and chances for cruise operators like advertising, public relations and customer loyalty. Research shows that people trust recommendations from people they know and consumers opinions posted online much more than advertisement in magazines or TV spots (Nielsen 2012; Bronner and de Hoog 2011; Kaplan and Haenlein 2010; Xu et al. 2009).

Use of social media to enable and enhance customer loyalty is one possibility to be competitive, because cruise operators can save money in advertising, target focus groups, are interactive and respond to needs of customers. Here, customer loyalty is defined as the systematically analysis, planning, implementation and control of all actions to enable and enhance and to intensify the relationship between cruise operators and customers. It also can be divided into actual behaviour, e.g. buying frequency and recommendations, and behavioural intention, e.g. intention of buying or recommendations (Greve 2011).

For cruise operators, it is significant to know what kind of social media are available, what kind of advantages and disadvantages exist and how they can use social media to enable and enhance customer loyalty. The use of social media is divided into own and other. It is difficult to separate them due to fluent transition. The chosen criterion for the varying consideration is responsibility. If cruise operators can publish any content at any time, they are seen independently from the social media platform, which is viewed as a technical tool to disseminate information of cruise operators. The focus is on own social media such as FB as the most popular social network, YT as the most used video portal in Germany (Statista 2014c, d) and other like the review sites HolidayCheck.de as a very popular cruise review web site in Germany and CruiseCritic.com worldwide.

This paper focuses on the cruise industry whereas it is the fastest growing sector in the leisure travel market. Between 1990 and 2015, the annual growth rate is predicted to be 7 % worldwide (CruiseMarketWatch 2012; Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association 2010) and in Germany, there was an increase of 13.8 % in 2011 compared to the previous year (Deutscher Tourismusverband 2012). The focus in on sea cruises, because turnover and volume of passengers are higher than in the river cruise sector (Deutscher ReiseVerband 2011). The focus is on the biggest cruise operator worldwide, RCI with approximately 62,000 berths, and the

largest one in Germany, AIDA, with 16,442 berths (Carnival Corporation & plc 2012; Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. 2012).

The use of social media by cruise operators was considered, and the question on how they use social media and whether there is a difference in the use in 2012 and 2013 seems to be an interesting issue. In this emerging research context, a global focus is beneficial for researchers and practitioners alike. The research question addressed in this paper is:

> How and why do cruise operators use social media for customer loyalty enablement and enhancement?

The purpose of this paper is to examine social media, especially the use of own and other as well as the use of moderated and unmoderated social media. This research is conducted by a literature review, an online research and an illustrative case study. The use of social media will be compared with the help of selective criteria. Furthermore, recommendations and implications for further research will be pointed out.

11.2 Social Media

Social media are a relatively new field because of technological development, growth of the Internet and wide distribution of smartphones (Grabs and Bannour 2011). It can take many different forms such as video, pictures and texts (Turban et al. 2010; Hudson and Roberts 2012). The most important factors are contact, communication and relationship with each other. Consumers network, share information, experiences, opinions as well as recommendations everywhere and at all times (Grabs and Bannour 2011; Henning-Thurau et al. 2010). To enable and enhance customer loyalty, social media supply various opportunities such as create communities to connect customers among them and to the cruise operators, provide sales, use geo-location-services, involve customers in product development and complaint management (Greve 2011). In order to reach a lot of customers and please them, additional value has to be created. Involvement requires analyses, planning and guidelines (Kreutzer and Hinz 2010).

Besides normal success factors, others such as authenticity, honesty, emotions, passion, openness and personalization, transparency in communication, ability to accept criticism and react appropriate are very important. The goal of successful social media marketing is to interact with customers and to form a long-term relationship on the basis of loyalty and trust (Bruhn et al. 2011; Litvin et al. 2008). The last decade was characterized by strong growth of Mobile Business and further increased is predicted by market research institutes. This development was made possible through various factors like location-independency, reachability, security, localization, immediate availability, personalization and cost-effectiveness (Berres and Bullinger 2002).

Location Based Services (LBS) and Social Location Sharing (SLS) gained importance within the last years. SLS differs from other LBS by the user's behavior, because the user reveals its position to the network and every other member is informed about the location (Salt 2012). On smartphones LBS, personalization, and permanent reachability can be applied in various ways. Pictures can be taken with a smartphone and the location is added: these pictures can be posted in social media or digital post cards can be sent home. The position on board can be transferred and guests can get information about on board activities such as animation, cinema programs or happy hours to improve on board revenue. Guests can see where other friends are on board with a "buddy finder". With programs like Google + Local or Foursquare guests can show their social network which places they have visited and can rate them via recommended/"like" places.

The term social media is defined as the digital communication instrument, which helps users to exchange information interactive and to communicate mutual. The goal for cruise operators is to provide additional social media for customer service in order to win new clients, monitor the market, interact, communicate or determine customer responses. It is necessary to examine the implementation and use with the help of selective criteria. Examples are number of views/likes total, subscriptions, frequency of posting and the average number of views. To analyse HC and CC, e.g. number of listed ships, average number of reviews, rating and recommendation rate are looked at.

11.3 Research Methodology & Results

11.3.1 Research Design

The research design is subdivided into three parts. First, a literature review on Google scholar, Wiley Online Library, JSTOR, Emerald, WISO and SAGE journals was done. Afterwards, an Internet search with the keywords social media cruise, customer loyalty enablement and enhancement on Google, both in English and German was conducted. Various cruise review websites and cruise forums such as HolidayCheck.de, CrusieCritic.com, cruisereviews.com, tripadvisor.com and kreuzfahrten.de were also looked at. Third, the focus within the research design was on an illustrative case study examining RCI and AIDA.

11.3.2 Illustrative Case Study

The use of social media is analysed in the following periods: 13.–27. July 2012 and 09.–22. December 2013 for the average values on FB and YT. The reference date for the other numbers such as number of likes total or number of subscriptions was

27th July 2012 and 30th December 2013. For the calculation of average values on HC and CC, all data has been considered until the reference dates. The illustrative case study focused on own social media of both cruise operators like FB, YT and the cruise operator's website as well as other social media such as HC and CC. It was also differentiated between moderated (FB, YT) and unmoderated (HC, CC) social media. Posts or comments do not lead to an action by the cruise operator in unmoderated social media. If a user writes a review about a cruise ship, other users can decide on HC, whether the review was helpful or not. In case of violating the terms of use, users can contact HC and inform them about it (HolidayCheck 2012; Cruise Critic 2012). In contrast, in moderated social media posts or comments lead to an action by the cruise operator, e.g. commenting on posts, pressing the like button or deleting posts. The results are presented in the following tables.

11.3.3   Use of Own and Other Social Media

Results of the AIDA & RCI YT examination as own social media (*Source*: You Tube 2012, 2013)

Criteria	AIDA 08/2012	AIDA 12/2013	RCI 08/2012	RCI 12/2013
Number of videos	438	650	214	305
Number of views total	766,683	4,401,138	3,491,539	3,253,946
Average views per video	2069	1118	12,016	1334
Average number of comments	1.16	0.8	2.3	0.45
Number of subscriptions	789	3035	3962	10,878
Frequency of posting	0.43 per day	0.36 per day	0.71 per day	3.14 per day

Results of the AIDA & RCI FB examination as own social media (*Source*: Facebook 2012, 2013)

Criteria	AIDA 08/2012	AIDA 12/2013	RCI 08/2012	RCI 12/2013
Number of likes	305,355	661,868	1,081,637	1,480,205
Number of people talking about this	8992	31,524	120,237	47,613
Average number of likes	354	1170	5502	8771
Average number of comments	37	64	289	418
Frequency of posting	1.71 per day	1.43 per day	2.14 per day	0.79 per day

Results of the AIDA & RCI HC examination as other social media (*Source*: HolidayCheck 2012, 2013)

Criteria	AIDA 08/2012	AIDA 12/2013	RCI 08/2012	RCI 12/2013
Number of different ships	9	9	24	23

Criteria	AIDA 08/2012	AIDA 12/2013	RCI 08/2012	RCI 12/2013
Average number of reviews	546	666	54	74
Average rating (based on scale from 1 to 6, whereby 6 is the best)	4.96	4.97	5.16	5.24
Average recommendation rate	88 %	88 %	93 %	95 %

Results of the AIDA & RCI CC examination as other social media (*Source*: Cruise Critic 2012, 2013)

Criteria	AIDA 08/2012	AIDA 12/2013	RCI 08/2012	RCI 12/2013
Number of different ships	0	0	22	21
Average number of reviews	0	0	560	685
Average rating (based on scale from 1 to 5, whereby 5 is the best)	–	–	4	4
Average recommendation rate	–	–	84 %	84 %

11.3.4 Use of Moderated and Unmoderated Social Media

It is difficult to categorize whether web pages are moderated or unmoderated. The RCI website does not offer space for writing comments or posts; they only refer to their activity on social media platforms. Communication with others is only possible in the closed Crown & Anchor Society. To apply for membership, a cruise with RCI has been completed. The AIDA web page supplies AIDAfun providing travelogues, blogs, videos and pictures. The content is provided by employees and users. A registration and log in on the website are necessary to comment or like something; however, everybody can register. The AIDAWeblounge lives from its community, their mutual assistance and support as well as share of information and experiences. In contrast, access to MyAIDA is only reserved to AIDA travellers. On the one hand, it is moderated social media, because of the possibility to comment or rate posts by AIDA. On the other hand, research within the AIDAWeblounge shows that only users are active regarding comments, rates or answering questions (Royal Caribbean International 2012, 2013; AIDA 2012, 2013).

To examine the use of moderated social media on FB and YT, four different statements (positive, negative, problem, question) are posted on the FB page as well as the YT channel. It was examined how much time has passed since the posts or comments were made and the way in which the cruise operators have responded. The posts on FB pages partially differ from YT comments (the first two are identical). But, the same sentences are posted on the same social media page to provide a higher degree of transparency and comparability. However, these sentences differ in language, because AIDA posts are in German and RCI posts

are in English. To be without attracting attention, four different FB and YT accounts have been created. Each is used for the same post for the AIDA and the RCI page. Two accounts with different names have been registered for the last two YT posts, because they differ from the FB posts. The comments are posted on weekdays with an interval of 1 day on both pages. To guarantee the same initial situations, posts on both pages are done at the same time each day; however, time difference has been considered.

Posts used for the FB examination as moderated social media

Post	German	English
Post 1: Positive User 1	Ich bin gerade von einer AIDA Reise wieder nach Hause gekommen und möchte mich gerne für die unvergessliche Zeit bedanken.	I've just come back home from a cruise and I would like to thank you for the unforgettable time!
Post 2: Negative User 2	Nachdem ich im Fernsehen einen Beitrag über die Hygiene bei AIDA gesehen habe, bin ich entsetzt. Nächstes Mal werde ich definitiv nicht mit AIDA fahren!	I saw a TV report about Royal Caribbean, which showed poor hygienic conditions on a ship. I am shocked and next time, I will choose another cruise operator for my cruise!
Post 3: Problem User 3	Ich wollte soeben auf www.aida.de eine Kreuzfahrt buchen und habe gesehen, dass bei Kreditkartenzahlung ein Transaktionsentgelt erhoben wird. Gibt e seine weitere Art der Bezahlung?	I wanted to book a cruise on www.royalcaribbean.com, but I saw that you need a credit card to activate the Sea Pass, but I don't have one. What do I do?
Post 4: Question User 4	Ich bin gerade von einer wundervollen Reise zurückgekommen und möchte gleich meine nächste Reise für Weihnachten buchen. Diesmal soll es in die Karibik gehen. Welche Möglichkeiten gibt es da?	I just returned from a wonderful trip and I want to book my next trip for Christmas to the Caribbean. What cruises are possible for that time?

Results of the AIDA & RCI FB posting examination as own social media (*Source*: Facebook 2012, 2013)

Criteria	AIDA 08/2012	AIDA 12/2013	RCI 08/2012	RCI 12/2013
Post 1: Time Reaction	5 min	19 min	–	–
	Hallo Frau Bender, vielen Dank! Das freut uns sehr! Wir wünschen Ihnen auch zukünftig unvergesslich schöne Reisen mit den Schiffen der AIDA Flotte! :)	Hallo Frau Lehmann, es freut uns, dass Ihnen die Reise so gut gefallen hat. Wir leiten lhr Lob gerne weiter.	None	None
Post 2: Time Reaction	19 min	1 min	–	–
	Hallo Jake Halloran, wir haben die benannte Sendung	Hallo Daniel Starke, die Gesundheit unserer Gäste und	None	None

Criteria	AIDA 08/2012	AIDA 12/2013	RCI 08/2012	RCI 12/2013
	selbst sehr aufmerksam verfolgt und sind für jeden Hinweis, ernst zunehmende Kritik und Anregungen sehr dankbar. Sie helfen uns, unsere hohen Qualitätsansprüche zu sichern und weiter zu verbessern. Wir haben die aufgezeigten Mängel umgehend intern ausgewertet und haben sofortige Maßnahmen eingeleitet, die eine Wiederholung ausschileßen. Wir freuen uns, wenn Sie sich vielleicht selbst eine Meinung bilden, wie das viele unserer treuen Gäste tun.	Crew hat für AIDA Cruises oberste Priorität. Hygiene und Sicherheit warden an Bord aller AIDA Schiffe großgeschrieben. Alle AIDA Schiffe unterliegen strengsten Hygienestandards. Unsere kontinuierlichen Kontrollen liegen weit über den an Land gültigen Vorschriften. Deshalb werden an Bord unserer Schiffe auch kontinuierlich präventive Hygienemaßnahmen getroffen.		
Post 3: Time Reaction* *The third post was sent via personal message to RCI due to no previous reaction to the first two posts.	11 min	6 min	1 h 12 min	23 min
	Hallo Sabine Lehmann, Sie buchen die Reise ganz bequem auf www.aida.de Nach Abschluss der Buchung haben Sie im Bereich myAIDA dann die Möglichkeit ganz in Ruhe zu Entscheiden, wie Sie lhre Kreuzfahrt bezahlen möchten-dabei können Sie zwischen Kreditkartenzahlung, Sofortüberweisung oder klassischer Banküberweisung wählen.	Hallo Sabrina Lehmann, Sie können alternativ auch regulär überweisen oder über MyAIDA per Paypal oder Sofortüberweisung bezahlen.	Hi Sabine, the SeaPass system may be activated with traveler's checks, debit cards with a Visa or MasterCard logo, or cash if you do not have a credit card. You can learn more information here: http://bit.ly/M3Whg7.	Hi Sabrina- Give us a call at (800) 529-6918 so we can help.
Post 4: Time Reaction	2 h 22 min	5 min	–	16 min
	Hallo Herr Starke, unter www.aida.de finden Sie unsere Karibikreisen in der	Hallo Jake Halloran, Wir freuen uns, dass lhnen lhre Reise mit AIDA so gut gefallen	None	HI Jake- We're so glad you had a great time

(continued)

Criteria	AIDA 08/2012	AIDA 12/2013	RCI 08/2012	RCI 12/2013
	Weihnachtszeit: http://bit.ly/MIKKKq Viel Spaß beim stöbern!	hat. Gerne können Sie sich auf unserer AIDA Website zu unseren Karibik Angeboten informieren. Eventuell haben ja auch unsere AIDA Facebook Fans noch den einen oder anderen Tipp für Sie http://www.aida.de/ kreuzfahrt/ziele/ karibik.18952.html		onboard. You can view our itineraries here: http:// bit.ly/ BookRoyal or give us a call at (866) 562-7625.

Posts used for the YT examination as moderated social media

Post	German	English
Post 1: Positive User 1 1st video on starting page	Ich bin gerade von einer AIDA Reise wieder nach Hause gekommen und möchte mich gerne für die unvergessliche Zeit bedanken.	I've just come back home from a cruise and I would like to thank you for the unforgettable time!
Post 2: Negative User 2 newest video	Nachdem ich im Fernsehen einen Beitrag über die Hygiene bei AIDA gesehen habe, bin ich entsetzt. Und werde nun einen anderen Anbieter für meine nächste Kreuzfahrt auswählen.	I saw a TV report about Royal Caribbean, which showed poor hygienic conditions on a ship. I am shocked and next time, I will choose another cruise operator for my cruise!
Post 3: Problem User 5 video with most views	Ich kann kein Video zu "Mein Schiff"' finden? Wo gibt es das?	I can't find a video about the Celebrity Breeze. Where is it?
Post 4: Problem User 6 video with least views	Wer und wann wird die nächste Berühmtheit an Board eines AIDA Schiffes sein?	Who and when will be the next celebrity on a cruise Ship?

AIDA and RCI did not reply to any of the posts on the YT page and therefore, there are no presented results.

11.3.5 Key Findings

The use of FB increased within the last years. AIDA operates their fan page very well, because they like comments reply fast and use different contents. The RCI reaction on comments can be improved, especially to negative posts. The use of YT also increased within the last years. However, the number of views depends highly on content of videos. Both cruise operators have to pay more attention to comments and they also have to moderate this social media. Therefore, the use is improvable. The web pages are already very good, but RCI can offer more interactive platforms or a community like AIDA. The different number of ratings on other social media like HC and CC may be caused by different target groups. One possible reason for higher number of ratings of AIDA on HC may be higher popularity and awareness in Germany. CC is unknown in Germany and this may be the reason for non AIDA reviews. Other social media have to be watched closely and improvement suggestions made by customers should be considered (Fig. 11.1).

The RCI web page is ranged in quadrant one since it is own social media and there is no own social media activity possible. The AIDA web page is classified between quadrant one and two, because of the characteristic of an own page as well as the possibility of moderation in the AIDAWeblounge. The YT channels of RCI as well as AIDA are both ranked between the first and second quadrant. They are own social media and the possibility of moderation is given. Both FB pages are ranged in the second quadrant, because they are own as well as moderated social media. AIDA is classified superior to RCI due to more responses. HC as well as CC are both ranged between quadrant three and four. Both are other social media and the possibility of moderation is provided. HC is classified more in quadrant three
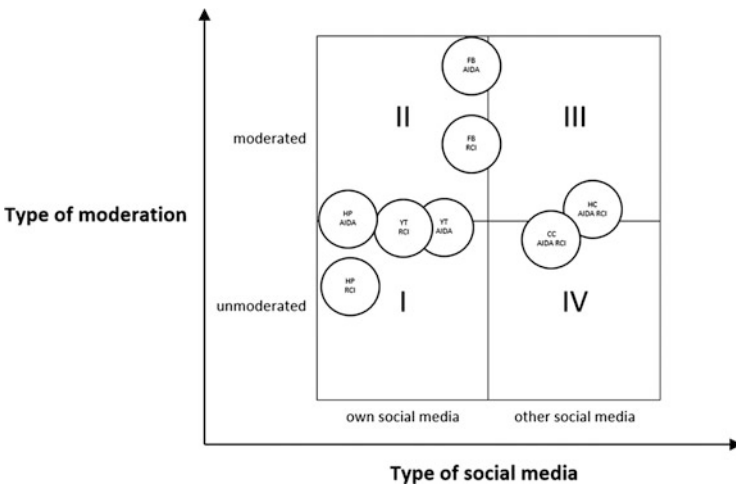

Fig. 11.1 Classifications of different types of social media

than CC. The reason for this is the frequently asked questions on HC, which point to the possibility of deletion of reviews, if the terms of use are violated.

The goal is to reach quadrant three, because it is the most interesting one and the reputation is very high, because social media are not controlled by the cruise operator and therefore, the consumer's confidence in contents is high. On the one hand, unmoderated social media are a reliable source since everybody can write what they want and nobody deletes it. This can lead to an information overload and false statements can also occur. On the other hand, moderated social media can control reviews as well as associated comments to prevent false information. It can be assumed that HC acts as a neutral party. For this reasons, moderated social media are preferred towards unmoderated social media. Acceptance and potential of different social media are presented in Fig. 11.2. Acceptance of review portals like HC and CC is very high due to the fact that people trust other posted opinions and ratings. CC is ranked higher than HC, because they have more visitors. The cruise operator's web page is highly accepted by customers, which already have done a cruise due to the fact that users are very active in the community. Normally, first time cruise travellers are not members of the community yet. For this reason, web pages are ranked below review pages. The acceptance of FB is classified in the middle, because the use depends on the consumer. Some travellers only use review sites and the web page; however, there are big differences in the country of origin of the travellers e.g. in the USA, FB is more accepted than in Germany (Statista 2012a, b). YT pages are used to watch video rather than to interact with cruise operators. Both cruise operators also post all videos on FB. Therefore, all FB users watch videos there and they do not visit the YT page. For these reasons, acceptance of YT
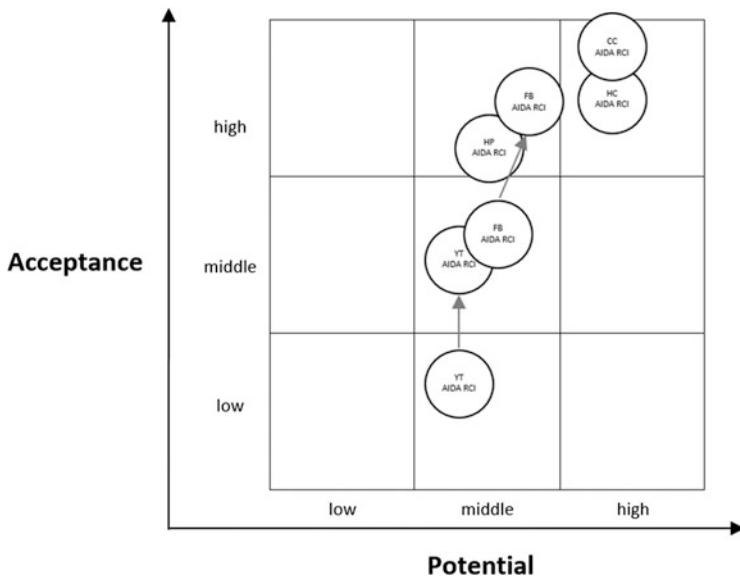

Fig. 11.2 Acceptance and potential of social media

is low. The overall potential is high since the cruise market grows very fast and the number of users in social media increases (CruiseMarketWatch 2012; Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association 2010; Cruise Lines International Association 2011). The potential for FB is middle, because on the one hand, the number of users is growing. On the other hand, other social networks grow faster and FB already lost some users (GlobalWebIndex 2012a, b). Potential for both review sites is very high due to the fact that the demand will continue to grow. Users still want to get information, which support them in their booking process. YT is classified middle regarding their potential, because it is possible to interact with the customers. The potential of web pages is middle due to the fact that first time cruises are not involved in communities. They only visit the web page to look for information and to read review or blogs. Nevertheless, returning travellers use the community actively and share their experiences or provide pictures. Due to the fact that the use of FB and YT highly increased within the last year, the acceptance changed within that time.

11.4 Discussion and Recommendations

There exist many advantages and disadvantages for own or other social media. One advantage for own social media is to have administrator rights. Due to this, cruise operators get a lot of information regarding demography, backgrounds, activities and interaction rates. Furthermore, cruise operators recognize and spy on customers with the aid of IP-addresses. Target groups are easy to classify regarding their geography like country, region or city as well as their socio-demographic characteristics such as language, relationship status, level of education and employer. It is possible to use an individual design and multimedia content for own web pages. On own social media like FB and YT, this is only possible to a limited extent, because neither AIDA nor RCI is the owner of this page in the strict sense. They only have responsibility about their fan page. However, in the scope of the possibilities supplied by FB or YT, fan page owners can design their page individual and unique.

An advantage is the possibility to link videos and allocate them in other social media. Today, many users use YT as a search engine and it became one of the biggest advanced search engines. However, a lot of users only watch videos and they do not like, dislike or comment videos. The reason may be required registration. Advantages of other social media are likewise disadvantages of own social media. User generated content provides higher credibility than classical forms of communication since users have more confidence therein and it appears more reliable to them. A second advantage for other social media is authenticity since other travelers write the experience in their own words and this contributes to credibility. Other social media are also advantageous to users regarding diversity since many users from all over come together and share their experience and knowledge. HC and CC only supply the platform as wells as infrastructure and users fill it with content. The feedback process and interaction among them are very

important, because they do not only allocate their opinions, experiences and recommendations but rate, recommend and classify them. In this way, a collective and cross-linked knowledge develops, which is available for all Internet users. Travelers like to seek advice, secure their booking and share positive as wells as negative experiences online.

Independent portals are very important and helpful for both, users and cruise operators. Opinions of other users are very relevant due to the fact that they have experienced the cruise and information is not sophisticated by cruise operators. Consequently, the most important advantage is independency. In conclusion, there exist many advantages and disadvantages for own and other social media as well as moderated and unmoderated social media. It is questionable whether the use of social media corresponds to all focus groups, because not everyone uses social media, especially FB due to privacy concerns, but rather the cruise operator's web page. It must be considered that social media change very fast and in some years, others might have greater influence.

Social media contain more than social networks, which offer various options to enhance customer loyalty. Before starting social media activities, a long-term strategy including e.g. goals, timetables and implementation plans has to be stated. Cruise operators must be aware of the fact that it takes an enormous amount of time. Prior to implementation, clear and specific goals have to be set, e.g. increase of turnover or reputation, rise of perceptions of users or higher ranking in search engines (Hudson and Roberts 2012). In most cases, results are not measurable immediately. The focus is rather on listening to consumers and commitment. It is also very difficult to quantify the return on investments (ROI), because the quality of conversations is very hard to measure. However, it is possible to measure success qualitatively as well as quantitatively, e.g. number of site views, visits, followers, interaction rate or classification of certain contents in different rankings, using software for monitoring and programs provided by page operators like FB Insight. Social media have to be observed constantly, because customers have an enormous power with smartphones in posting very fast, at any time and everywhere. Transparency, openness, honesty, authenticity, personal communication and personalization play a central role in social media, e.g. employees should write blogs or be interviewed. It is conducive to build up trust and credibility and to be authentic. Cruise operators have to be fast, up to date and provide relevant information, because it is an ongoing process. First, cruise operators have to listen, before they can react.

Social media offer possibilities to promote brands, to increase conversation rate, to launch discussions, to do market research or to enhance customer loyalty. Cruise operators have to find out needs of consumers and react to them. They should also ask for feedback and implement suggestions, because nothing is more authentic than honest opinions made by customers. This has to be taken very serious and quality can be increased. A dialogue is possible, especially in communities which link the customers on the long-term and they also play an important part in contributing to establish loyal supporters which are very important for cruise

operators due to the reason that they stand up for the cruise operator and defence them, in case of e.g. negative comments or posts.

Users talk about cruise operators and it does not matter, whether cruise operators take part or even know about it. Cruise operators must join these conversations and participate. They should admit problems, offer self-criticism, deal with constructive criticism and react to all posts. If they are positive, they should give thanks to writers and maybe like comments, because it is also very important and it can lead to better bonding. If cruise operators are criticized, they should systematically take part in conversations and support frank exchanges of views. They should never delete posts with exception of violating the terms of use in form of e.g. harassment or discrimination. They should take up position and thereby, they can weaken the negative ratings and correct their position in an open, professional and honest way. They should give thanks for comments, promise to take care of problems and ensure that mistakes are tried to be avoided in future. In this way, cruise operators can build up trust and maybe, this can lead to a change of mind. It is very important that legal aspects have to be considered. Information is spread faster and further online than offline. If reliability is lost once, it will be very difficult to build it up again. In any case, contact information should be provided on all social media, so users can also contact the cruise operators personally (Herzog and Luthe 2010; Mangold and Faulds 2009). LBS, personalization and permanent reachability can also be applied in various ways. Examples are: adding GPS position to pictures, digital post cards, providing guest information such as weather forecast or information about ships, seeing the location of friends on board or showing their networks visited places and rating them via Google + Local or foursquare. It is very important that emotions, passion and enthusism are used to enable customer loyalty. Customers have a high emotional bind to cruises since they are on vacation which is experience-oriented and it is a special event for most travelers (Silberer et al. 2002; Bronner and de Hoog 2011).

It is very important that the focus is not only on one social media page but rather on more at the same time. A mix of own and other social media should be used due to fast changing social media and moderation is essential. Cruise operators cannot be statically, but must be flexible. Overall, customer satisfaction is necessary for successful customer loyalty. One of the biggest problems is the involvement in the post purchase process. Travelers just returned from their cruise and the next vacation is far away. It is essential to be active in this period of time. Reasons for visiting social media have to be established to bind travelers to the brand and convince them to cruise again. In conclusion, there is no ideal way for all cruise operators and each cruise operator has to determine their strategy and implement it.

11.5   Limitations

First, the focus relies on the biggest cruise operators regarding berths. Hence, only two large cruise operators have been analysed and no small or medium sized cruise operators. The biggest cruise operators can also be defined based on other criteria. The focus was on oceanic rather than on river cruises. Due to these facts, it is very difficult to project the results onto small or river cruise operators. For these kinds of cruise operators, other recommendations may apply. Only two cruise operators in the field of oceanic cruises on the German and the US market have been examined. It is also crucial to generalize the findings for other markets.

Second, social media only have been surveyed for 2 weeks in two different periods and only four different comments on each social media page within a period of 4 days were posted. The posts differed in language and other users could also see the posts and may have influenced the behaviour of page owners. In order to gain more significant results, the research has to be conducted over a longer period of time as well as more different kinds of posts have to be used.

Third, some results of this study are conflicting. One example is the decreasing views on the RCI YT channel. In 2013, they had approximately 200,000 less views than in 2012. The reason may be a new starting point or different criteria to count the views. In summer 2012, 1.08 million people liked the RCI FB page. During the period of 1.5 years until December 2013, 400,000 people liked the RCI FB page. By 12th January 2014, there were 2.1 million likes. This means that within 2 weeks, 700,000 people liked the RCI FB page. This figure does not fit within the other figures. Other criteria may be used to count the criteria.

11.6   Conclusion and Further Research

Research shows that RCI and AIDA already use different social media. Both cruise operators are presented very well on FB; although, RCI still has to improve its involvement. On YT, both cruise operators have to be more active and reply to the customer needs faster and better. AIDA already has a very good community on its own web page: this could be also established by RCI. It is necessary for both cruise operators to state a long-term strategy and to measure their success. They have to consider the success factors of social media for their strategy. Social media and their usage rapidly change: cruise operators should use a mix of different own and other social media to improve customer loyalty enablement and enhancement. Moderation on social media is essential to control contents to a certain extent, answer to questions and be interactive with consumers. Replies to customers' questions and comments must be helpful, honest, polite, and authentic. Manipulation is possible in many ways e.g. cruise operators can improve their reputation and rate competitors worse. In the short-term manipulation may help, but not in the long-term. Sometimes manipulation is revealed and the reputation of a cruise

operator can be destroyed: information is spread widely and quickly. Content is very difficult to delete in social media and often, even impossible.

In short, social media are very relevant topic in today's dynamic and complex business environment. Cruise operators have to pay attention to this important topic to state competitive and to enhance customer loyalty on the long-term.

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