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Exploring the Use of Youtube as a Marketing Tool for Tourism Sector with Special Reference to Western Regions of India

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Abstract

Tourism and Hospitality, constituting one of India's largest service industries, hold significant sway in propelling the nation's growth and prosperity. As per WTTC data, the industry's contribution to the GDP has steadily risen, projecting around INR 16.5 trillion by 2023. Marketing stands out as a paramount management activity within the tourism realm, given the perishable and intangible nature of its products.

The advent of digital marketing gained traction alongside the widespread adoption of the internet in the 1990s. Yet, one of the primary hurdles faced by digital marketers is distinguishing themselves in a landscape inundated with digital ads and various distractions.

Online videos have long been capturing the attention of audiences, wielding substantial influence in the digital realm. YouTube Marketing emerges as the strategy for promoting businesses through videos and ads on the platform. With YouTube ranking as the world's second most popular website, boasting a vast and diverse audience, it presents significant opportunities for promotional endeavours. The present study tries to explore the use of YouTube as a marketing tool for tourism by the Government Tourism Development Corporations with special reference to Western regions of India.

Keywords: Tourism, You Tube, Marketing, Digital Marketing

Introduction

Tourism and Hospitality, as pivotal components of India's service sector, exert an extraordinary influence on the nation's economic growth and prosperity. Acting as a crucial driver, it not only fosters job creation but also facilitates rapid development by spurring the establishment of multi-use infrastructure, including upscale hotels, resorts, efficient transportation networks, and cutting-edge healthcare facilities (www.investindia.gov.in).

According to WTTC data, the industry's contribution to the GDP has witnessed a consistent upsurge, projecting a staggering INR 16.5 trillion by 2023 (Times of India). Additionally, the Hotels Association of India (HAI) anticipates the creation of approximately five million jobs within the hotels and tourism sector in the next 5-7 years, with expectations soaring to 58.2 million jobs by 2033 (www.cmie.com).

According to the study conducted by Arunmozhi and Panneerselvam (2014), Marketing has been recognized as the most important management activity in the tourism industry which is growing at a rapid rate. It is especially important because of the perishable and intangible nature of the tourism product. Tourism marketing is important to raise awareness, Motivating Consumers and Promoting Image of the tourist location.

Marketing trends are undergoing perpetual evolution alongside advancing technology, reshaping consumer-company interactions. Staying abreast of these trends is crucial for crafting effective marketing strategies (www.indeed.com)

The ascent of digital marketing gained momentum with the widespread adoption of the internet in the 1990s. Digital marketing encompasses the utilization of websites, apps, mobile devices, social media platforms, search engines, and other digital mediums to promote and sell products and services, reflecting the evolving landscape of consumer interactions with businesses (www.investopedia.com). The present study tries to explore the use of YouTube as a marketing tool for tourism by the Government Tourism Development Corporations with special reference to Western regions of India.

Objectives of the Study

Following are the objectives of the study:

1. To explore the use of YouTube as a marketing tool by the Government Tourism Development Corporations in the western regions of India.
2. To suggest the measures to improve the use of YouTube more effectively.

Research Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature, based on the secondary source of data retrieved from several sources such as official websites of government agencies, official YouTube channels of the government agencies, research papers, publications from government and non-government organisations etc.

Literature review

Wang H and Yan J, (2022) [3], Their research study lends empirical support for guiding destination operators in implementing content marketing, building destination images, and innovating tourism enterprise services. Particularly, it underscores the pronounced impact of tourism information quality on the intentions of novice tourists.

Fotis, Buhalis, & Rossides, (2012) [2], The study emphasizes the significant role of social media in shaping tourist behaviour, as travellers use platforms to share experiences before, during, and after trips, heavily influencing their vacation decisions.

Chatterjee and Dsilva (2021) [1], another study focusing on

the promotion of sustainable tourism in Assam and Odisha states that the evolution of the internet has led to a significant shift in global consumption patterns. Therefore, actively promoting sustainable tourism destinations on social media platforms would enhance visibility and accessibility to visitors.

Yadav and Arora (2012) [4], highlighted social media's pivotal role in tourism marketing, emphasizing its potential to enhance destination reputation. Hence, tourism providers should integrate social networking sites into their marketing strategies.

Online videos have long captured the attention of digital audiences, wielding significant influence. YouTube, the world's second most popular website after Google, boasts a vast and diverse audience, offering extensive opportunities for marketers. With billions of active users, YouTube stands as a valuable and robust tool for digital marketing (www.emeritus.org/in)

Use of YouTube for marketing in western region of India and Tourism performance

The western region of India is celebrated for its breathtaking natural landscapes in Maharashtra and Goa, while Rajasthan embodies the essence of India's royal legacy, bustling with vibrant culture. Gujarat extends gracefully into the Arabian Sea, blending desert landscapes with a 1600 km coastline, famous for its beaches, temple towns, and rich historical capitals. Wildlife sanctuaries, hill resorts, and natural wonders abound in Gujarat, complemented by its rich heritage of sculpture, handicrafts, arts, and festivals.

Table 1: Use of YouTube for by the respective State Tourism Development Corporation in the western region of India and Tourism performance

S. No	State	No. of YouTube Videos	No. of Subscribers	Number of Views	Year of Joining	DTVs Ranking 2022	FTVs Ranking 2022
1	Gujarat	517	84700	97,40,091	2012	5	1
2	Goa	178	4660	29,33,904	2013	Not in top 10 ranks	Not in top 10 rank
3	Maharashtra	513	138000	1,44,29,421	2016	6	2
4	Rajasthan	567	116000	5,63,24,227	2015	7	7

Source: Compiled by researcher through www.youtube.com as on 25th February, 2024 & India Tourism Statistics, 2023 Report

Table 1 highlights the use of YouTube by the Government Tourism Development Corporations of the western regions of India. The Gujarat state is 1st state among the other western region states to have his own YouTube Channel, followed by Goa, Rajasthan and Maharashtra respectively.

Rajasthan state Tourism Development Corporation has uploaded maximum number of videos on their official YouTube channel followed by states of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa respectively.

Maharashtra state Tourism Development Corporation has maximum number of subscribers for their official YouTube channel followed by Rajasthan, Gujarat and Goa respectively.

Rajasthan state Tourism Development Corporation has the maximum number of views to their videos uploaded on their official YouTube channel followed by states of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa respectively.

Table 1 further highlights that in the western zone of India, the Gujarat state ranks first in all India Foreign Tourist visitors (FTVs) and 2nd ranks the state of Maharashtra. In case of Domestic Tourist Visitors (DTVs) Gujarat state ranks 5th and Maharashtra state ranks 6th respectively, whereas the Rajasthan state ranks 7th in Foreign Tourist Visitors and Domestic Tourist visitors respectively. The Goa

is not in the top 10 ranks of Foreign Tourist Visitors (FTVs) and Domestic Tourist Visitors (DTVs).

Measures to improve the YouTube marketing strategy

1. Create captivating, informative, and entertaining video content.
2. Avoid lengthy durations for your videos.
3. Address common inquiries from potential customers regarding your business, products, and services.
4. Gather testimonials from satisfied customers.
5. Enhance visibility by incorporating frequently searched keywords related to travel on YouTube.
6. Utilize the "Honors" section on YouTube to monitor activity trends over time, such as most viewed, commented, rated, and discussed videos, which can significantly boost viewership.
7. Monitor YouTube analytics, which encompass various performance metrics like views, subscribers, watch-time, and comments. Understanding these metrics is essential for gauging audience engagement and assessing the effectiveness of your content.

Conclusion

YouTube presents an incredible opportunity for businesses

to attract more traffic and customers. However, it's important to recognize that it's a fiercely competitive platform. Merely uploading videos won't yield immediate results. Success on YouTube entails more than just creating exceptional content; it requires strategic optimization around keywords that align with user searches.

A recent research study indicates that Government Tourism Development Corporations of western regions of India have embraced YouTube as a marketing tool. Despite prolonged usage, subscriber counts and views haven't reached significant levels. Therefore, concerted efforts are necessary to enhance relevant YouTube metrics. There exists substantial potential to convert video viewers into prospective customers, particularly since young consumers heavily rely on online content for decision-making.

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