Chapter 43

Search Engine Marketing: An Outlining of Conceptualization and Strategic Application

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ABSTRACT

The most common feature of Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is the pay-per-click concept that outlines the conceptual understanding of the human-computer interaction (HCI) in marketing. In this type of marketing, the three active actors act simultaneously: the service provider, the search engine as the platform and the individual user base. On the assumption that technology will dominate future marketing channels, this study will explore the conceptualisations of SEM, in relation to HCI in tourism marketing. This paper asserts that strategically, a congenial and accepted level of interaction is much required between the service provider and consumers. Also, this is outlined that the customization of a tourism industry led application and adoption of SEM is possible on ground of the Unified theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) where, factors like age, gender, experience and voluntariness of use are attached with performance expectancy (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

INTRODUCTION

In tourism marketing, technology as deemed to become more in practice and in effect as opposite to conventional marketing strategies. The reliability and usability of such tools are in fact focused to fill the demands of consumers those remain as inconsistent due to the availability of offers and the individual mind-set. On the other side, technology enabled marketing strategies can hardly be confined within geographical boundaries and inaccessible for global consumer bases. There is also general understanding that, technology supported marketing tools are required in such a situation where, almost every aspects of human life is intertwined with technology and technology backed innovations. The application of
technology in tourism or related areas of business can become diverse and may not follow the similar pace of advancements as they require. This is mainly an interaction between consumers and services or product providers. Thus, if marketing strategies remain as more rigid, inaccessible and incompatible to absorb, the level of acceptance will also remain as lower than the expectation. The common understanding that, technology should remain as more rewarding and accessible for consumers becomes more convincing. SEM is gradually becoming a major concept in the present world. There are very few or almost none example that can reveal the significance or bottlenecks of SEM. Also, the relevancies to reveal applications and uses of technologies become crucial to some extent. SEM is an unavoidable element of online marketing that is mostly attached with technological advancements. The necessities to applaud technological applications in wider forms of the societal structure render importance. This type of marketing is getting popular in numerous societies covering both relatively developed and less developed market settings and structures. Search engine is an element of a system as part of the technological intervention within the humans. This has been getting modified over years through the involvement of organisations and institutions of diverse types. Online platforms as part of technological advancements are essential components of technological applications. Marketing methods on the internet concentrates on ads purchase that appears on search engine result pages like Google. The number of search engines is not huge but characteristically, the rate of payment as offered by an advertiser settles the frequency of appearance on the page. Simply, advertisement of that particular company or service provider will appear more that pays more. However, due to limited display capacities a sort of competition always remains between advertisers or service providers.

SEM is relatively new in research areas in tourism research as in past the research was focused on technical aspects of Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and confined to computer and information science (Pan et al., 2011). The internet has affected five competitive forces in the tourism, on supply side tourism business has adopted this, on demand sides now most of customers rely on internet, the entry barriers are decreasing, threats of new substitutes offering is increasing and industry rivalry is become very fierce and just a click away (Pan et al., 2011). As a result, there is a constant struggle among tourism sector players to engage with potential tourist as well be on the top of organic searches as Search Engine Result Pages (SERPs). So, this research attempts to answer the questions related to how tourism and destination marketing organisations should use SEO as a CRM tool and create competitive advantages.

Search engine marketing (SEM) is a tool of customer relationship management (CRM) strategy that predominantly aims at acquiring new customers. Due to competitive dynamics of the tourism industry and customers’ movement to online platforms for decision making, SEM has a great role as a tool of CRM strategy. This research article aims at critically analysing and synthesising researches and practices in search engine marketing (SEM). The implications of research findings for tourism marketers are discussed. SEM has potentials as a multi-billion dollar industry. As per research by Piper Jaffray, search is second most used application on the web and the industry amounts about $44.5 billion worldwide (Jarboe, 2007). Its’ actual emergence dates back for decades as related to the availability and access of internet. This is a form of marketing that initiates with the consumer’s search for a specific product or service that is termed as the ‘hunt mode’. The consumer then indulges in research as passing through the ‘buying cycle’. Marketers target the traffic through paid advertising post and normal search engine result page listings. Both segments of SEM as organic (free) and inorganic (paid) are dominated by giant market players as Google, Bing, Yahoo and few others and are used by millions of companies or business