©LUMEN Proceedings

http://proceedings.lumenpublishing.com/ojs/index.php/lumenproceedings

The 14th Economic International Conference: Strategies and Development Policies of Territories: International, Country, Region, City, Location Challenges | May 10-11, 2018 | Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, Romania

Strategies and Development Policies of Territories: International, Country, Region, City, Location Challenges

Advertising and Promotion in Rural Tourism in Romania. A Content Analysis of Social Media Advertisement. Case Study

Răzvan ONU

https://doi.org/10.18662/lumproc.77

How to cite: Onu, R. (2018). Advertising and Promotion in Rural Tourism in Romania. A Content Analysis of Social Media Advertisement. Case Study. In C. Năstase (ed.), *The 14th Economic International Conference: Strategies and Development Policies of Territories: International, Country, Region, City, Location Challenges | May 10-11, 2018 | Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, Romania* (pp. 241-254). Iasi, Romania: LUMEN Proceedings. https://doi.org/10.18662/lumproc.77

© The Authors & LUMEN Proceedings.
Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the conference

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited

©LUMEN Proceedings

The 14th Economic International Conference: *Strategies and Development Policies of Territories: International, Country, Region, City, Location Challenges* | May 10-11, 2018 | Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, Romania

Advertising and Promotion in Rural Tourism in Romania. A Content Analysis of Social Media Advertisement. Case Study.

Răzvan ONU[1]

Abstract

This paper describes a social media campaign, as a pre-launch stage, for an innovative tourism project, located in Romanian rural area. The process was started by creating social media profiles for the channels relevant to our target audience that we and our team are comfortable with (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.). Depending on the type of campaign we're running, some of these channels will be more relevant than others. Thinking about which networks our target audience is most likely to be active on and start building an online presence in the appropriate spaces.

Social media is one of the best ways to spread the word about campaign in advertising and promotion. Once we've created the accounts we want to use, we were regularly rotating content, such as news, blog posts, images, videos or quotes. Consistently posting interesting, relevant content helped engaging with our followers and starting to build an online community. The content analysis can also identify and reach out to influencers in our space to help build awareness about teaser campaign and the innovative tourism product.

Keywords:

Advertising, promotion, social media, innovative rural tourism.

[1] Babes-Bolyai University, Doctoral School: Communication, Public Relations and Advertising, Cluj-Napoca, Romania, onu.razvan@yahoo.com

https://doi.org/10.18662/lumproc.77

Corresponding Author: Răzvan ONU[1]

Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of the conference

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited

1. Introduction

The present study is a continuation of two previous studies, currently in process of publication, about Innovation in Tourism. The first paper, presented on public in November 2017, named "*Innovation in Tourism at Cold Mountain*" presents the stages of a project to implement an innovative tourism form at Cold Mountain, in Cluj County, Romania. The marketing perspective describes aspects related to the innovative tourism product, prices, placement and promotion. The sociological perspective describes "the story" of the development of tourism facilities through volunteering [9].

The second paper is about advertising and promotion in Social Media regarding the Innovative Tourism Research Project, mainly the teaser campaign, study presented in April 2018 at the 6th edition of the International Conference on Communication [8]. That paper describes a teaser campaign, as a pre-launch stage, for the same innovative tourism project, located in Romanian rural area. The process was started by creating social media profiles for channels relevant to the target audience that we and our team are comfortable with (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc.). Depending on the type of campaign we are running, some of these channels will be more relevant than others. Thinking about which networks our target audience is most likely to be active on and start building an online presence in the appropriate spaces.

Once we have created the accounts we want to use, we were regularly rotating content, such as news, blog posts, images, videos or quotes. Consistently posting interesting, relevant content helped engaging with our followers and starting to build an online community. The content analysis can also identify and reach out to influencers in our space to help build awareness about teaser campaign and the innovative tourism product.

Here is an update of content, the third work of the series.

2. Problem Statement

Campaigns are something that one can see often on TV, on social media, through a social demonstration or even on a billboard. Lately, many destination marketers are turning over more of their budgets to digital and **social media**, according to the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) and U.S. Travel Organizations. According to the DMAI, average budget allocations for consumer **advertising** skew toward online and print at 30% and 33%, respectively, but also include TV at 8% and radio at 5%. (The remaining 24% was "other.") [10].

Social media spread as well as Mobile Social Media development and Information Technology progress, contribute to the increasing availability of a large amount of multimedia unstructured and structured content about customers and prospects. Travel organizations able to gather, analyze, and interpret this information have the chance to enhance customers' knowledge, and consequently, to improve service differentiation and personalization [5].

The synchronization with various target markets allows creating a competitive advantage and increasing financial and operational performance. Therefore, a key issue turns out to be the definition of the most appropriate social media metrics able to evaluate social media performance and, if combined with other measures, to support and improve business strategies. [6]

Figure 1. Social media overview



According to zelist.ro [3], in Romania, on March 2018, (figure 1) the top 10 in social media is leaded by Google, followed by Facebook, YouTube, Yahoo, OLX, Filelist.ro, Emag.ro, Wikipedia, IMDB, Instagram.
The overview from figure 1 is the reason for have we chosen Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn and ResearchGate for promotion and advertising campaign.

3. Research Questions/Aims of the research

The first question is: what differentiates a social media campaign from regular posting? HubSpot's definition of social media campaign is "A variety of content assets centralized around one message." [11]

The message is **#VolunTourism**

Our goal was to increase engagement of our posts on Facebook and YouTube by 30%, within 6 months of running this campaign and our posts on ResearchGate and LinkedIn posts by 20% within 4 months of this campaign.

4. Research Methods

The starting point is Considering Advertising and Promotion - one of the **7 P -** as a part of the Marketing Mix for the innovative tourism Product ***VolunTourism @ Cold Mountain*** (table 2).

Table 1. 7P Marketing Mix

PRODUCT	***VOLUNTOURISM @ COLD MOUNTAIN***
PRICE	TIME
PLACEMENT	Cold Mountain/ Cluj County/ Romania
PROMOTION: **SOCIAL MEDIA**	**Facebook/ YouTube** (common sense channels) **LinkedIn/ ResearchGate** (scientific social media channels)
PROCESS	1st November 2017 (in progress)
PHYSICAL EVIDENCES	Photos, Posts, Videos, Quotes, Film/Interview
PEOPLE/ TARGET AUDIENCE	VOLUNTEERS/ Volunteers Tourists

A full marketing campaign include social media, billboards, TV, and sometimes print advertising. In this paper the focus is on the social media element and how could even run a full campaign on social media alone.

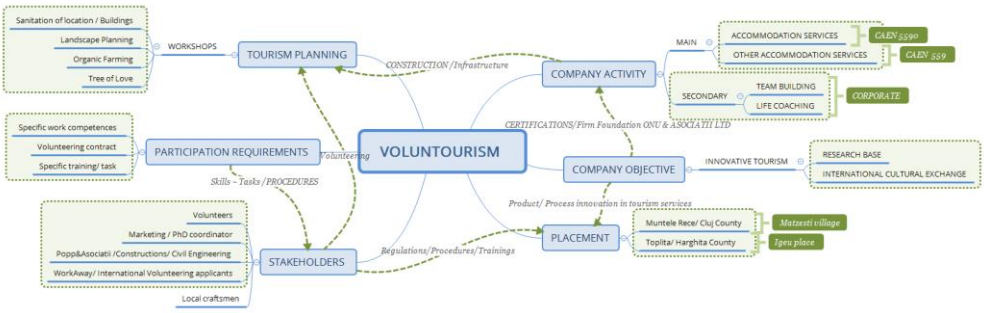
The advertising and promotion process [1] was split up into 4 sections:

- Establish Goals
- Define the Target Audience

- Create Content
- Create a Plan

First step was to create a mind map after an elaborate Business Analysis (figure 2). Viewing the mind map it is easier to select the useful and correct strategy/steps.

Figure 2 Business Analysis. Mind Map



Step 1: Establishing Goals

Why do we want to run the promotion campaign? What is our goal? Campaigns can run for following reasons, including:

- Promoting a new product launch, with the goal of increasing audience
- Generating brand awareness
- Generating interaction and engagement with leads
- Drive app downloads
- Drive traffic to a website
- Increase footfall

Outlining our goals for this campaign is essential, as it will dictate the audience we are promoting to, the content we create, and the results we get. We will be able to measure whether our campaign was successful or not at the end, as we will have a goal to compare with the results.

We are using S.M.A.R.T goals to define our targets and set meaningful goals.

Specific: We want to rapidly increase our product awareness before launching and building the web site. Company Page "***Re-Connect***" hosted on Facebook, have evolved from a nice-to-see to a need-to-contribute. Through a Company Page, we can market our business to the Social Media

community, telling our company's story and giving customers and prospects a place to learn about our business, our activity, and our brand.

Measurable: Numbers are very important, as they will allow us to determine the success of our campaign and keep a numerical record of how our campaign is going.

We would like to increase engagement of our posts on Facebook and YouTube by 30%, and our posts on ResearchGate and LinkedIn posts by 20%.

Attainable: How are we going to achieve this?

R: Organizing workshops with Volunteers. Once we have created the accounts we want to use, on Facebook, LinkedIn, ResearchGate, we were regularly rotating content, such as news, blog posts, images, videos or quotes, research findings (scientific papers on ResearchGate). Consistently posting interesting, relevant content helped engaging with our followers and starting to build an online community.

Is it attainable? Collecting data / Thinking about how much money we can budget for Facebook or Twitter campaigns, and how much time our team must market this product and create the campaign. We could also consider the market value and how much market share we have for Voluntourism in Romania, in comparison to our personal former experience in Africa (Ghana and Tanzania) as an international Voluntourist, and how this affects the attainability of this goal.

Relevant: How is this relevant to our business in general? What will this goal help us to achieve in the long run? For example, it will increase our revenue and awareness, allowing us to hire staff?

For the moment all the work is done through volunteering. It may enable us to access investment opportunities or set up a new placement?

Time-Specific: When will we do this, and within what time frame?

We want to increase engagement of our posts on Facebook and YouTube by 30%, within 6 months of running this campaign and our posts on ResearchGate and LinkedIn posts by 20% within 4 months of this campaign.

Moving on to the next steps:

- Set up and building an up-to-date web site;
- International Volunteering by Work Away and other channels;
- We want to set up a new Voluntourism base in Toplita, Harghita county, in 2 years;
- Engaging a partnership with civil engineering companies and local craftsmen.

- International cultural exchanges workshops.

Step 2: Define Audience

As a campaign revolves around one central idea or product, we may have a different customer persona for this campaign (Volunteer/never been Volunteer) from our business customer persona (International Volunteer/ Voluntourist).

Customer personas are fictional outlines of what our ideal target customer would be.

Name: **Marius** (The name has no relevance – this is to make the persona seem more realistic)

- Age: 25
- Location: Suceava, Romania
- Occupation: Student/ Professional (Volunteer / Never been Volunteer)
- Interests: charitable work, yoga/mindfulness, natural products, and traveling

This is a basic customer persona but gives an idea of how to fully outline the needs, interests, and lifestyle of our target audience.

Step 3: Create Content

Our content is in alignment with our campaign goals and target audience. As the definition of a campaign states, we need to be making the most of a range of content that surrounds our core topic, idea or product. We came up with a list for instance:

Q&As. This could be in the form of a video, live video, blog post or simply replying to comments on a post. This is a way of generating interaction with our target audience, creating a relationship with them, and answering questions they may have about what our campaigning for or about.

Imagery. There should be either an image, video or graphic in every post we make, as this will bring the most engagement, interaction, and will also position our content nearer the top of the news feed.

Photos are made by the author of this paper, as a professional photographer and experienced video editor, and they were chosen carefully, as this will reflect highly Volunteering workshops and activity. These images were behind-the-scenes, or even user-generated content.

Video. The video content on social media are the most effective. Because we plan on using Facebook and YouTube for our campaign, video is a must.

On figure 3 is presented an insight/content analysis of a posted professional filmed interview made by NCN TV, shot professionally. The film has a duration of 51:30 minutes long and was published on **YouTube** channel on February 8th, 2018. The main topic of this interview: International Volunteering/Tourist (Voluntourism) activity of Razvan Onu, the author of this study, a short story about Voluntourism.

On the post (figure 3) the interviewee is introduced by following words: "Răzvan Onu is an International Volunteer and he has visited 36 countries to help people. Stories from a Volunteer's bag who makes himself friends wherever he goes." [7]

Figure 3 YouTube insight analytics about Film/Interview



The same interview was posted on **LinkedIn** site on April 24th, 2018 on Razvan Onu's account. In one week, it reached 545 views from 872 followers (figure 4).

- **Events.** Whether it's a launch event, conference or Volunteering event based on our campaign, events are a good way to tie together online and offline interaction.

For example, **Tree of Love** Event is described on table 2. It took place between *Valentine's Day* (worldwide day of Love, 14th February) and *Dragobete* (24th February, a traditional Romanian holiday).

- **Hashtag.** Starting a campaign, we think, is the perfect time to create our very own hashtag, related to both our brand

and the topic/product our campaign focuses on. We have already a few campaign hashtags in the examples below:

#VolunTourism, #Tree of Love, #Re-Connect #RebelSpirit6 # Online Marketing

Table 2. Facebook event **Tree of Love**. Event Plan

Facebook Account	@RebelSpirit6
Page	**Re-Connect**
Event	**Tree of Love**
Date	19th February 2018
Placement	Cold Mountain, Cluj county, Romania
Physical evidences	photos, videos, comments, shares, likes
People	Volunteers
Hashtags:	➨ # **VolunTourism** # Tree of Love #Re-Connect #RebelSpirit6 # Online Marketing

Hashtags purposes are to help surface our posts in front of the people who matter most, target audience. We add relevant hashtags so that others can easily find our content in search. Using a hashtag will ensure that when members are looking for information on a certain topic or timely event, our article will come up as one of the options.

- **User-Generated Content.** User-generated content, or UGC, is a way to make our campaign about our audience as well as our brand, making them feel a part of it and identified with it. UGC is often used alongside a campaign hashtag, as mentioned above.

Influencers are also a great route to go set up a campaign, especially if we want to create maximum impact and reach as many people as possible. To make sure, we select an influencer who resonates well with the campaign and whose values are aligned with those of our brand. Also, we must make sure that they have the right audience to promote our brand to. A type of influencer is NCN TV, a local TV post, who realized and posted on YouTube channel the interview analyzed before (figures 3 and 4).

Step 4: Create a Plan

We now have the tools to post content, but we need a plan in place before we go any further.

A plan is essential for social media marketing, especially for a campaign and each piece of content should be planned accordingly as part of the project. A plan should consist of the following elements:

- **Which platforms we plan on using.**

We will use **Facebook** to connect with our audience on a personal, individual level, driving engagement and interaction for the campaign.

YouTube is for common sense audience, specific for video content.

We will use **LinkedIn** because it is, by far, the largest number of professionals gather to stay connected and informed, advance their careers, and work smarter. More than 467 million professionals are on LinkedIn. These are the decision makers, influencers. On LinkedIn, we have: • 61 million senior-level influencers • 40 million decision makers • 10.7 million opinion leaders • 6.8 million C-level execs • 3 million MBA graduates. [4]

We have found **ResearchGate** to be particularly useful in making connections, acquiring new perspectives, and finding resources.

- **List the content types we plan on using** and the actions we need to take to create them, such as hiring another professional photographer and videographer or investing in a new camera. We may need to research influencers, get in touch with them, and form a collaboration.
- **A content calendar**. The calendar should be very flexible, especially because we are going to be running events as part of our campaign.
- **Our metrics.** The metrics we use to measure the success of our campaign are determined by our goal, which we outlined before. For example, if our goal is to increase traffic to our website, you would be measuring click-through rates, and using the Facebook Pixel to track activity on our website coming from Facebook. If our goal is to generate brand awareness and interaction with our audience, we would measure likes, comments, shares, mentions, and impressions/reach, weekly or bi-weekly basis. On this paper metrics are measured mainly on February 2018. The most important thing is that we keep track of our campaign success, as this will help we decide whether something needs

changing, adjusting, or even amplifying for the rest of the campaign.

- **Partnerships that will drive the campaign forward.**

Partnerships can include sponsors, charities, or influencers, for example: NCN TV, local craftsmen, *"Popp and Asociatii"*- civil engineering.

5. Findings

Knowledge and understanding of the expectations, needs, values of target audience are goals of any marketing campaign. The mission of our promotion and advertising campaign is difficult because we must develop a marketing mix able to target people from audience, invoking satisfaction and high interest. Communication strategy has a special role to play, especially in Voluntourism, where Tourism and Volunteering should be mixed.

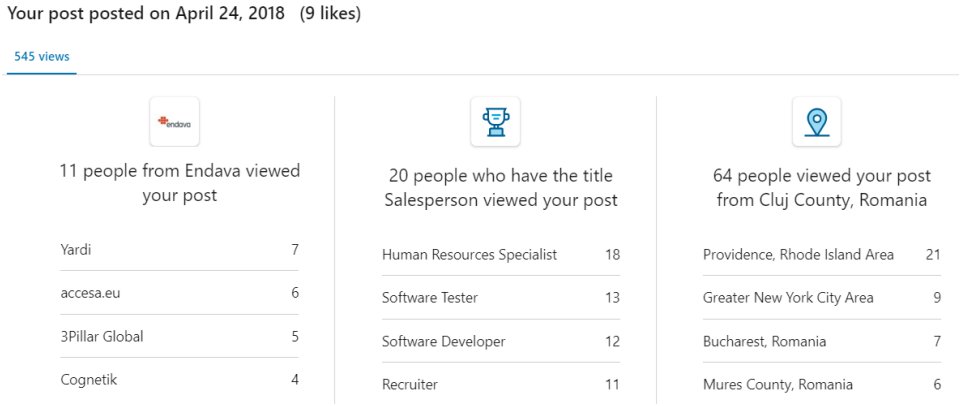
6. Discussions

Regarding that initially our goals were to increase engagement of our posts on Facebook and YouTube by 30%, within 6 months of running this campaign and our posts on ResearchGate and LinkedIn posts by 20% within 4 months of this campaign, those are the results at the end of April 2018:

The Film/Interview posted on 8th February 2018 on YouTube by NCN TV Channel, reached in 3 months 801 views and 27 likes from worldwide audience (figure 3). No other insights are available on YouTube site, because there is no data.

The same Film/Interview about Voluntourism was shared on Razvan Onu's LinkedIn account from You Tube channel, on April 24th, 2018. The content analytics (fig. 4) shows up 545 viewers and the distribution of the viewers: by working place (11 people from Endava); job title (20 people were Salesperson); geography (64 people from Cluj County, Romania, 21 people from Providence and 9 from New York – totally 30 from USA [2].

Figure 4 LinkedIn insight analytics about Film/Interview



We decided to get into promoting the research much more on Research Gate and we have been very pleased with the results, thanks to the community of researchers we have encountered online through this site. The full paper about "*Innovation in Tourism at Cold Mountain"*, posted as preprint, reached 20 reads on week ending February 25th2018 (figure 5).

As is showed up in the figure 5, our achievements display that our project "*Voluntourism and Social Architecture in Tanzania. Case study.*" reached 10 reads at the end of 2017. On the 1st November 2018 - the starting point of the campaign on the Facebook /Page Re-Connect- the metrics level was the same. Considering 20 reads (February 2018) and comparing with 10 reads (December 2017), that means an increasing with 200%. In 4 months our achievements were doubled.

Regarding that initially our goals were to increase engagement of our posts on Facebook and YouTube by 30%, within 6 months of running this campaign, this is a subject of the previous paper, about the teaser campaign. [8]

Figure 5 Achievements on **ResearchGate**



Our goal to increase engagements on ResearchGate posts by 20%, in 4 months, is accomplished.

6. Conclusions

Limits of the paper came from metrics that cannot be compared because the sources and time frame measured are different. Target audience on Facebook are not the same with other Social Media channels like LinkedIn or ResearchGate. An insight about an Interview cannot be compared with achievements of a scientific paper. But fortunately, all contribute at online marketing, promotion and advertising, finally almost 360 degrees of audience are covered.

Future perspective about research and partnerships. Partnerships can include sponsors, charities, or influencers, for example: NCN TV, local craftsmen, *"Popp and Asociatii"*- civil engineering.

Research perspectives are very bright: after preliminary discussions, we are proud to obtain a solid promise of partnership from associate professor dr. Madalin Coman, Technical Director of Popp & Associates (in the field of research and in the field of structural engineering).

Tourism is a major and dynamic economic sector worldwide. Thus, Voluntourism /Tourism research from an economic perspective could treat subjects such as equity (local community benefits, stakeholder's contributions, sustainability) and efficiency (productivity, use of resources) of this field.

We believe Social Media will impose research objectives to explore how new technology is changing the way tourists perceive things and how owners/ managers should run their businesses with the emergence of new technologies. In the business world, relationships matter more than ever.

People sometimes ignore promotional messages or irrelevant content. But also, they do want to engage with companies that focus on sharing useful and relevant information and content. The companies that inform and engage on Social Media are not doing just online marketing, they are building relationships.

References

[1] Hill A. *How to Run a Successful Social Media Campaign.* Retrieved from Cambie and Co; 5 March 2018. Retrieved from: https://cambieandco.com/campaigns/run-successful-social-media-campaign/

[2] *https://www.linkedin.com/in/onu-razvan*. 2018 Retrieved from activity/shares/ca/share-analytics/urn:li:activity:6394725953523707904/

[3] *https://www.zelist.ro/monitor*. March 2018. Retrieved from https://www.zelist.ro

[4] LinkedIn. March 2018 . *marketing-solutions/audience*. Retrieved from business.linkedin.com: https://business.linkedin.com/marketing-solutions/audience

[5] Minazzi R. Social Media Impacts on Travel Suppliers: Social Media Marketing. *In Social Media Marketing in Tourism and Hospitality*; 2015; 77-126.

[6] Minazzi, R. (2015). Social Media Metrics and Analysis. *Social Media Marketing in Tourism and Hospitality, Springer, Cham*; 2015: 137-163.

[7] Onu, R. Cine esti tu...Razvan Onu? (G. Roman, Interviewer); February 8 2018.

[8] Onu R. Teaser Campaign in Advertising and Promotion. A Content Analysis of Social Media Advertisement in Rural Tourism in Romania. Case Study. *International Students' Conference on Communication* (p. currently in process of publication). Cluj-Napoca: Babes-Bolyai University, International Students' Conference on Communication 6 th Edition. 2018.

[9] Onu R., Martin G. Innovation in Tourism at Cold Mountain. *Studies and Researches from Socio-Human Sciences Domain 13th edition* (currently in process of publication). Cluj-Napoca: Romanian Academy, Socio-Human Research Department; 2017.

[10] Snyder Bulik B. Over 1 billion ways to say "Come visit". *Advertising Age, Business Source Complete*. 2012; 29.

[11] *Tourism_SMEs_in_a_Digital_Environment_Literature_Review*. (2018, April). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320917102_Tourism_SMEs_in_a_Digital_Environment_Literature_Review