Digital marketing adoption by National Tourism Organisations (NTOs): A Zimbabwean perspective.

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Abstract

The importance of adopting digital marketing in this era of rapid globalisation can't be overlooked. According to several authors (e.g Bennett and Buhalis, 2003; Buhalis & Law, 2008) the internet is perceived as a powerful and effective marketing tool in tourism. It is consistently accepted as a valuable tool for distributing information and communication, and maintaining a corporate website is vital for the maintenance of relationships established between companies, by strengthening relationships with the public, and especially with customers, thus capturing a larger market segment. It goes without saying that digital marketing technologies have dramatically changed the way tourists and travellers communicate with each other, exchange views about their holidays, interact with the tourist industry in general as they organize their trips (pre-trip), or comment on services offered at hotels, restaurants (on-trip or post-trip) among others. The research sought to establish the digital marketing strategies adopted by Zimbabwe Tourism Authority; to establish the benefits of implementing digital marketing and the challenges faced thereof. In-depth, semi structured interviews were administered to 10 personnel from the NTOs marketing division. The data was thematically analysed. The results show that though ZTA has embraced the use of digital marketing through tools like websites, email marketing, social media marketing, it still faces an array of challenges that include limited financial resources to fully implement the concept.

Keywords: Digital marketing, National tourism organisations, Zimbabwe, Social media marketing, Websites