

# Particularities of communication with tourism services consumers on the Internet

Radygina E.G.

Ural State University of Economics  
Ekaterinburg, Russia  
radygina@bk.ru

Zhabreeva N.A.

Ural State University of Economics  
Ekaterinburg, Russia  
zhabreevana@usue.ru

**Abstract** — The Internet is a special space of communication in which the new structural and communicative relationships are formed. Communication in the service sector is not only the informative process but it influences consumers' expectations and their perception of the service quality. The purpose of this article is to reveal the communication features on the Internet and to identify characteristics of communication with consumers in tourism.

The main communication channels on the Internet are sites, search engines, feedback portals, video-channels, articles and publication in the press, contextual advertising and social media. Communication should aim at the formation of consumer behavior through the organization of interaction, impression, social experiences, values and attitudes. There is a necessity to highlight the marketing communication features expressed as a set of the possibilities to be used and threat to be resolved due to the voluntary nature of interaction on the Internet.

The studied characteristics and tendency of the Internet development allow to formulate the following principles of communication with consumers: territorial and information accessibility, individualization, feedback, interactivity, logistics, safety and security of personal data

**Keywords** — communication, marketing communication, interaction with consumers, information, information and communication technologies, space of communication, Internet, channel of communication, social media, tourism, tourist and recreational complex, tourism communication

## I. INTRODUCTION

Communications play the important role in all spheres of modern society life. The content of the term 'communication' is studied by philosophers, sociologists, teachers, psychologists, marketers. It is an active interaction between actors, implying the exchange of information. Conveying an informational message forms the basis of communication on which relations and the strategy of society behavior are organized. It also has a significant impact on the process of socialization, formation of values and attitudes, rules of conduct, personal identity, professional competence; the functions of reflection and social control are also implemented through communication.

Marketing communications are the informative sector because interaction between consumers and producers is connected with the processes of the information exchange in the market economy.

Marketing communications are the process of the exchange of information about a product to the target audience. In this case, the tools of marketing communications are advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, sponsorship, and public relations [4, p. 132]. The information flows include assortment, performance of goods and services, personal data of consumers, financial flows, and etc.

However, the use of the listed tools is not enough. The main problems which needed to be addressed are 1) the impossibility of organization of the effective interactions with consumers in real time, and 2) the necessity of the consumer requirements individualization. The modern marketing communications are becoming increasingly informative and high-tech, and require using of the new technological and technical solutions. The main one is adoption of the Internet.

The purpose of this article is to reveal the communication features on the Internet and to identify characteristics of communication with consumers in tourism.

## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The studies provided by D. Anderson-Butcher, A. Ball, M. Brzozowski, A. Lasseigne, M. Lehnert, B.L. McCormick [1], D. Tomse, B. Snoj [4], S. Plaksina, G. Abdrakhmanova, G. Kovaleva [12], P. Sinitsyna [16], N. Ukhinova [20], A.Ya. Friedland [21], I.V. Khudorozhkova [22] were used in the process of research on marketing communications substance and content on the Internet. The features of information comprehension and organization of interaction with consumers were studied on the basis of materials by D. Dickson, R.C. Ford, B. Laval [2], D.K. Wright, M.D. Hinson [5], V.A. Pleshakov [3], E.V. Viktorova, E.R. Batkaev [6], M.E. Lipatova, A.A. Bogatyreva [10], E.E. Surovaya, M.A. Vasilieva [19].

Examination of the Internet resources was based on data received by the collecting and indexing Internet public messages and hashtags companies (Rusability [6], Brand Analytics [17], Infografika [14], Yandex [9]) and data of own research conducted by Vkontakte, Ok.ru, Yandex and Google. Mathematical and statistical methods were used for processing and analysis of the obtained data.

The key term in the theory of marketing communications is 'information' which is considered as 'a message transmitted by channels of communication' in terms of the functional approach (K.E. Shannon, Yu.M. Kanygin, I. Yaglom) [24]; as 'the content, inner characteristic of an object and a process' in

terms of attributive approach (N. Wiener, V.I. Korogodin, E. Schrödinger) [25]; as 'the meaning, content of a message received by a person from the outside world with the help of the sense organs in terms of the anthropological approach [21]. Thus, the essence of marketing communications becomes the informational interaction between actors of marketing (consumers, producers and mediators) which contributes to impression for consumers affecting their behavior.

### III. RESULTS OF RESEARCH

The process of marketing communications focuses on the quality of the informational interactions expressed as accuracy, reliability, security and relevance of information. The Internet is a special space of communication in which the new structural and communicative relationships are formed.

The Internet is becoming a space for socialization, formation of values, transmission and interiorization of the socio-cultural experience. 74 million of users are registered on the Russian part of Internet, 58,3 million people of them access the Internet for once a day. Thus, such the active audience share is 78,8% of the adult population. The annual growth rate of the Internet users who access it for once a month is 7%, a day – 12% [11]. The activity of users has clearly visible tendency, under which the most active among users are young people aged between 25 and 34 years and inhabitants of bigger cities.

According to E.V. Viktorova and E.R. Batkaeva's research, the main purpose of using the Internet is communication (95% respondents aged between 14 and 30 years). Moreover, 57% of the interviewed respondents access the Internet every day and spend on it between 2 and 4 hours, 37% of them – more than 4 hours every day, and 6% - an hour and less [7, p.92].

The most popular communicative channels are social media which is defined as 'actors' various activity on the creation and exchange of information on the Internet [20, p. 33]. The main communication channels on the Internet are sites, search engines, feedback portals, video-channels, articles and publication in the press, contextual advertising, and social media [15]. The amount of sites on the Russian part of the Internet is 15 million. It is only 6,5% of the Internet space, and Russian users are 2,2% among all users [9]. The most visited sites in Russia are Vkontakte.ru (68%), LiveJournal.com (3%), RIA.ru (3%), and Komsomolskaya Pravda– Digital (3%) [14].

The most popular search engines in Russia are yandex.ru (53%), google.ru (34%), Mail.ru (9%), Rambler.ru (1%) [8]; feedback portals are otzovik.com, migreview.com, booking.com, flamp.ru and market.yandex.ru [18]; video-hosting is YouTube, Vkontakte, Vimeo.com, RuTube, IVI.RU, Video.mail.ru [13].

According to data of Brand Analytics, the most popular social media is Vkontakte, OK.ru, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, Twitter, Mail.ru и LiveJournal (table 1) [6, 17].

TABLE I. THE MOST POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA IN RUSSIA

Title of media	Number of senders, millions of people	Number of public messages a month, items	Average age, years	Gender	
				women, %	men, %
Vkontakte	46 600 000	1 096 392 000	25-34	56,3	43,7
OK.ru	31 514 000	1 120 000	25-34	61,1	30,9
Instagram	23 740 600	304 960 000	no data	76,6	23,4
Facebook	2 250 500	122 760 000	25-34	59,3	40,7
Youtube	1 958 600	15 973 000	no data	45,2	54,8
Twitter	818 300	59 635 000	no data	45,3	54,7
Mail.ru	99 100	7 216 000	55 and over	56,3	43,7
LiveJournal	55 900	4 615 500	35-44	30,0	70,0

According to the provided data, the social media which is directed at men or women audience and at different age groups has been clearly indicated. The most 'elder' social media is Mail.ru (the average age is 55 years and over), and the most 'young' is Vkontakte (in spite of the fact that the senders are mainly people aged between 25 and 34 years, the registered users are people aged between 18 and 14 years). Moreover, social media is highlighted because of its orientation towards public communication (with many public messages) such as Vkontakte and Instagram, and because of personal communication such as OK.ru.

The structure and characteristics of the audience and properties of the channels of information exchange define the features of the Internet as a space of marketing communications (Figure 1).

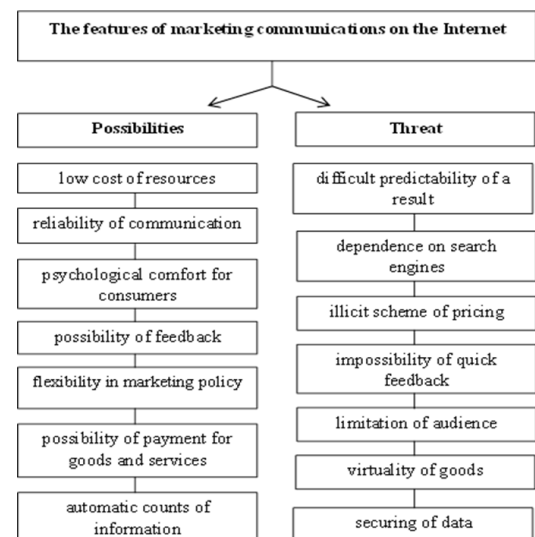


Fig. 1. The features of marketing communications on the Internet

The Internet as the new business environment differs from the traditional sectors of economy by its diversity [12, p. 55]. The Internet allows to send a message to a lot of consumers simultaneously in terms of marketing (provides mass character of communication), and on the other hand, to individualize a proposal for the certain consumer, in accordance with his/her need. A saturated environment, emotionally colored virtual communication creates the condition for impression which, as a rule, is not realized by users. However, controversial issues

provoke more emotions if the user takes part in discussion of them.

The Internet-communication has a significant advantage for the users compared to real communication: psychological comfort provided by territorial accessibility, possibility of postpone, opportunity of anonymity, allowed to achieve in reality-inaccessible psychological and social statuses and roles [1]. Virtual communication which is included in the structure of modern socialization competes freely with real communication within the traditional social institutions. The socio-psychological studies of the impact of the Internet on a person indicate that mental processes, including emotionally motivational ones, are transformed during cybersocialization, in addition, mind and behavior are also changed [3].

The development of the information technologies and virtual means of communication allows to identify the main tendency of the Internet development as a space of marketing communication:

- 1) Intensity of communication exchange (thanks to the implementation of the new information technologies of communication, any activity on the Internet becomes directed at social interaction);
- 2) Change of information communication form (verbal and visual components of a message, symbol presentation, peculiar coding system, additional visual components, emoji and emoticons are converging) [19, p. 97];
- 3) Change of the text comprehension (there is no border line between the public and private message; written language becomes similar to spoken one; the mechanism of informational selection is activated);
- 4) The barriers and border lines are disappeared (language, spatial, temporal, and between public and private life) [10, p. 72].

The principles of interaction with consumers on the Internet allow to combine the selected features and tendency of the communication development:

- a principle of territorial accessibility (communications are provided, irrespective of the consumer's location);
- a principle of information accessibility (information is provided in accessible form and is public; reliability and completeness of information are open for verification);
- a principle of individualization (the individual approach to identify the consumer's needs and expectations and to form the proposals, recognition of cultural difference);
- a principle of feedback (studying of the consumer's satisfaction through using the different channels of communication);
- a principle of interactivity (interaction with consumers is provided in real time with the use of different program and technical means);

- a principle of logistics (it is necessary to provide the technical conditions for the Internet using);
- a principle of safety and security of personal data.

Tourism is characterized by high-dependency on the new information. It becomes possible with the emergence and development of the Internet. It is the Internet which provides the instant transmission of information in the world unified informational field.

The following forms of using the Internet are the subject of the key interest to tourism organizations:

- 1) an access to the most comfortable and relatively cheap systems of communication (e-mail, digital telephony, video-link), accessibility of telephone rates, territorial accessibility of the Internet;
- 2) advertising and promotion of a tourist product (sites, accounts on social media). Promotion of services has become more powerful and detailed regarding consumers because of increasing the Internet possibilities;
- 3) a possibility to access to the large groups of consumers without substantial expenditure in order to the specific information transmission (announcements, discount, individual proposals), a possibility to increase the target audience;
- 4) possibilities of using different electronic platforms for business promotion (for example, the electronic international tourist exhibitions);
- 5) the use of booking systems provided possibilities of quick and effective accepting consumers' applications, independent organization of a tour, rapid receiving of information on different countries and directions, reliable and timely obtaining information about the weather, timetable of traffic, hotels price and rate monitoring;
- 6) a possibility of non-cash settlements for tourist services.

Such forms of the Internet using in business allow to organize communication with the potential consumers of tourist services more effectively, to focus on different target groups, to create conditions for the tourism development.

The potential consumers of the Internet resources are more than 60 million people today [23]. It is a unique possibility to organize communication with consumers at a distance.

The significant changes occur in the informational space every year. Attention is given to the improvement of the processes of information exchange with actors and objects of the tourism management (Figure 2).

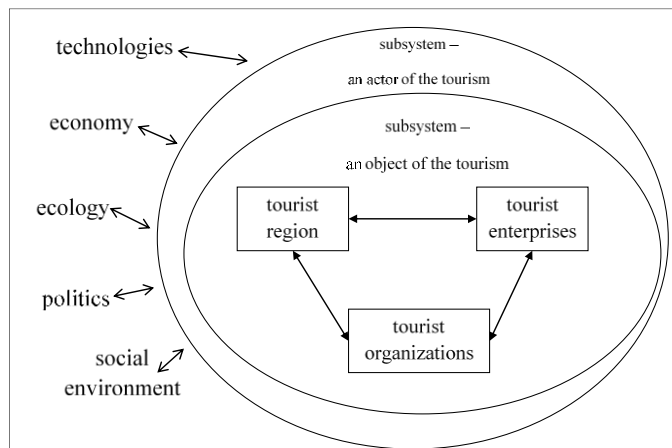


Fig. 2. The system of the tourism management

It is important to give particular attention on the features of the modern information communications in tourism:

- change of standard, traditional hierarchy system of the tourism management. It is a consequence of new informational and communication technologies development such as the Internet, information and tourist centers, etc.;
- growing importance and number of information communications in relations of tourism with other spheres and types of activity;
- change of traditional and mass information communications. Today, bloggers provide the serious competitiveness against the Internet sites, portals, newspapers, magazines, official information. In this case, the information field is increasing, and it is possible to establish the flow of 'useful' information under cooperation with this information structure;
- development of the main directions of information communications, such as complexity, unpredictability, uncontrollability, creates 'oversupply' of information which can provide disturbance in the informational exchange.

Such changes will be unavoidable because of the Internet development and increasing of information and ways of communications.

Today, the informational and communication space of the regional tourism management includes such information as: (1) managerial – information on conditions of the organization processes (personnel, technical, financial, and etc.); (2) analytical (scientific) – this characterizes activity of an organization (the set of knowledge, facts); (3) market-oriented – statistical data, results of the marketing studies, and etc.; (4) normative – informational resources of an organization; (5) operational (situational) – information which is necessary for the current activity and for decision-making; (6) accounting (control) – information which characterizes the firm activity over a certain period.

There is a necessity for the complex approach to studying information communications of actors and objects of the tourism management which requires that the issues of their development are considered as the single model 'actor-object of the management', taking into account the features of the modern informational and communication space development.

It is impossible to imagine the modern tourism without marketing communications. The market of tourism is so multidimensional that it is often defined as the independent direction. An advertising message in tourism reaches the maximum level of effectiveness only in the complex of marketing.

Advertising has a significant impact on consumers' decision of purchasing services. In this case, advertising in tourism can be considered as a form of communication which responds to the consumers' respond. Advertising in tour-business is the most effective tool of information transmission to a consumer. It draws attention to services, modifies their behavior, creates positive image. The main function of advertising is conviction. It convinces consumers to purchase a tour-product. It is the Internet which forms value choice orientations of a consumer. That is why today's effective advertising is aimed at the Internet as a space of the might communication environment.

Such advertising is impersonal. The communication signal is coming to potential consumers with the mediators' help. The impact of advertising occurs unilaterally. Feedback is being received as the final behavior of potential consumers.

Information saturation is another feature of tour advertising. Services, unlike products, do not have the material form; they are in need of the priority development of the marketing tools as in formativeness and promotion.

Effectiveness of advertising communications should be implemented comprehensively and more than once. Such a form of communication provides qualities and characteristics of a product to consumers.

These are communications which act as the most active element of the marketing complex. Today, it is not enough to have just a nice tour-product. It is necessary to actively inform consumers about its advantages. Marketing communications provide a product as the most useful and attractive for potential consumers. However, such information is independent of the way of its transmission to a consumer. The Internet plays the important role in this process but using only one channel of marketing communications is not enough. The Internet has enormous possibilities but also has the number of disadvantages.

#### IV. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

Discussion of research results has taken place within the presentations at the scientific and practical conferences:

the Tenth Eurasian Economic Youth Forum 'Russia - Asia - Africa - Latin America: the economy of mutual trust' was held at the Ural State Economic University (Yekaterinburg) on April 16-18, 2019;



the International Tourist forum "Big Ural-2019" was held in Yekaterinburg on April 24-26, 2019;

the International scientific and practical conference 'Modern approaches to improving the quality of service in the tourism and hospitality industry in the context of intercultural communication', section of 'Tourism and hospitality industry in Russia and abroad: condition and projections', Yekaterinburg, 26 April 2019;

the Round table 'The impact of the digital economy on the development of the tourism, service and hospitality industry', Yekaterinburg, 27 September 2019.

## V. CONCLUSION

The Internet as a space of marketing communications has features which define the possibilities of its using (low cost of resources, reliability of communication, psychological comfort for a consumer, possibility of feedback, flexibility in marketing policy, possibility of payment for goods and services, automatic counts of information) allowed to quickly achieve the goals with effectiveness; and it has threat to be resolved (difficult predictability of a result, dependence on search engines, illicit scheme of pricing, impossibility of quick feedback, limitation of audience, virtuality of goods, securing of data).

The studied features and tendency of the Internet development allowed to formulate the principles of interaction with consumers: territorial and information accessibility, individualization, logistics, feedback, interactivity, safety and security of personal data. The achieved results demonstrate that the formation of this space of marketing communications is not over yet and has the certain dynamic of its development. However, the use of only the Internet in marketing communications does not allow all the marketing goals to be fully realized, and it is necessary to use this channel of communication with the other ones (press, outdoor advertising, exhibition marketing, advertising events, communication in sale-spots, and etc.)

The modern Internet development in Russia allows to make a conclusion that the impact of the Internet on the economy development depends on infrastructure and a possibility of using the information technologies in a region, formation of the legal aspects of communication on the Internet, creation of the state monitoring system of posting information, development of mechanisms of improving consumer financial and informational literacy.

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