



THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PROMOTING MUSIC FESTIVALS

ULOGA I ZNAČAJ DRUŠTVENIH MEDIJA U PROMOCIJI MUZIČKIH FESTIVALA

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Abstract:

Music festivals are the global phenomenon which is gaining considerable importance through the event tourism industry. There are different types of music festivals worldwide and their number is rapidly growing. Under such circumstances, the key to success lies in the appropriate marketing strategy. Nowadays, the growing popularity of the Internet has changed the way people communicate, purchase and make decisions. All this has triggered the reinvention of the traditional marketing strategies. As the world becomes more and more connected, keeping pace with the developments and trends is essential for marketers trying to reach new audiences, who are much more demanding, perceptive and fragmented. Social media marketing provides the marketers with the most important information in the marketing industry: the possibility of being completely aware of customers' needs. By being active on the largest social media, marketers are not only able to assess the needs of the customers, but they also have easy access to the customers' feedback – the level of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, as well as the factors triggering such opinion. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the importance of social media in modern marketing strategies of music festivals.

Key words:

marketing, social networks, trends, tourism, music festivals.

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become an indispensable part of human nature. It has evolved along with the socio-economic development of the society and has flourished since the middle of the 20th century. The growing number of tourists worldwide has had a considerable bearing on their expectations and needs for specific experiences. It is necessary to highlight the role of events, especially music festivals, and their significance in modern tourism. Music festivals are not only one of the most important segments of tourism, but also an inseparable part of human society.

There is an abundance of different types of music festivals worldwide and their figures are rising every year. Under such circumstances, the key to successful festival lies in the appropriate marketing. Goal achievement of any festival depends heavily on marketing, regardless of the diverse purposes of the festivals. Before the popularisation of the Internet for marketing purposes, there were different ways for advertising festivals, by means of different media such as radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, as well as via telemarketing or pamphlets. Usually, the goal was to promote the festival's name among as many people as possible

Apstrakt:

Muzički festivali su globalni fenomen koji poprima sve veći značaj kroz manifestacioni turizam. Postoji veliki broj različitih muzičkih festivala na svetu i svake godine se pojavljuju novi. Pod takvim okolnostima, ključ uspeha određenog festivala leži u odgovarajućoj marketing strategiji. U današnje vreme, rastuća popularnost interneta uticala je način na koji ljudi komuniciraju, kupuju i donose odluke, što je podstaklo ponovno izučavanje tradicionalnih marketing strategija. Kako svet postaje globalno selo, od suštinske važnosti za svakog marketing menadžera koji želi da privuče novu publiku, koja je u današnje vreme zahtevnija, perceptivnija i podeljenija nego ikada, jeste da ide u korak sa dostignućima i novim trendovima. Marketing društvenih medija nudi marketing menadžeru najvažniju informaciju koja postoji u marketinškoj industriji: mogućnost da bude potpuno svestan potreba potrošača. Prisustvo na najvećim društvenim mrežama pomaže marketing menadžerima da procene potrebe potrošača, kao i da imaju lak i brz pristup povratnoj informaciji – stepenu zadovoljstva ili nezadovoljstva potrošača, kao i činiocima koji pokreću takva osećanja. Svrha ovog rada jeste da naglasi važnost društvenih medija u modernim marketing strategijama muzičkih festivala.

Ključne reči:

marketing, društvene mreže, trendovi, turizam, muzički festivali.

at the smallest price possible. With the outbreak of the Internet, a number of search options became available and marketing has changed significantly compared to its beginnings. Due to the technologies available today, music festivals have the option to advertise themselves on a larger scale and create global campaigns. Today, festivals use the Internet as one of the most powerful tools in numerous ways. The Internet has unlocked a large number of search options and as such managed to redefine marketing, giving even small festivals a chance to promote and brand their programme on a larger scale.

2. THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF MUSIC FESTIVALS

Various types of festivals and events have long existed as a significant part of human society and were devised as forms of public display, civic ritual and collective celebration. In fact, people in all cultures have recognized the need to set aside certain amount of time and space for communal creativity and celebration (Quinn, 2009). Historical research demonstrates how the events evolved from primitive gathering of people for



agricultural or religious reasons to modern type of events, as well as their long history of attracting tourists and establishing host communities as tourist destinations. The role and impact of events within tourism have been well documented in tourism related literature. Yet, it was only a few decades ago that “event tourism” was established as an independent discipline in both the tourism industry and research community. Event tourism is defined as a set of interrelations between tourism management and event management (Getz, 2008). Tourism management deals with tourism development based on the analysis of behaviour and motivation of all kinds of tourists. On the other hand, event management deals with event marketing, design and event management. Moreover, it attempts to understand and manage event experiences. Hence, event tourism is in the middle of the two sectors. In other words, event tourism aims at full exploitation of the event capabilities in order to achieve tourism development of host communities.

Event marketing managers must not be solely concerned with their event’s image but with the destination image too, working towards establishing and maintaining those that are good. They have to cooperate closely with destination managers and their joint activities regarding the event should have positive effects on the destination and its brand, and vice versa, which should further lead to image transfer from event to destination. Image transfer is the process that occurs when any of the benefits that visitors recognize in the event becomes the benefit of the host destination. Co-branding of the two brands, destination and event, is very sensitive. They share the image, which can either be positive or negative. It is very important that the destination chooses an appropriate event to co-brand with. It is necessary to explore the event brand with regard to the destination image in order to achieve the desired results.

Great number of music festivals incorporates the name of the host destination into the festival name in order to make it more associated with the destination. However, the literature on branding indicates that the event should not always have the name of the destination. Poor connection between the event and destination may result in negative brand building and the negative image transfer. However, if the destination organizes the appropriate event, then the event can also be used as “brand extension” of the brand of the destination. Many countries have used music festivals in order to gain legitimacy and reputation, highlight their achievements, support trade and tourism, or assist in the process of making their countries available to global influences. Tourists can have a positive image of the destination, but it is just one of the many choices. Thus, the following question may impose “why do they need to visit that destination at that specific moment?” (Oklobdžija, 2014). It is the music festival that can be the “engine” that creates the real reason for that potential tourist to visit a particular destination.

When tourists visit a destination for the purpose of attending a music festival, they tend to stay both before and after the event. That enables the sale of other products offered by the destination. Festivals increase the level of local businesses, fill hotel capacities, and in long term perspective, they enhance the infrastructure, quality of life of the local population and add additional value to the identity of the destination. In addition, many destinations have a seasonal problem, which means that tourist flows are concentrated within a relatively short period of the year. Music festivals can play an important role in overcoming such problems and attract tourists during the off-season periods as well. Festivals can have a significant effect on the formation of destination image and can help with its promotion, positioning and branding, which can further contribute to a more favourable perception as a potential tourist destination.

Music festivals can provide a wide public attention to numerous destinations through extensive media coverage. Socio-cultural benefits of festivals to local communities are also significant and include an increased activity associated with the event and the strengthening of the regional values and traditions.

3. INTERNET AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Internet marketing is essentially any marketing activity conducted online through the use of the Internet technologies. Internet marketing is much more than just advertising shown on websites, as it also includes other kinds of online activities such as email and social networking. Traditional marketing mix, especially traditional advertising, as the most important and most profitable part, relied on one of the traditional media channels – newspapers, television, radio, magazine or billboard. Basically, the aim of any marketing activity has always been the same - to exploit the reach of mass media by broadcasting a single message to the mass market, while the advertiser has been able to control the placement, frequency and content of the message as well as the distribution channel.

The growing popularity of the Internet has changed the way people gather news, communicate, purchase and make decisions and it resulted in reinvention of the traditional marketing strategies. Blogs, wikis, social networks and news websites are just a few examples of how the world of information is becoming more of a social experience. All the content available online is fast moving: within just a few minutes, blogs, tweets and Facebook profiles are updated with the latest news, gadgets and gossip.

With the arrival of the Internet, marketers have a new medium to spread the word on, through an “integrated communication approach” that achieves increased brand awareness and market reach. The increasing mass use of computers has provided a new channel for marketers to communicate with the consumers, thus causing media habits to shift from exclusively offline channels to an integrated approach of mixing media (Trenkove *et al.*, 2011). Along with further development in online marketing, the strategies and tools are evolving rapidly as well, shifting from impersonal mass messages to the more personal and targeted communication with the audiences.

Internet marketing communication is the fastest growing and most exciting branch of marketing today. As the world becomes more and more connected, keeping up with developments and trends, is essential for marketers trying to reach new and more demanding, perceptive and fragmented audiences. Technology and software are rapidly changing, so that it seems almost impossible to keep up with the latest trends. All the events interested not only in continuing their current success but in attracting new audiences are evolving and adapting to the online sphere. The “digital revolution” has changed the shape of media for good and the old media is slowly coming to terms with the fact that the digital age is not going anywhere. Moreover, it has continued to develop faster and further beyond every expectation. The web is constantly shifting, growing and changing, and the only way to continuously enjoy its benefits is to keep up-to date.

The Internet continues to grow, driven by greater amounts of online information, knowledge, entertainment and social networking available to the modern users. The overall Internet usage has experienced tremendous growth. Table 1 shows the number of the Internet users worldwide for the period 2000 - 2014. By 2010, there were already 1 billion Google searches every day, 300 million Internet users reading blogs, and 2 billion videos viewed on a daily basis on YouTube (Antara news, 2011). In 2012, there were 2.5 billion people using the Internet, while in 2013, over 2.7 billion people were Internet users, which corresponds to 37.9%



of the entire world population. It is estimated that in 2020, the number of internet users will surpass 5 billion people (Network world, 2010). Taking that into account, it does not come as a surprise that the Internet has become the main medium of modern marketing.

Throughout its history, the Internet has reinvented itself many times – and the changes are far from over. The current web is dominated by socialising, cooperation, information sharing and personal entertainment. People of all ages are spending more and more time online and are turning to the Internet for better services, convenience and life-enhancing tools. According to the statistics, six out of seven people in the world have Internet access and nearly one in every four people uses at least one social network. Thus, it does not come as a surprise that most of the companies have moved the focus of their businesses to the online sphere. 2010 was the first year where online advertising spend overtook the amount of money spent on newspaper advertising in the USA. It was the same year that online readership overtook traditional newspaper readership, which illustrates just how large an impact of the Internet is on the marketing and advertising industry. If any single trend exemplifies the online space, it is considered social media. The entire premise of web 2.0 is based on the ability to network with peers and likeminded communities using technology. Social media has incredible power to steer opinions and spread messages, making it both extremely valuable and very risky to use.

Social networking, as one of the most widely used forms of social media, is an online activity in which friends or peers interact with each other in a social group using a central website or application to transmit messages. These messages can contain text, images, videos, links or other sharable media. Social networks allow users to create virtual approximations of their real-world social relationships and facilitate sharing of news and content. Their focus is usually on immediate, sharing-based casual interactions between acquaintances, though this can vary depending on the platform. Despite the differences between the social networks, there are three main characteristics of social networking in general: connecting, sharing and engaging. Fig. 1 shows the number of active social media users.

As with traditional marketing, the best way to get a product into the public space is to put it somewhere where the right people (the target market) will find it and initiate discussion about it. Social networks, with their wealth of personal and preference data, make it much easier to find, speak and convert every market. There are three essential components of marketing on social networks (Trengove *et al.*, 2011):

1. Advertising – the importance of placing online adverts in the right place and targeting the correct keywords and users is the essential part of the Internet marketing. Social networking takes this idea a step further because it involves marketing in a social space – where adverts and promotional materials are less welcome. This makes it both harder to market – given the fact that people do not want to be imposed upon an advertising message, as well as more powerful since the social space is ideal for sharing, recommendations and spreading adverts among friends.
2. Building a brand presence - the “soft sell” part of social network marketing communication. By building a brand presence on a social network, an event becomes a social actor that can engage with customers. It also becomes a cornerstone of the event’s PR campaign.
3. Word of mouth – it is the riskiest and the least controllable aspect of social networking, but the one that can reap considerable rewards. Online word of mouth spreads best over social networks and can be harnessed and steered by a clever online marketer. People are more likely to try something new based on what people in their social group have recommended – so every marketer’s aim regarding social media is to try to get the right people to speak about the brand and spread the message.

Facebook, as the first and the biggest social network, was founded 11 years ago. However, despite the fact that we live in times where we quickly lose interest in new trends, it’s not the case with the trend of social networking. Not only that the number of social networks users increases every day, but there

Year (July 1)	Internet Users	Users Growth	World Population	Population Growth	Penetration (% of Pop. with Internet)
2014*	2,925,249,355	7.9%	7,243,784,121	1.14%	40.4%
2013	2,712,239,573	8.0%	7,162,119,430	1.16%	37.9%
2012	2,511,615,523	10.5%	7,080,072,420	1.17%	35.5%
2011	2,272,463,038	11.7%	6,997,998,760	1.18%	32.5%
2010	2,034,259,368	16.1%	6,916,183,480	1.19%	29.4%
2009	1,752,333,178	12.2%	6,834,721,930	1.20%	25.6%
2008	1,562,067,594	13.8%	6,753,649,230	1.21%	23.1%
2007	1,373,040,542	18.6%	6,673,105,940	1.21%	20.6%
2006	1,157,500,065	12.4%	6,593,227,980	1.21%	17.6%
2005	1,029,717,906	13.1%	6,514,094,610	1.22%	15.8%
2004	910,060,180	16.9%	6,435,705,600	1.22%	14.1%
2003	778,555,680	17.5%	6,357,991,750	1.23%	12.2%
2002	662,663,600	32.4%	6,280,853,820	1.24%	10.6%
2001	500,609,240	21.1%	6,204,147,030	1.25%	8.1%
2000	413,425,190	47.2%	6,127,700,430	1.26%	6.7%

Table 1. Internet users in the world (Source: Internet Live Stats)

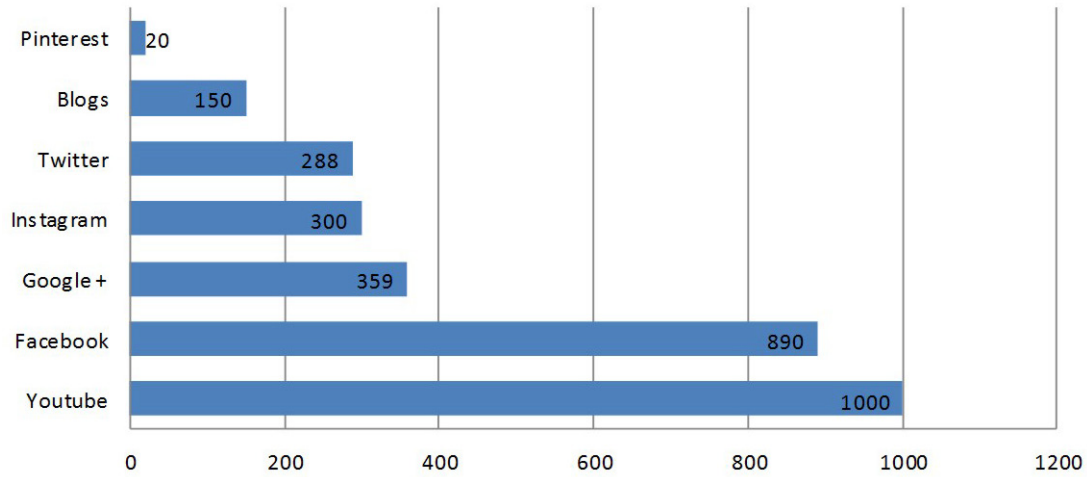


Figure 1. Number of active social media users in millions (Own calculations according to data taken over from Statista, 2014)

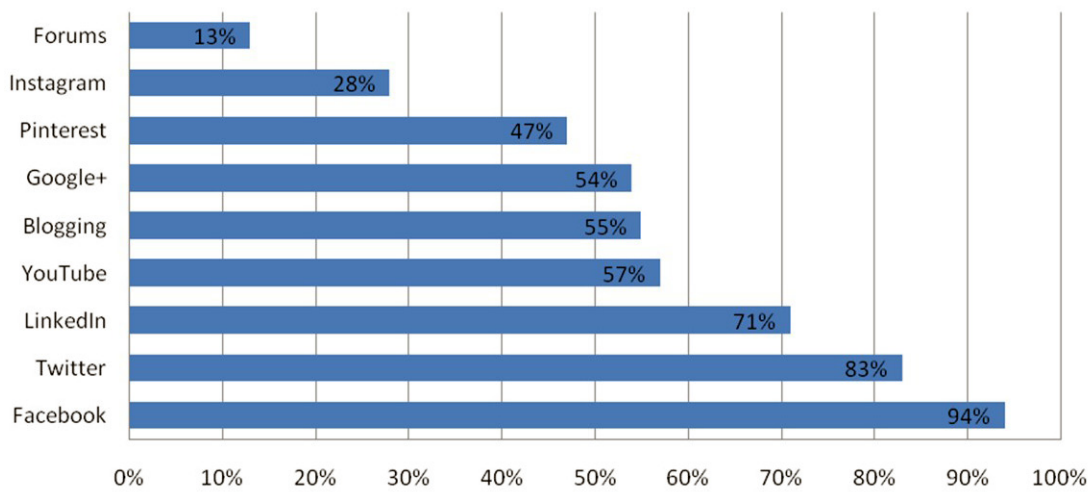


Figure 2. Social media platforms used for marketing (Own calculations according to data from Statista, 2014 and Pew Research Center, 2015)

are new social networks arising on a daily basis. Some of them have established themselves as an important part of human communication, but they still do not make any trace. Nevertheless, there is a significant number of popular social networks, and modern marketers are becoming more and more aware of the positive effects of social media advertising. Fig. 2 shows the most popular social media platforms used for advertising.

The most popular social networks are quite different among themselves. Not all of them are well suited to marketing strategies or they may require profoundly different approaches. However, all of them offer the possibility of getting in touch with a great number of potential users, which makes them an essential part of modern marketing strategies. Nowadays, it has become virtually impossible to think of marketing without linking it to social media, bearing in mind that 93% of marketers use social media for business purposes, with Facebook and Twitter being the most popular networks for advertising (Bullas, 2014).

4. ADVANTAGES OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA IN ADVERTISING MUSIC FESTIVALS

Since the middle of the last century, marketing has taken over a key role in the efforts to attract larger number of visitors – the necessity for making profit – and at the same time promoting culture. Due to the fact that there are numerous music festivals

available to customers, it is hard for a particular festival to stand out from the group. The role of marketing is to offer more attractive benefits than other festivals and thus, convince potential customers to choose the particular one.

Every marketing plan should consider customers' needs and there are always difficulties with defining precisely such needs. There is frequently a gap between customers' needs and marketing strategies of cultural festivals due to the characteristics of cultural products. The purpose of event marketing is to locate these gaps and propose ways to overcome them, and not only advertise and sell a certain product or service. (Allen *et al.*, 2011). Social media marketing offers the possibility of being completely aware of customers' needs. By being active on the largest social media, marketers are not only able to assess the needs of the customers, but to have easy access to the customers' feedback – the level of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, as well as the reasons for such opinions. Marketing is an integral part of the whole process of festivals and successful marketing of music festivals can bring beneficial impacts to organizations and communities. Festivals are a demanding business endeavour involving tremendous amounts of marketing (Lee *et al.*, 2008). That is, marketing functions are the vital part of the entire process and help music festivals to achieve success, which is the main objective of any festival. In order for marketing to be effective, proper understanding of the market, products and audience is crucial.



What distinguishes marketing of music festivals from other types of marketing is the fact that cultural products are very complex due to the fact that they include intangible value. Cultural products are described as aesthetics, non-quantifiable and subjective (Colbert, 2007). Therefore, the most important thing in the marketing of music festivals is to carefully analyse the characteristics of the cultural product and attract visitors who will appreciate that specific product. The ultimate artistic experience is the communication that happens between the performers and the audience, and marketing should facilitate such communication (Bernstein, 2007). Marketing strategy of music festivals cannot be applied uniformly; it has to be modified to meet the needs and specifics of a particular cultural product. The most important goals of marketing of music festivals are to increase the awareness of the target audience by presentation and demonstration of the product, to highlight the specific characteristics of the product, which will help it differentiate itself from other similar products and build market recognition. This is directed towards attracting visitors and satisfying their needs and expectations. Nowadays, the simplest way to accomplish that would be by creating a website, a blog, or simply by being active on the largest social networks – by sharing and encouraging engagement. However, many studies argue that the main objective of the marketing strategies of music festivals should not be to attract audiences to one-time performance, but to establish and continue to build visitors' loyalty. Although marketers need to seek out new visitors, the marketing strategies of music festivals should first take into account the improvement of the experience for the already existing visitors. Social media is the best way of achieving that, with all the information about the good and bad experience of the existing visitors, as well as the needs of the future ones to be just a click away from the marketers.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Event marketing differs from the traditional marketing because the products of events contain intangible value. In order to successfully market an event, its unique qualities must be carefully designated and exploited. Another reason for event marketing to be different from the conventional types of marketing is the special nature of the cultural experience and the centrality of the customer in creating that experience. Under such circumstances, the focus of marketing shifts from the organizers' needs to customers' needs, in order to enhance the customer satisfaction and loyalty. Generally, marketing represents an endless effort, and the current success does not necessarily imply that it would be the case in future. Therefore, it is of extreme importance for every marketer to set a goal, continually review and evaluate success and change the marketing strategy accordingly. Considering the fact that the event tourism industry has been affected by new technologies just like all other industries, the biggest and the most important adjustment that the event marketers should make is to adopt the Internet marketing communication as the primary one.

The Internet has become an indispensable part of modern life. Even though the Internet as we know it today has been available only for about two decades, it has completely changed our lives. The gadgets and possibilities it offers are countless and even though most of us lived in the era before the Internet, it is almost hard to remember how it was before and we would never make it if we needed to live without it again. It has made our lives much easier and has put the whole world at the top of our fingerprints. Considering the influence it has on our lives, it does not come as a surprise that it has become the basis of every

modern marketing strategy. Traditional media is losing the battle for the leading marketing platform, while the Internet marketing communication is becoming more advanced each and every day. The possibilities of online marketing are countless, from creating a website as the virtual office of every product that needs to be advertised, through search engine optimization in order to attract as many visitors as possible to the website, to all the different social networks available. Still, the most important fact is that it can be even completely free – the only investments required are marketer's time and creativity.

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