


Chapter 33

Communicating and Building Destination Brands With New Media

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ABSTRACT

The chapter aims to discuss building destination brands with the use of brand placements, like in movies and in songs, brand communities, and storytelling through new media options. The objective is to share how these three tools using new media can help build a destination's brand awareness, brand recognition, brand associations, and brand personality. The chapter presents the meaning of new media and old media and then details the meaning and applications of brand placements, brand community, and storytelling. There is a discussion to understand how these three tools help build a destination brand by sharing information with consumers. The use of three techniques will help gain consumers' attention and may develop their attitudes in favour of destination brands to visit the destination.

INTRODUCTION

Destination branding is gaining momentum but still is in the early stages of growth (Kumar & Kaushik, 2017). Destination branding may include marketing and promotion of a country, city, religious places, or any location which may be useful and attractive to tourists for worth spending resources. Many destinations are still not popular, not well-known, and visited by a few explorers. However, these destinations may be beneficial to be explored by tourists and, in turn, be fruitful and helpful for the growth of the place (destination). Building a destination brand needs a well-designed communication strategy, such as nation branding by Malaysia and India (Kumar & Kaushik, 2017), capital branding by Australia and New Zealand (Peirce & Ritchie, 2007).

Tourism marketers can consider different media types to communicate about destination information and build a destination brand. Various media are primarily classified as traditional media and new media. Traditional media includes television, radio, newspapers, and magazines, also referred to as old media. New media relates to web-related communications and includes blogs, online social networks,

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Wikis, social media forms (like YouTube), and virtual worlds (Friedman & Friedman, 2011). Marketers usually use both media in combination though they may consider only one form of media as per the requirement of communication objectives to target audiences. Friedman and Friedman have shared new media characteristics as 5C's, viz.; communication, collaboration, community, creativity, and convergence. New media characteristics differentiating from old media are digital, interactive, hypertextual, networked, virtual, and simulated (Thompson, 2018).

Available information to tourists helps them in decision making for holiday locations. In other words, media choice by marketers may help tourists to evaluate different stages of the decision-making process, viz, problem identification, information search, evaluation of alternatives, and purchase (Hudson & Thal, 2013). Besides helping to provide information for the first four stages, new media options also help share the post-purchase experience like writing in travel blogs, which may become useful to other travellers in destination decision-making.

Tourism-related organisations like e-travel agents, hotels, airlines, and tourism organisations like Disney communicate through new media. However, it is considered that all these are unable to utilise these media platforms. According to Divol et al. (2012), less than 1% of an average marketing budget is likely to be allocated for social media by such tourism organisations. This limited use of new media indicates a very high opportunity to work with new media platforms to build destination brands. New media provides several diverse possibilities besides being creative to reach the target tourists.

Therefore, the chapter aims to discuss building destination brands with the use of brand placements like in movies (Park & Berger, 2010) and in songs (Srivastava, 2020), brand communities (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), and storytelling (Ben Youssef et al., 2019) through new media options. Brand placements are ones where brand advertising is combined within a movie or song or drama. It can be assessed as indirect advertising and can work due to likeness for actors in a movie/ drama or a singer singing the song. A brand community is a group of consumers who are admirers of a brand or a specialised group of consumers and are non-geographically bound. Marketers usually bring consumers together on a social platform to get informed, interact, and share about the brand. The storytelling form of communication is a known mode for destination marketing, which can be applied explicitly to destination brand building.

Thus, the objective is to share how the three tools can help build destination brand awareness, brand recognition, brand associations, and brand personality. Brand awareness and recognition help in considering a destination for a possible holiday, and brand associations and brand personality may help in making a final choice for the destination to be visited. Thus, awareness, associations, and personality knowledge about a destination may help a traveller to evaluate a destination for making a decision whether to visit the destination or not. This chapter, thus, explores the current literature to build an introductory theme and strong knowledge foundation around the stated objective. The focus is on secondary data with relevant real applications of destination brand placements, brand community, and storytelling in new media to build destination brands. Real-life applications as case examples are cited in the chapter though the chapter does not focus on an in-depth case study.

With the above brief background, the proposed chapter will first build on the knowledge of destination branding and old (traditional) and new media followed by meaning, characteristics, applications, advantages and disadvantages of the three techniques of marketing communication, viz.; brand placements, brand community, and storytelling. The chapter will detail the application of brand placements, brand community, and storytelling in destination branding through new media. The use of three techniques will help gain consumers' attention and may build their attitudes in favour of destination brands.

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