


Chapter 8

Digital Relationship Marketing Strategies of Medical Tourism Entities

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to develop a priori perspectives and practical experience of implementing digital marketing strategies of medical tourism subjects. At the same time, communication systems (channels, means, tools) were subject to analysis and digital systems and technologies for providing medical services (techniques, AI-based technologies, etc.) and facility management. The system of digital communications, the nodal channels of the medical product, which are informationally connected in the distribution system, are defined: B2B (medical and tourist companies), B2C (product implementation through other distribution channels), C2C (communication between consumers, in particular opinion leaders, people with successful medical results, etc.). The considered direct distribution channels (B2C) are key drivers of medical product strategy, which should become a priority in the development of state programs for the development of tourism and support for medicine and investment goals for the development and implementation of medical innovations.

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INTRODUCTION

The formation of relations between business entities takes place in complex conditions, full of both difficulties and opportunities. Difficulties in relations are associated with man-made and pandemic disasters, cyclical crises of a financial and social nature, the emergence of new threats and risks caused by the trends of industrial revolutions, the consequences of war. In turn, difficulties encourage constant improvement of managerial competences, definition of new business directions, diversification of activities and identification of opportunities for development. Thus, the invasion of the coronavirus pandemic, the escalation of terrorism and wars created a collapse of the global environment, and on the other hand, contributed to the development of digital technologies, digital communications, a leap to Industry 5.0, where the symbiosis of human and artificial intelligence will create new visions of civilization and civilizational relations.

Tourism is known as the sphere of socio-cultural and economic direction that absorbs difficulties and opportunities and creates attractions at their junction. Using the recreational opportunities of the locations, medical tourism involves many economic sectors in the creation of the product, thereby counteracting crises and multiplying the socio-economic balance. Therefore, the issue of mutual relations becomes a cross-industry concept, where tourism plays the role of guide and driver. One of the concepts that can be useful for solving the identified problems is the marketing of relationships between medical tourism entities. The concept describes the strategic goals and objectives of the tourism system of a certain territorial unit (location, territory, region, country) in forming offers and promoting the consumption of a medical product. At the same time, the strategy is based on the information and social infrastructure, the material, technical and intellectual capabilities, advantages of a specific medical placement. Therefore, digitalization should be focused on real medical tourism programs. Evaluating the effectiveness of the relationship marketing strategy should focus on the progress, improvement and professional competences of the employees of medical institutions and tourism companies, be as flexible as possible, since each environment is changeable and unpredictable, as the experience with COVID-19.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of this study is on interrelated multi-aspects: relationship marketing, digital strategies and medical tourism, which outlines the relevant academic field.

Thus, the theoretical foundations for understanding the mechanism of marketing relations have been considered by many scientists: Bruhn (2015) in his work considered the strategic directions and imperatives of marketing relations formation; Palmatier and Steinhoff (2019) – types of customer-company relationships, focusing on interpersonal relationships, inter-firm relationships, and technology-mediated online relationships, as well as relationship management approaches in digital relational environments.

At the same time, in the conditions of global spread of the coronavirus pandemic, scientific research has intensified around strategizing the digitization of relations and the use of digital technologies. So, strategy as a potential of digital marketing was examined by Savvytska and Mykhaylova (2018). The methodology for developing digital strategies and marketing substrategies is proposed by Drummond et al. (2020). Systematization of approaches to classification of strategies and their typification in the field of digital marketing is reflected in the works of Dragomir and Andronie (2017), Mogilko (2016), Yoo (2010), and others. The article by Özoğlu and Topal (2019) on the review of marketing digital in-

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