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DIGITAL MARKETING TOOLS FOR RESTAURANT BUSINESS

The paper studies the implementation of digital marketing tools in the restaurant business and its impact on customer's loyalty. The author describes main methods and features of online activity conducting by restaurants. Basic technologies, which help to promote restaurant's services to the target audience, are indicated. Different variants of restaurant advertising are offered, both paid and free of charge. The author describes such elements of digital marketing as website maintenance, search engine optimization, social media marketing, contextually targeted advertising, email marketing etc., focusing on their complex use.

Key words: *digital marketing, restaurant's online activity, SEO, SMM, email-marketing.*

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ИНСТРУМЕНТЫ ИНТЕРНЕТ-МАРКЕТИНГУ В ДИЯЛЬНОСТІ РЕСТОРАНІВ

Розглядається впровадження інструментів інтернет-маркетингу в діяльності ресторанного бізнесу та їх вплив на лояльність клієнтів. Описані основні методи й особливості онлайн-діяльності ресторанів. Зазначені основні технології, які допомагають просувати послуги ресторанів до цільової аудиторії. Запропоновані різні варіанти реклами закладів ресторанного господарства в інтернеті, як платні, так і безплатні. Автор описує такі елементи цифрового маркетингу, як обслуговування веб-сайта, пошукова оптимізація, маркетинг у соціальних медіа, контекстна реклама, email-маркетинг тощо, акцентуючи на їх комплексному використанні.

Ключові слова: *інтернет-маркетинг, онлайн-діяльність ресторанів, пошукова оптимізація, SMM, email-маркетинг.*

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ИНСТРУМЕНТЫ ИНТЕРНЕТ-МАРКЕТИНГА В ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ РЕСТОРАНОВ

Рассматривается внедрение инструментов интернет-маркетинга в деятельности ресторанного бизнеса и их влияние на лояльность клиентов. Описаны основные методы и особенности онлайн-деятельности ресторанов. Указаны основные технологии, которые помогают продвигать услуги ресторанов к целевой аудитории. Предложены различные варианты рекламы заведений ресторанного хозяйства в интернете, как платные, так и бесплатные. Автор описывает такие элементы цифрового маркетинга, как обслуживание сайта, поисковая оптимизация, маркетинг в социальных медиа, контекстная реклама, email-маркетинг и т. д., акцентируя на их комплексном использовании.

Ключевые слова: *интернет-маркетинг, онлайн-деятельность ресторанов, поисковая оптимизация, SMM, email-маркетинг.*

Introduction. Nowadays the screen-driven group is no longer limited by age and social status – an internet use through various devices has become an hourly habit across the majority of people. Such tendency greatly affects all the areas of activity, including the restaurant business. To look for a new restaurant to try out, to find a place to eat during the traveling, or to get some information about a restaurant before making reservations, people go online. Many factors influence their decision: food pictures (Foodie app.), complaints and high praise for dishes and service, social check-ins, reviews and commentaries about the dining experience on social media and other specialized online resources. More often diners look up restaurant's website for contact information, location, menus, reviews etc. According to a study conducted by Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration (2013), approximately 50 percent of respondents stated they make restaurant reservations online, and about 40 percent of those completed the reservation on the restaurant's own website. Therefore, it is crucial for restaurants to maintain an online presence to communicate with current diners, attract new customers, and build loyalty among patrons.

Literature review. The growing number of publications, devoted to various aspects of restaurant digital marketing activity, confirms the significance of business' online presence. A number of authors such as V. Kutepova (2014), O. Shaleva (2013) and some other consider general questions of digital marketing development in Ukraine and internet technologies use in restaurant business. The importance of marketing communications usage for achieving a competitiveness demonstrated by A. Rasulova (2015). Specific digital marketing tools such as online advertising, multimedia means for restaurant promotion, branding and diners loyalty are investigated by V. Yazina (2015), Z. Gadetska (2015), M. Chorna (2017), E. Yurchak (2014) and others. Considerable attention is also paid to social media as one of the most effective ways of restaurant business promotion in the internet.

Foreign digital marketing theorists and practitioners talk about systematical approach to restaurant's online activity organization, focusing on website creation, search engine optimization and social media marketing.

The main objective of this paper is to examine and describe the main tools of digital marketing in restaurants. In particular, the study has been designed to attain the following objectives:

To study the key attributes of restaurant's online presence;

To explore digital communications tools for restaurant's promotion.

Results. Digital marketing is the process of promoting a restaurant on the internet. There are many channels to do this, but unlike traditional

marketing (print, TV and radio), internet marketing relies on audience participation and two-way conversation. All the methods are designed to encourage further engagement with restaurant's brand and their success is measured by the number of people who actually respond.

The web has drastically changed the way people communicate with each other and with business. Now it is vital for companies to be online and focus on a dialogue with every diner, in order to cover as much potential customers as possible and get more revenue as a result. The importance of starting online marketing efforts explained by permanently rising number of internet users who do online searches every day, including information about particular restaurants; it is possible to create a reputation through the content generation; internet marketing costs less per lead than other methods; it creates conversations, where customers can communicate as well (the feedback may not always be positive, but it is worth hearing, in order to make a restaurant better).

The basic process of restaurant business promotion in the internet, which aims the target audience reaching, should include a complex usage of few key strategies, such as website managing, search engine optimization, advertising, mobile, email and social media marketing.

The most important step for digital marketing is building a website, which should be easy to navigate for customers and easily updated by its owner. Website is a fundamental and necessary part of the conversation with diners, which makes things easier for them. There is a wrong opinion that third-party resources (social media, email campaigns, review sites etc.) can replace restaurant's website, but in fact they are designed to enhance it and after receiving a positive social media interaction, visiting restaurant's site is the natural next step for customers to take. Before diners go out to eat, they want to know such things about the place: menu, prices, what things look like (photography of food and ambiance), location and directions, hours of operation, parking service options, how to make reservations (online or by phone) and how to order take-out when available, offers/promotions/events. Because dining is a visual experience, it is important to capture the ambiance and food through updated and high quality photography. Photo subjects should include: well-plated dishes (includes dessert, main courses, and appetizers); smiling and friendly wait staff (engaged with customers or in a group shot); room shots (ideally with people who are representative of restaurant's clientele).

Considering the fact, that the main task of the website is to present an information in a helpful way that stimulate customers to visit the restaurant and encourage others to dine there in future, it is vital to build a website that adjusts for any device automatically. According to

Google's "Our Mobile Planet" research, 94% of people use smartphones to search local businesses. However, traditional websites appear to be less effective when accessed through mobile phones for several reasons:

1) Navigation — for example, links are often too small and user's fingers are typically too large to click it well. On the other hand, mobile-optimized sites space out buttons and make them bigger so they are easier to access.

2) Text and graphics. A smaller screen makes it tougher to read an information — text may be too small, or in case user zooms it, it is needed to scroll side-to-side all the time.

3) Content prioritization. Mobile consumers visit website with a very specific purpose, so they do not want to be overwhelmed with too many different options. The information that is most crucial to converting customers is a business phone number, location, menu, directions and reviews. Therefore, the main task of mobile marketing is to suggest a customer the simplest way of making decision.

In order to build a mobile-optimized site, first step will be to analyze already existing software. Some popular platforms for website creating like WordPress may be equipped with simple mobile configuration tools. So, for developer, who made the site, it will be relatively easy to create an inexpensive mobile-optimized version of it. If such variant cannot be realized it is necessary to reach out to mobile vendors who can create or adopt already existed website to mobile devices.

Another way to establish a mobile presence is to work with third parties and list the business in different online directories. Such partners can offer viable mobile-optimized shortcuts, including popular mobile apps that showcase the restaurant. These sites are usually search- and mobile-optimized, ensuring customers can find quick-hit information related to an establishment. If the restaurant is already listed on directories like Google, it is important to take an ownership of those listings and make sure all of the information is up to date.

To ensure customers get the most useful information about restaurant, it is important to add a business location to Google Maps, which may increase search traffic and will be helpful for website promotion. Even a new site will be able to get visitors from the search results for highly competitive queries. The procedure of adding the location is simple and requires entering some basic information about business (city, street, address, phone number, email etc.) at «My Business Google» page and confirming it. Company information will be pending for some time. Reviews, added by diners, may speed up company appearance in search results (*SeoProfy*).

The successful restaurant business promotion in the internet should involve the full complex of online-marketing tools. However, an offline

advertising may also play an important role in online promotion process. Type-in traffic (when users get to the site through manual typing an URL in the browser's address bar) can be got through link placement at any non-digital carrier like business cards, books, newspapers, banners etc. The advantage of such method is that restaurant gets a target audience, which is ready to use products and services.

The strategically important promotion tool is search engine optimization (SEO). It can independently generate traffic – customers find particular restaurants through search systems, so it is important to optimize a website with on-site and off-site techniques that make it more visible and attractive to search engines. Search systems return recommendations based on formulas, and SEO is the process of making restaurant's website friendly to search engines by fulfilling the criteria that these formulas are coded to detect. At the same time, search engines change their algorithms all the time, in order websites fully meet the needs of users, so only SEO usage without any other promotion tools may be risky for a business.

The restaurant business is quite competitive industry so in many cases the first places in search results are occupied by specialized restaurant-oriented websites. However, search engine optimization can still provide a great amount of traffic to the restaurant's website.

The whole seo-process includes next steps:

Goal setting (for example, to increase the attendance up to 500-1000 unique visitors per day);

Competitors' sites analysis;

Keywords selection;

Semantic kernel creation;

Internal site search optimization;

External site search optimization.

It is important to note, that all the seo-technics should be integrated in complex. While choosing keywords to describe restaurant's environment or cuisine, it is needed to remember to optimize the content, written for location. Most people prefer to dine out close to home, so they will almost always search for a restaurant in their towns or neighborhoods. Location-based keywords should be included in the text on the website, from the copywriting on the homepage to the title tags of each page. In addition, it is necessary to make sure that the restaurant's site is listed in the location-based results that appear on search engines. Generally, search engine optimization is not a fast process, but may be very effective in the form of costs and results.

Another vital promotional tool and an important factor for successful search engine optimization is SMM (Social Media Marketing), which

is focused on the direct communication with diners and identification of their needs and interests. To insure this method works it is needed to find places where online target audience is situated, such as online-communities, specialized forums, blogs, and theme-based websites. The advantage of social media marketing is the rapid information dissemination and an immediate feedback from users. However, restaurant's administration should not overuse advertising — social network users are ready for dialogue, but not for advertising. The peculiarity of such tool is that while communicating with potential users, their request is not yet actualized, and even when an interesting service or product is suggested, it is not likely recipient will use it at the moment. That is why working with social media should be focused on demand actualization and its retention.

Maintaining a strong social media presence is essential to business today and there is a plenty of online-platforms, which allow promoting restaurant online. Possible social media channels to include into restaurant's SMM-strategy are:

Facebook — one of the largest world's network, which is good for sharing promos, pictures, and other high quality content.

Twitter — a real time network for sharing short-form content, allows companies to make a resounding impact on potential customers.

Instagram — one of the most popular picture sharing networks. Pictures can be a strong trigger, especially when it comes to restaurant's food or décor.

Foursquare — a location-based network, gives the ability to incentivize visits and check-ins for customers.

Before choosing which social media channels to pursue, it is important to carefully research potential audience and decide which sites target them the best. After developing restaurant's account or group in social media and attracting loyal audience to them it is necessary to stimulate the conversation: a promotion which fans will not only like but which they can share with friends and family can lead to word-of-mouth advertising appearance; being visual is another vital factor of successful interaction with customers — these can be photos, illustrations or graphics that fits restaurant's promotion concept; publications frequency and consistency is important, but if the promotion is recurring, it is necessary to rotate in new visuals to accompany the same promotion. Additionally, if budget allows, there is a possibility to use paid advertising. It is well customized and takes into consideration a lot of targeting parameters: gender, age, interests, preferences, locations etc.

Paid advertising may be displayed not only on social media channels but also in search results. PPC-advertising (pay-per-click) or Contextually Targeted Advertising is a quick method to attract an

interested audience to the restaurant's website. To start advertising campaign it is needed:

- Understand what kind of audience should be reached;
- Choose keywords;
- Create ads in Google or other search engine;
- Establish a budget.

PPC-advertising is quite effective tool, but it depends on restaurant's aims. Such promotion is good when it is needed to reach target audience quickly and accurately and present any activity. These can be restaurant's promotional actions or other events (for example, holidays).

More private marketing channel is email. It is important for restaurant's digital marketing because of its low cost and high level of effectiveness when executed correctly. There is a common situation when a company collects a bunch of email addresses but is not sure how to use them. Fundamental email marketing process includes five chronological steps:

Email Service Providers (ESP) search. No huge financial investment are needed to obtain the right email marketing technology. For example, free tools, such as Constant Contact and MailChimp are ESPs that are easy to use and offer simple control over restaurant's email campaigns.

Understanding of restaurant's customers. It is important to classify different types of customers and this can be a crucial part of how to turn one-time customers into repeat visitors and keep repeat visitors consistently coming back for more. Email marketing systems provide an ability to send them different messages based on their category (new, repeat or inactive customer).

Get customers to opt in. Users should know what they are getting in exchange for sharing their information. To convince customers to provide their email addresses, there are few methods: running contests offering discounts, coupons and other extras, which require an email address for customers to sign up to win; including forms and surveys with the check; asking for an email address when customers buy gift certificates.

Writing great subject lines and emails. The most important part of writing a strong email is delivering the right message or promotion. An email that delivers the message well has two elements: the subject line, which stimulates customer to open the email and the body of the email itself that encourages the customer to follow through on visiting the restaurant with the content of the email.

Testing and retesting campaigns. Testing helps to determine how often to send emails, find effective subject lines, see which promotions work best for drawing customers in.

The last thing to ensure that diners are satisfied with restaurant's service is to monitor online reviews. To new diners reviews or feedback

they receive from other people means more than what a restaurant tells them. If someone posts something positive, it is important to thank them. If there is a negative review left, it is better to publicly acknowledge it, and try to reach out to the customer to make the situation right. Finally, positive reviews or awards may be posted on the website. Testimonials and “social proof” like this can make a potential patron much more likely to visit an establishment.

Conclusions. An internet audience is huge and with the help of internet marketing, it is possible to bring many people to the restaurant. Constant interaction with the target audience is a vital condition of restaurant’s online activity, which may cause brand confidence growth. Promotion in the internet is a constant and laborious work, which requires systematic approach and attention to details.

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