

Destination Marketing Organizations' Social Media Usage: A Research on Balkan Countries

Murat Bayram

Pamukkale University, Denizli, Turkey
mbayram@pau.edu.tr

Semih Arici

Yalova University, Yalova, Turkey
semiharici@yalova.edu.tr

Social media has fundamentally reshaped the way tourism related information is distributed and the way people plan for and consume travel. Since social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and TripAdvisor began allowing businesses to create profiles and become active members, businesses have started incorporating these strategies into their marketing efforts. For Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) have used these sites to promote special offers, for customer service and strengthen their existing brands; however, little is known about how DMOs are taking advantage of the social media marketing popularity.

The aim of this study is to explore the usage of social media among the DMOs of Balkan countries through a content analysis of Balkan countries' official web site profiles. Also this study examines how social media is being used by the DMOs to enhance their brands and to reach potential visitors. This study confirms the growing importance of social media in the online tourism domain and mostly DMOs use only Facebook and Twitter as a social media tools. Solely having a profile will not in itself increase awareness. DMOs should use more social networking sites to communicate with their consumers and give them the ability to broadcast opinions about services.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, DMOs, Balkans.