

**The effectiveness of electronic promotion channels for booking platforms:
comparative study between Namlati Hotel Booking and Booking.com.**

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Received: 27/07/2023

Accepted: 06/01/2024

Published:15/01/2024

Abstract

This research paper intends to analyze the most effective e-promotion tools for an emerging online booking platform to improve its results despite limited resources. To achieve this objective, a qualitative research approach was adopted by carrying out a comparative study between Namlati Hotel Booking and Booking.com. Booking.com excels in building strong relationships with its customers through its advanced and interactive website. In contrast, Namlati focuses on transactional and informational aspects but faces challenges in developing relational features on its website. Both platforms use SEO and SEA to improve online visibility, While Booking.com has a strong affiliate program, Namlati has chosen not to integrate it currently. Both platforms take a holistic approach, using social networks offering special promotions and investing in paid advertising.

Keywords: Electronic promotion, website, affiliate marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), search engine advertising (SEA).

Introduction

Digital technology and the Internet are having a massive impact on globalization, providing opportunities for economic growth while presenting challenges. Growing online competition makes it difficult for businesses to differentiate, requiring creative use of images and video to create engaging, quality content to grab audiences' attention. Online presence is essential for companies, which can use various online marketing tactics to promote their products and services, thereby gaining a sustainable competitive advantage. As described in Dave Chaffey's book, the best Internet marketing techniques in practice are search engine marketing (SEM), banner advertising on specific websites, email marketing, mobile advertising, affiliate marketing and social media marketing (Chaffey, 2006, p.8).

A consistent integration between online and offline promotion, as well as the use of traditional media, can contribute to the success of online promotion. Online promotion drives online engagement, while offline promotion attracts local customers and encourages them to visit the company's website and make purchases online. This integration is essential for company success in a competitive market, while responsible tourism management promotes sustainable economic growth and job creation. Technological progress is strongly influencing customer behavior in the hospitality industry, with increased use of the Internet for travel planning, researching hotel information and making online reservations, replacing traditional travel agencies with online booking platforms such as Booking.com and Expedia. Moreover, innovation appears to be a necessity in competitive fields that are often globalized and marked by technological changes (Gérard & Kokou, 2016, p. 10).

E-platforms have helped promote tourist attractions and increased their market share, while technology has improved communication among tourism industry players, simplifying the tourism process. Algeria has significant tourism potential, but it has not yet fully exploited the opportunities for online tourism promotion, unlike other Arab countries. With the rise of digital media, the use of electronic platforms to promote tourist attractions becomes essential. Algeria could therefore strengthen its presence by developing a digital marketing strategy to promote its tourism offer and stand out in the market. Therefore, in this research we will try to answer the following questions:

How can Namlatic, as an emerging online booking platform, identify the most effective tools of electronic promotion for its services, in order to optimize its investments and achieve better results in terms of customer acquisition and business growth?

The current study tries to examine the following questions:

- What are the electronic promotional tools used by electronic booking platforms to promote their services?
- What e-promotion tools are the most effective for an emerging online booking platform to improve its results despite limited resources?

The study seeks to achieve a set of objectives, perhaps the most prominent of which are:

- Highlighting what e-promotion is and the most important characteristics of a

successful e-promotion.

- Explaining the electronic promotional tools used by electronic booking platforms to promote their services
- Analyze the most effective e-promotion tools for an emerging online booking platform to improve its results despite limited resources.

Background to the research:

1-1 Le concept de l'e-promotion

The emergence of advanced marketing techniques via social networks, websites and other electronic media has been favored by technological development. Today, a company's ability to compete effectively with its competitors depends on having an effective digital advertising strategy in place, which is critical for a company to be able to compete effectively with its competitors. Online advertising or promotion enhances communication through electronic media through attractive visuals and graphics. Its objective is to inspire people to take action, and once that's done, it's necessary to go back to the fundamentals of traditional marketing to determine how best to move the relationship forward (Carmody, 2001, p. 282). Knowing that online promotion depends on technology used to grab the attention of the target audience.

1-2 Characteristics of a successful e-promotion

The use of electronic promotions in marketing has brought about various notable changes. First, it increases online inquiries as well as the use of pop-up banner ads. These practices are essential to building brand awareness, capturing consumer attention and engaging them. In addition, online promotional tools offer the possibility of targeting customers and influencing their behavior and brand perception (Hedid & Abdessamad, p. 50). This ability to personalize promotional messages allows companies to create more relevant and engaging experiences for their target audiences. Another advantage of online promotion over traditional means of communication is the reduced cost (Badri & Belmouloud, 2017, p. 6). Communication tools on the Internet are less impacted by financial constraints, which allow companies to save a lot of money while reaching a large audience. These online promotions boost customer satisfaction and strengthen relationships with potential customers by providing information on the best products and services tailored to consumers' needs and wants.

1-3 Electronic promotion tools

a. Websites

A website is a set of web pages linked together and designed to achieve one or more objectives according to the activities of the company. It combines functionality, content, form, organization and interactions. A website is created to help the customer meet their shopping needs, save time and money and find information (Kotler & Keller, 2016, p.

694). Currently, a company's online presence is no longer the prerogative of the biggest or most innovative companies. As a result, many small company websites share similar characteristics with large companies, a trait not typically seen in storefronts (Meroño-Cerdan & Soto-Acosta, 2007, p. 78). The website is of great interest, especially since it is one of the most common sources of information. Plus, it's a great way to establish and maintain a relationship between the company and its audience.

Today, a website must be effective so that it can meet the targeted company objectives. The technical aspects should not take precedence over the content, ergonomics and design of the site. After referencing, these three elements are decisive for the effectiveness and profitability of a project (Oualidi, 2013, p. 36). Content is a key part of search engine optimization and attracting visitors. Ergonomics is essential to guide users in the contact and design is a crucial element to offer a pleasant experience to visitors. The website could use artificial intelligence to understand the user's preferences and instantly provide them with online offers tailored to their needs. The data collected via this tool is used to personalize the site's offer (Castro et al., 2017, p. 96).

Creating an effective website is different from just creating a website, it is important to focus on the effectiveness and quality of the website to avoid issues such as lack of visibility on search engines, inaccessibility on some browsers...etc. These errors can deter visitors and cause them to abandon the website prematurely. To assess the differences between different content, the use of statistics and analysis is essential (Oualidi, 2013, p. 41). The complexity of websites influences consumer attention. Researchers have concluded that there is an optimal level of complexity to engage consumers by providing relevant information, without overwhelming them with an overload of visuals and links (L. Geissler et al., 2006, p. 77). Not all companies can claim to have the same level of functionality. On the one side, there is a huge divide between companies with secure websites, encrypted payments, and on the other side, companies with order forms for buyers to print (Menvielle, 2004, p. 81). Wang and Russo (2007) assert that *“a successful company website depends on the integrative application of four components as its primary function: (1) provision of up-to-date and accurate information; (2) effective and constant communication with consumers; (3) reliable and transparent electronic transaction; and (4) appropriate and sustainable relationship-building programs”* (Wang & Russo, 2007, P 188). The dimensions related to the elements of a website are crucial for a successful marketing strategy. Companies can use these as a checklist to monitor and improve their site's performance (Li et al, 2015, p. 138).

b. Affiliate Marketing

Online companies aim to maximize their returns and profitability by attracting and retaining a growing customer base. To achieve this, they can use affiliate marketing, which involves a collaboration between a supplier and affiliates, this supplier pays a commission to the affiliate for the referrals produced by promoting the products and services offered by the supplier, directing Internet users to a single tracking link, the latter redirecting Internet users to the advertiser's website, thus encouraging them to access the supplier's offer

(Green & Mazzullo, 2011, p. 52). In affiliate marketing the affiliate does not have to worry about inventory management, advertising or product promotion (Schneider, 2011, p. 197). These tasks are taken care of by the provider. In addition, the affiliate does not have to process the financial transactions related to the sale, since this is also managed by the supplier. Thus, the affiliate can save on the costs associated with these tasks. Moreover, the affiliate does not need to take financial risks because he does not have to invest in stocks or products.

Many newly created websites with a limited budget use affiliate marketing as a method of generating income. Affiliate marketing is a pay-for-performance campaign; essentially, you only pay when revenue is generated. If no leads come in, at least you won't be spending more money on an unsuccessful campaign (Ugochukwu & Nwogu, 2019, p. 19). One of the main benefits for suppliers using affiliate programs is the ability to pay affiliates based on campaign results. This performance-based payment model is more optimal for suppliers than traditional payment models, because it reduces the financial risk for the supplier (Kalyanam & McIntyre, 2002, p. 23). In sum, a company can seek out affiliates to help them achieve several different goals, such as launching a new company, entering untapped markets, or attracting competitors' customers. Indeed, there are two ways to approach affiliate marketing: the company can offer an affiliate program to others or register to become an affiliate of another company (Afrina et al., 2015, p. 73).

c. Email marketing

Email is the most widely used Internet application, which makes email marketing very popular. Customers giving their authorizations can receive promotional information by e-mail. Emailing existing customers is an effective marketing strategy. True opt-in involves the client's authorization of future information. Traditional and online media channels can help drive traffic to your online promotions (Giannoni, 2000, p. 18). Email has faster response times, higher response rates and lower costs than traditional mail (Giannoni, 2000, p. 70). Personalization, interactive features, and hyperlinks to web pages are effective strategies for attracting and engaging email recipients. Compared to verbal text, especially the body of the message, those who take the catalog approach often reduce the text to a brief description of each product. Personalization also affects the style and layout of email marketing messages. It should be emphasized that email can still be an effective communication tool when used strategically. A well-established e-mailing policy is an ideal technique for conveying professional messages to a wide audience, for attracting new customers and maintaining relationships with existing customers.

Overall, email can be a very effective communication tool for companies, but it's important to use it strategically and align email policy with company goals (Westphalen et al., 2015, p. 390). The return on investment (ROI) of email marketing campaigns is about double that of other forms of online marketing such as web banners and online directory listings (Pavlov et al., 2008, p. 1191). Email plays a vital role in digital marketing, enabling customers to be profitable at all stages of the buying journey. Due to its low cost

and speed of execution, not to mention that it is often the first channel customers turn to, this method is usually the one that yields the best results(Diamond, 2019, p. 443).

d. Social networks

Social networks offer a representation of each user's social connections, i.e. links between individuals, groups, companies, etc., as well as a range of additional services, such as instant messaging, streaming multimedia content, etc(Omoyza & Agwu, 2016, p. 3). These platforms are as much a social tool as a marketing tool. Currently the variety of social networks available today presents even more opportunities for organizational marketing professionals looking to connect with potential or existing clients. Social networks have become an essential marketing tool for companies concerned with remaining competitive in an ever-changing market. As many products and services become digital, the network effect becomes a key differentiator and an indispensable element of value creation(Bharadwaj et al., 2013, p. 475). Although the use of social networks is not a condition for the success of a company, not using them can mean missing out on a myriad of opportunities for growth and expansion(Macarthy, 2015, p. 7).

Social networks have gained popularity due to their user-friendly interface which offers a variety of features such as music, email, instant messaging, videos, etc(Lichy & Kachour, 2020, p. 127). It represents how people discover, read and share news, information and content. Social media applications offer users new forms of empowerment and new ways to share information(Omoyza & Agwu, 2016, p. 3). The social network is considered as a complementary source of information and not as an alternative(Mitchell et al., 2012, p. 128). By monitoring the frequency with which their name is mentioned, brands can gauge their awareness among their target audience(Hossler et al., 2014, p. 67). By understanding the reasons and context for these mentions, they can gain a better understanding of the user experience and the strengths and weaknesses of their brand. Kietzmann noted that consumers are more receptive to the opinions of people like them than to advertisements paid for by companies(Kietzmann & Canhoto, 2013, p. 6). To some extent, social media marketing was seen as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reach and promote customers for free. this is true, but with fierce competition and more demanding audiences, paid advertising is necessary in every field and this is not to say that brilliant results cannot be achieved without spending a penny, but that even small expenses can make a significant contribution to the success of a brand(Macarthy, 2015, p. 19).

e. Search engines

Search engines are websites that allow users to find information on the Internet(Schneider, 2011, p. 199,200). They are made up of three main parts: A program that crawls the web to find web pages that the user might be interested in. This information is then entered into the search engine's index, or database. The index helps verify that the information on the page has been developed and designed to facilitate

quick searches through the vast amount of information it contains. A search utility that creates a web page that contains a list of links to URLs found by the database in response to search terms entered by the website visitor. By clicking on these links, the visitor can go to the corresponding site. Search engine optimization (SEO) can focus on various forms of search, such as image search, local search, video search, academic search, news search, and vertical search engines specializing in specific sectors (Afrina et al., 2015, p. 74).

In fact, there are two approaches to SEO: First, White hat SEO uses legitimate search engine-approved methods. This involves providing relevant, high-quality content, using appropriate metadata and effective keywords, and getting high-quality links from other relevant pages. Second, black hat SEO involves the deceptive practice of manipulating the content of a web page to deceive search engines as to its true nature (H. Al-Badi et al., 2011, p. 2).

2- Methodology Adopted in the Study

The study relies on a qualitative research approach and was adopted by conducting a comparative study between Namlatic Hotel Booking and Booking.com. Our sample consists of two online booking platforms, the first platform is Booking.com Founded in Amsterdam in 1996, Booking.com has become one of the leading online travel agencies in the world. And the second is Namlatic, an online booking agency founded in Algeria; it has been operational since January 2021. To fulfill this activity, we have chosen two platforms that operate in the same sector, which is the hotel industry.

So the exercise is to do a comparative study to help emerging platforms become well-established platforms based on the analysis of the most relevant electronic promotion channels for online booking platforms. We will also explore the relationship between Namlatic and Booking.com, drawing on the latter's experience and best practices in electronic promotion. Furthermore, the use of this methodology is particularly important as the topic of e-promotion is an important and current topic that still requires further research and learning and is a new area of knowledge

2-1 Case of the “Namlatic Hotel Booking” online booking platform

Namlatic is a technological platform for hotel reservations in Algeria, offering customers the possibility of booking directly without an intermediary. Reservations are automated, secure and offer instant confirmation, with various payment methods available. Since its launch in January 2021, the platform covers more than 33 Algerian cities and offers more than 130 hotels, offering a practical solution and avoiding the hassle and costs associated with traditional reservations. Namlatic also uses digital media to promote tourism in Algeria, thus contributing to the development of the tourism sector through an innovative technological approach.

2-2 Case of the “Booking.com” online booking platform

Founded in 1996 in Amsterdam, Booking.com is a global digital travel agency that

makes it easy to book travel. Through its investments in technology, Booking.com enables millions of travelers to find unique transportation options, accommodations and experiences to explore the world. As one of the largest travel market, Booking.com offers a global platform for hotels to reach large audiences. Available in 43 languages, the site offers more than 28 million real estate adverts, including more than 6.6 million for unique accommodations such as houses and apartments. Booking.com's goal is to make booking travel easy for everyone, with customer support available 24/7. Whether you want to travel or discover new experiences, Booking.com makes it easy to find and book your trips.

3- Findings and discussions

3-1 The most relevant electronic promotion channels for Namlatic and Booking.com

Websites

Booking.com highlights positive developments through press releases, highlighting new features and benefits for users and partners. The Genius program is used to provide exclusive benefits and encourage customer loyalty. Artificial intelligence powered chatbot optimizes interactions and collects data for effective personalization, while user-generated content provides objective information and real testimonials to help users in their booking process. Namlatic, on the other side, is an Algerian platform focused on online transactions, offering secure orders and payments to generate revenue. They offer a variety of electronic payment methods for more flexibility. Although relational functionality is less developed, Namlatic recognizes its importance and engages in advanced development to improve the user experience. They also use their website as a marketing tool to promote their services and grow their customer base, highlighting the benefits and privileges offered to Associate Founders to attract new partners. Booking.com offers transactional and relational web applications that add value by building customer loyalty and increasing sales. Conversely, The Namlatic website is primarily a communication channel and a source of information. This may be due to Namlatic's more recent development stage, which focuses on improving information delivery. Booking.com emphasizes building lasting relationships by optimizing communication on its website. The transition to interactive websites requires significant investment, specialized skills and management commitment.

Affiliate Marketing

Booking.com has a strong affiliate program where third-party partners run accommodations on their websites with promotional tools. Affiliates receive a commission when users book through their site. This benefits Booking.com by increasing its visibility and affiliates by allowing them to earn revenue from bookings. Links, widgets and banner ads are used to redirect users to Booking.com. This strategy stimulates reservations and promotes a win-win relationship. Booking.com offers a dedicated Affiliate Partner Center to help manage and monitor affiliate program performance. Affiliates can manage their account, find the right products and offers, and segment their activities through the Groups

area. This platform provides valuable information on visitors, reservations and conversion rate, allowing affiliates to optimize their promotional activities. Affiliate Partner Center is an essential tool for Booking.com affiliate partners. Booking.com's customizable widgets are essential tools for affiliate partners, allowing them to embed links, search fields and banners on their websites. These widgets help promote Booking.com accommodations, increase sales and improve the booking experience for users of affiliate sites. By using these widgets, affiliates strengthen their partnership with Booking.com while providing quality service to their visitors.

On another side, Namlatic has chosen not to integrate affiliation into its growth strategy. The reasons can be related to limited resources, making setting up and running an affiliate program expensive or complex at the moment. Instead, Namlatic focuses on other electronic promotion channels and takes an organic growth approach. By focusing on customer loyalty and the quality of their offer, Namlatic favors a sustainable approach for the development of their startup activity. In conclusion, Booking.com uses affiliation to expand its reach and drive bookings, while Namlatic favors other promotion channels. Each approach has its advantages, and it is crucial for each company to consider its situation and its objectives before deciding whether or not to adopt affiliation in its growth strategy.

E-mail marketing

Booking.com uses a personalized email marketing strategy to encourage bookings and foster user loyalty. They send confirmation emails, booking reminders and special offers, tailored to each individual's travel preferences. Collecting reviews after the stay and sending loyalty emails highlighting the benefits of the Booking Genius program keeps users engaged. Re-engagement emails are also used for inactivity. Booking.com uses alias email addresses, an automated message tracking system, and email pixels to gauge recipient interaction. The aim is to make communications relevant and encourage bookings on the platform. Namlatic uses newsletters and promotional emails to maintain contact with its users, promote and encourage its online reservation services. Newsletters provide relevant information on news, special offers, popular destinations and travel tips. Promotional emails are personalized to users' travel preferences and highlight special offers to entice them to book. These communications are intended to keep users engaged and encourage them to further explore Namlatic's services. They are professional, engaging, and based on email marketing best practices.

Search engines: SEO and SEA

Booking.com uses the Trustpilot platform to collect customer reviews and assess customer satisfaction, helping future users make informed decisions. Although Booking.com does not systematically respond to reviews on Trustpilot, this helps maintain transparency and authenticity of customer reviews due to the high volume of reviews received(<https://fr.trustpilot.com/review/www.booking.com>). Booking.com uses natural referencing practices to improve its ranking in search results, in particular by optimizing the content, the structure of the site and by generating quality links. They create relevant content, incorporate relevant keywords and seek to obtain quality inbound links. In

addition, Booking.com uses social networks to promote its offers and interact with users, thus increasing its online visibility. Booking.com uses paid referencing to increase its online visibility through paid search and remarketing campaigns. SEA allows sponsored ads to appear in search results, while remarketing targets users who have previously visited the site with personalized ads. By combining SEO and SEA, Booking.com improves its online visibility, generates qualified traffic and encourages reservations. SEO provides long-term benefits by improving organic rankings, while SEA provides immediate results through paid advertising. These complementary strategies strengthen Booking.com's online presence and drive bookings.

Namlatic uses Google Ads to increase its online visibility and promote its services. Namlatic uses Google ads within its budget, so that it is for limited times, unlike Booking.com, which relies heavily on these ads. By targeting specific keywords, they show ads on Google's search results pages, thereby driving traffic to their website. This approach aims to attract new customers, especially those looking for alternatives to hotel reservations. Although paid search offers instant visibility, it requires an ongoing advertising budget to maintain the results achieved. Namlatic uses this strategy to maximize its impact despite its limited resources. Namlatic uses Trustpilot to collect and publish authentic customer reviews, thereby building its credibility. They see reviews as an opportunity for continuous improvement and don't delete them(<https://fr.trustpilot.com/review/namlatic.com>). In addition, Namlatic invests in Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to increase the visibility of its website in the long term. These combined strategies aim to strengthen Namlatic's online presence, attract new customers and gain their trust in the online booking industry. In summary, Booking.com and Namlatic use similar tactics, such as Trustpilot and SEO, to attract new customers, build popularity, and increase online visibility in the online booking industry.

Social networks

Booking.com and Namlatic use social media to promote their online services. Booking.com takes a more complete approach to social media presence and strategies. Both platforms are active on popular platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to reach large audiences. They share inspiring travel-related content and engage with users by responding to their comments and questions. Social networks are also used to promote special offers and discounts, encouraging users to book through their website. Booking.com also works with influencers to promote their services and share travel experiences. In summary, Booking.com takes a complete approach using multiple platforms, sharing inspiring content, engaging with users, offering special offers and collaborating with influencers. Namlatic mainly uses paid advertisements on social networks to increase its visibility. These strategies allow them both to optimize their visibility and strengthen their position in the online booking market.

Conclusion

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In conclusion, this study looks at the relevant online promotion channels for Namlatic and Booking.com. For Booking.com, their website is central in promoting services, highlighting new features and collecting user reviews. They also use affiliate and email marketing effectively to reach large audiences and encourage bookings. In terms of SEO, Booking.com combines SEO and SEA to increase its online visibility and generate qualified traffic; which relies heavily on these ads. On the other side, Namlatic takes a different approach. Although the website can be enhanced to be a marketing tool by the transition to interactive websites which requires significant investment, specialized skills and management commitment, add to that they choose not to incorporate affiliation into their growth strategy. Instead, they focus on other promotional channels, such as newsletters and promotional emails, to keep users engaged and drive bookings. Namlatic also invested in SEO to grow its online presence and used the Trustpilot platform to collect authentic reviews and build customer trust. Namlatic is a thriving platform with a growing following. This success reflects Namlatic's continued efforts to expand its presence and provide innovative solutions in the travel industry.

By intelligently targeting these means of electronic promotion, emerging online booking platforms can optimize their budgets and achieve positive results by generating qualified traffic, increasing brand awareness and increasing conversion rates, converting visitors into clients. Each method has its advantages and characteristics, and each company must consider its situation and its objectives before deciding to integrate certain e-promotion strategies into its overall strategy. By understanding the most relevant channels and tailoring their use to their specific needs, online booking platforms can increase their visibility, attract new customers and drive business growth. It is always important to know where the platform is located so that in a few years it can reach the same audience as other companies. As you can see, Namlatic is growing steadily, and over time it could reach levels of attention and engagement similar to Booking.com. Namlatic can learn from these strategies to improve its online visibility and attract new customers.

Research recommendations

Namlatic, a major player in the travel industry, could use a range of strategic tips to improve its online presence and expand its customer base. These recommendations include working with affiliate partners, travel bloggers and influencers to increase brand awareness by reaching new audiences. Creating a dedicated blog on their website, adding value to users and keeping them coming back for more relevant content. Integrating a chatbot on their website will provide 24/7 support, optimizing customer experience and gathering valuable feedback to improve service. In conclusion, by adopting these strategic recommendations, Namlatic was able to strengthen its online presence and achieve its digital outreach objectives.

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