

THE IMPACT OF SEO OPTIMIZATIONS FOR ROMANIAN TRAVELLING AGENCIES

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***Abstract:** The tourism has become a key part of the economy matching the importance of other better known parts like industry, agriculture or commerce. Online tourism has known an increase in popularity over the last years at the point in which most tourism agencies use the internet as the main method of promoting the offers. In the online promotion of the company are used sites, blogs and social media platforms. The main goal of this research paper is to highlight the importance of SEO optimization in online tourism. The research has been made by studding the online activity of few travelling agencies from Romania.*

***Key words:** online tourism, SEO, travelling agencies*

Introduction

Optimization is considered a major step towards success for any business that operates in the online media. SEO, „Search Engine Optimization”, represents the highlighting of certain key words fundamental to the field of interest of the company. The main goal of the process is to bring a positive impact over the internet.

In online tourism, SEO optimization is a stage in online marketing in which the company or institution wishes to place the certain site in the top list of the search engines through key words.

For travelling agencies SEO optimization represents a scientific research with can be structured in four main chapters:

1. The travelling agencies presence in the online media
2. Touristic marketing
3. SEO optimizations of larger sites
4. Promoting the agencies offers in online media

The main goal of this research paper is to highlight the importance of SEO optimization in online tourism. The research has been made by studding certain success stories and online behaviour on theoretical data of SEO process. Another method to research SEO for this research

paper is to follow dedicated forums on the subject analysing the responses given by the members including specialists.

In order to implement SEO optimization it is necessary to research online tourism. Nowadays tourism has become a key part of the economy matching the importance of other well-known parts like industry, agriculture or commerce. It is hard to point out the exact borders of the touristic phenomena because like all other human activities it falls under the incident of other studies like geography, economy, psychology or sociology.

Online tourism has known an increase in popularity over the last years at the point in which most tourism agencies use the internet as the main method of promoting the offers. In the online promotion of the company are used sites and platforms as Facebook or blogs. One of the companies that use online marketing is Ultramarin and in the following paper it has been chosen as the practical subject for studding SEO optimization.

The travelling agency was founded in 2001, in the private sector. The main goal of the agency was:

„We wish to orient our services to each customer offering competence, quality, safety, innovation and professionalism.”
(Ultramarin)

To realize this study, we took a look in the Timisoara tourism agencies offers so I decided to make an analysis to the following travelling agencies from Timisoara:

- AsTour: <http://www.astour-timisoara.ro>
- Eximtur: <https://www.eximtur.ro>
- Ebostour: <http://www.ebostour.ro>

The type of research that first the most in our situation is descriptive research in which we will observe the market, the impact over the clients and the absorption rate of the offers the companies make.

All travelling agencies have a well defined goal which is promoting and selling touristic services. The differences between the companies consist in the way they present the offers, the prices, the destinations and last but not least the effect on its clients and potential clients.

All the sites of these companies tend to look alike due to the expose of pictures and offers on the main page. Each trip is followed by a picture or a video clip defining the trip. Ultramarin differentiates itself from the rest by defining each trip and offering as many material needed for the client.

Suggested optimization method

In online tourism, SEO optimization is a stage in online marketing in which the company or institution wishes to place the certain site in the top list of the search engines through key words. In order to reach the top of Google’s search list, in online marketing, a site needs to follows certain SEO performances criteria. SEO optimization consists of respecting the following criteria:

- accurate titles – short and descriptive
- metatag description
- url structure
- creating an easy to navigate site
- the quality of the content and services
- promoting the site trough online media
- Google notification

The title of the travelling agency is different from the rest; its colouring makes it unique. Well defined tags in every search engine make for good optimization.

The optimization method used is promoting the site trough social media. During the research at Ultramarin we came up with a schedule with promoting messages for trips to Greece in Thassos and Lefkada. In this paper we present only a part from the entire campaign. The schedule is divided into weeks as following in table 1.

Table 1. The promotion workflow

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Facebook	Video presentation Thassos/Lefkada	Photo gallery	Discount offers	Last minute	Historical and cultural monuments
Site	Presenting the offer, price rooms transport		First page special offer		Short period discount
Blog	Short description of the place	Photo gallery	Culinary specialities	Beach parties	Traditions
Newsletter	Early booking				Special offers

Results of the SEO Optimization

The promoting of the Ultramarin tourism agency was made by the following methods:

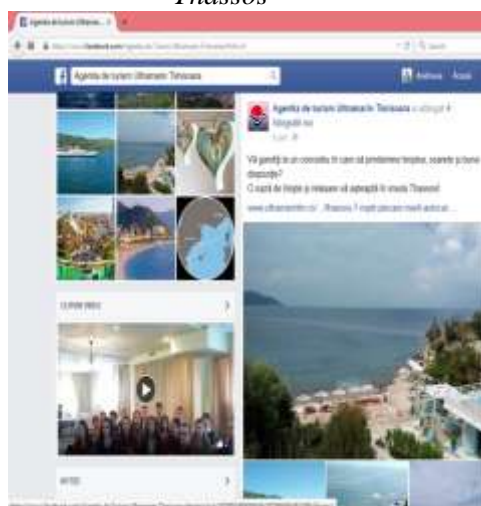
- First step it was the technically optimization of the site www.ultramarin.ro.
- In the second step the blog site is use. A new impact was obtained by writing articles and messages on the company blog. In writing the articles are used key words to attract the readers inters like: culinary specialties, unforgettable vacation, etc. <http://blog.ultramarintm.ro>
- Third step use promotional advertising methods on social media using Facebookplatform <https://www.facebook.com/Agentia.de.Turism.Ultramarin.Timisoara>.

Table 2. Social media promotion

Message 1: Lefkada



Message 2: „An oasis of peace - Thassos ”



<https://www.facebook.com/Agentia.de.Turism.Ultramarin.Timisoara>

Message 3: The personal experience

Message 4: Greek dishes



<http://blog.ultramarintm.ro/un-colt-de-lume/2015/03>

<http://blog.ultramarintm.ro/specialitati-culinare-traditionale-ale-greciei-intalnite-in-thassos-si-lefkada/2015/03>

Another important element in promotion was the choice of pictures from the designated locations: nice colours, representative’s objectives, and emotional impact.

In these articles are used key words which respect the Google rules for a good indexation of the site.

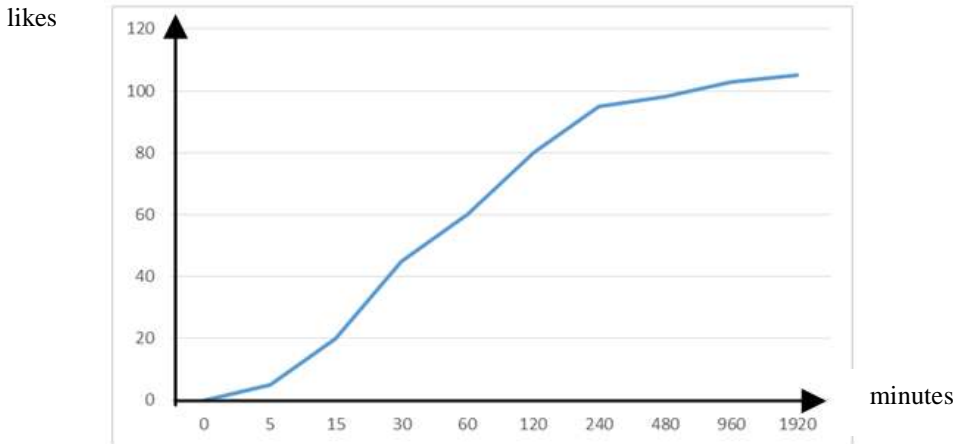


Figure 1. “Like” average ratings for the posts made on facebook in a 5-week period.

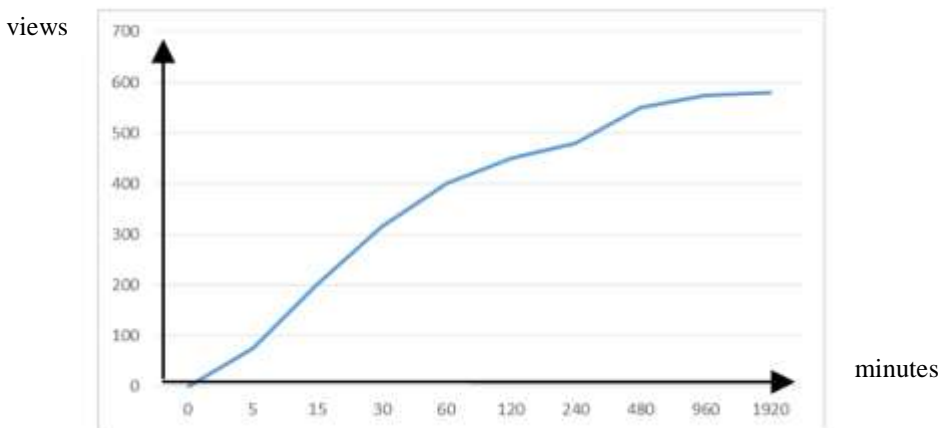


Figure 2. Mean “viewers” who saw a message posted on facebook for a period of 5 weeks.

Figure 1 clearly present the viral evolution in the number of likes on facebook of posts. After 24 hours the interest decreases a lot. We also note a certain restraint in awarding marks on facebook. If we count the number of views on a post it notes that they are substantially more than “like”. For the most interesting posts we have a factor for granting qualifier “like” 1: 7 (from 7 visitors, maximum one offers a qualifier “like”). The exemplification is in Figure 2.

Conclusion

Ultramarin has become a very important figure in Romania’s tourism commerce by promoting its services trough online media marketing and direct marketing at the company offices. The SEO optimization of a site is a long process, very complex, and involves many components that must be considered. The competition in the online environment is very big and inventive. A process of promotion and SEO optimization in online environment does not end ever.

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