

CROSS-CULTURAL ONLINE MARKETING CAMPAIGNS FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY



Travel companies and tourist boards often face the need to optimize their website. However, effective search engine optimization needs to follow several rules.

The most obvious advantage of the internet is - no borders. It seems that such a simple yet crucial prospect has been forgotten by online marketing professionals. On earlier stage most of search marketing companies have developed international strategies predominantly based on the English based internet space. Currently, more search marketers look for localized search engine optimization (SEO) campaigns.

Tourism Review Digital Network (TRDN) is clearly the pioneer of localized information channels with clear focus on the [tourism industry](#). Martin Heger, the Tourism Review' leading marketer specialist, shares some principles of expanding SEO internationally and be successful in multinational campaigns.

"It's quite common for international SEO newcomers to forget that while in the United States and in Europe Google covers the main part of the search market share, Baidu is the leading search engine in China, and Yandex in Russia. Yandex holds about 67% of the search engine market in Russia," said Heger.

"The engine was founded in the early 1990s and it has built its reputation on technology such as mapping and the ability to meet cultural needs," added Heger.

However as many industry experts emphasize, it's difficult for Google to get more than 20% in Russian market. Also many Wall Street analysts believe Baidu will continue to demonstrate a growth pattern similar to Google in its early days. "We think Baidu can grow 3.5 to 4 times in the next four to six years," - experts advise.

However, keeping track of multiple search engines around the world becomes challenging. Not only search engines in different countries use different algorithms, but also, for example Chinese authorities want to regulate Internet search.

Some marketers who deal with international SEO believe they can handle localization by simple translation of the original content in English to another language. "This approach is completely wrong," confirms Martin Heger, the Tourism Review' leading marketer. It is not successful to simply translate your web site as individuals in diverse places are looking for diverse things and they use words which are often not translated but based on their particular background and behavior.

"Translating search phrases is by far the most dangerous trick of all tourism industry professionals in multilingual SEO. The law number 1 in [multilingual SEO in Tourism](#): not appreciating that 'keywords' cannot be translated is most widespread factor of unsuccessful international search engine optimization efforts," warns Heger.

Another "must" issue to be considered is responding to cultural differences. In fact it is crucial for a

good online as well as off line marketing. First-rate keyword research can be used not merely to improve the performance of a tourism site generally but to recognize how prospective customers are thinking and which travel products may be the best ones.

The challenges vary from company to company. Some companies move from a centralized to a decentralized marketing strategy, and then back again. Many others however, believe they have handled optimization in English and try to apply this approach into international markets. Mr. Heger suggests outsourcing an online promotion to qualified professionals with cross-market coordination of marketing and [PR communication in Tourism](#).

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