

The Case of Vermont: Employing Mobile Marketing Strategies

A considerable portion of the publicity for the tourism industry is still through the print and the broadcast media. However, in Vermont the marketing strategy to improve tourism has been given a new direction using the power of the Internet combined with the increased use of smartphones.

The new strategy is aimed at getting to know the visitors' specific interests from the vast database of consumer information that is collected.



A new tourism campaign was in force last winter at South Station in Boston. The Tourism and Marketing department announced daily text-to-win giveaway gifts to drive visitors to www.pathtovermont.com. The response was awesome and the drive received close to an astounding 6,000 message entries.

Elaborating the new strategy, the deputy commissioner of the Tourism and Marketing department, Steve Cook stated that it was designed to choose and maintain a set of active consumers who by themselves helped to promote specialized last-minute packages, deals, and promotions not only for the current season, but for the future seasons as well, collaborating with the department in a sustained manner.

“It was observed that a major portion of the visitors to the state's website accessed the site from home or office computers. However, a significant amount of the traffic did come through Internet enabled mobile smartphones,” Cook said.

Similarly, the main aim of the summer campaign was to drive enthusiastic online traffic to the state's tourism travel website, www.VermontVacation.com.

To add impact to the national summertime campaign that began on May 1, the department planned a spate of Google ads. Google with its satellite TV partner, Dish Network, helped to extend the marketing reach of the campaign while simultaneously maintaining reasonable costs.

Outside Television, a cable network devoted to promoting outdoors lifestyle, YouTube, and Orbitz, an online travel site, were also roped in as other channels for the state's tourism promotion campaigns.



Geo-targeting is another major strategy aimed to increase tourist visits to the state. The use of Google and Pandora to market the tourism options to a limited number of people based on their geographical location forms a part of the promotion.

Marketing efforts in the regional sector includes ads that appear on NESN, the Boston Red Sox network at Fenway Park coinciding with Vermont Day falling on 5th of August. The ads targeted the Montreal, Boston and New York regions.

The Tourism and Marketing commissioner, Megan Smith, asserted that her department is doing everything to contribute to an increase of awareness about the importance of the tourism industry.

The department has come up with a couple of videos produced that are now available for watching in the department's YouTube channel. Whereas one video is directed at helping students who may want to make a mark in the hospitality industry, the second video is shot to reveal to Vermont lawmakers the economic contributions of the tourism industry. The industry attracts close to 13.7 million visitors in a year who create a revenue turnover of \$1.42 billion annually for the state.

The tourism program of the last year was, however, severely challenged by the tropical storm Irene, when it threatened all the efforts of the tourism department with its advent just before the onset of the autumn season.

Lawrence Miller, secretary of the Commerce and Community Development agency lauded the extraordinary efforts of the residents of the Vermont state and those in the tourism sector to keep activities afloat in the aftermath of the natural disaster.

What stood out was the generosity of the many innkeepers who provided shelter for stranded travelers and the locals who had lost their homes, Miller asserted.



Even those volunteers and relief workers who had come in from outside the state noticed the yeoman service that those in the hospitality industry rendered to the affected people.

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