



Yacht tourism and Internet marketing applications

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Marketing for yacht tourism is complicated since it deals with a specific and sophisticated target market with special needs and it should provide clients with options and alternative ways to accomplish their goals. marketing. One of the most important applications that could help for such differentiation is through Internet marketing may be an excellent tool for yacht tourism due to its flexibility, speed, place and time availability that it provides to users. This paper consists of two

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The internet is the most common and widely used worldwide network of computers that gives individuals access to on-line information and documents from distant resources (Buhalis, 2003:16). Internet is a combination of a worldwide communication system, it can be used for e-mail to send messages and ask questions of experts or individuals who share the similar interests (Zikmund & D'Amico, 1996:146). Unlike the traditional broadcasting media, such as radio and television, the Internet is a decentralized system. It can publish ideas, and can sell products with a minimum overhead cost. Businesses are discovering the Internet as the most powerful and cost effective tool as it provides a faster, more efficient way to work with colleagues, customers, vendors and business partners. The World Wide Web (WWW) is the highly graphical, multimedia component of the Internet. People can obtain valuable information about companies, markets, products on the Web. In addition, the Web offers marketers' unique opportunities to target their audiences, extend their business hours and geographic reach, and even sell their products and services to anyone who has Internet access. Recently, WWW has emerged as a major low cost platform for many marketers.

Internet marketing and sales on-line are highly increasing each year. According to Economic Impact: U.S. Direct & Interactive Marketing Today, interactive/e-commerce can be expected to see continued growth. Online sales are forecast to exceed \$36 billion in 2002 and grow annually by 20.9 percent to reach \$81.1 billion in 2006. As of July

2008, approximately 1,463,632,361 people worldwide use the Internet, according to Internet World Statistics (<http://tofoc.usinfo/>) which is more than 24 times higher when compared with 1996 data. This sharp increase in less than 15 years shows why the Internet has become such an important tool.

The e-business renaissance has revolutionized the use of technology by consumers and business entities. During the past several years, e-business has changed the business paradigm and has created a new business model across all industries. This new business model is based on creating new channels that facilitate open communication among "service users" and "service providers," enabling information access, information exchange, and procurement of goods and services faster and cheaper. Using this business model, a new breed of young companies has entered the market attracting massive investments and creating extremely high market values. These new companies have been able to effectively compete with more established and mature companies, taking away their market share, and even acquiring them (Nardoza, 2000).

Electronic marketing provides several alterations in marketing activities (see Table 1). Internet advertising is seen as a crucial component of the marketing mix, both for branding and direct response campaigns. The best online marketers are establishing a notable competitive advantage, while those that have been slower to embrace the medium are working to catch up. The Internet has changed all the rules for business. Past

Table 1 : How electronic marketing changes marketing activities

Marketing Activity	Traditional Marketing	Cyber Marketing
Advertising	Prepare print, video or voice copy and use standard media vehicles such as television, radio, newspaper, and magazines. Usually only very	Design extensive information and put it on the company's Web page; CD brochures linked to your site; distribution of public relations information
Customer Service	Provide service five days a week, eight hours a day in the store or over the phone in response to customer calls; provide on site visits.	Provide seven day, twenty-four-hour service response; send phone, fax, or e-mail solutions; allow customers to co produce their customer service; access to frequent guest diner and
Selling	Phoning or visiting prospects and customers and demonstrating product physically or by projective equipment.	Videoconferencing with prospect; showing the product on the computer screen; enabling customers to purchase their own hospitality
Marketing Research	Use of individual interviews, focus groups, and mailed or phones surveys.	Use of newsgroups for conversation and interviewing, e-mail questionnaires; access to focus groups over the

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internet usage in yacht tourism, success and failure factors in internet marketing in yacht tourism, things to consider when establishing Web sites for yacht tourism. The second part of the study is a practical part, where, 45 boat owners that are the customers of yacht tourism are interviewed about their special expectancies from internet marketing.

Reference: Philip Kotler, John Bowen & James Makens (2003), Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism, Third Edition, Prentice-hall, Pearson Education International, New Jersey, p.632.

market, the efficient number for profitability (size of the target market) is number one reason for the failure in Internet marketing (Sterne, 2004). Another reason for failure is not identifying the most important site visitors. It is important for a successful web site to recognize the type of visitor that (Sewell):

- Shows up the most often
- Stays the longest
- Looks at the most pages
- Buys the most stuff
- Buys the most frequently
- Spends the most money

Also, Web site having very little to no traffic leads to failure in Internet marketing. The last reason is about Web site design. The purpose of a website is to first educate and then to sell. Most websites do neither. If the Web site has very little useful content, there won't be very many visitors or potential customers.

Success tips for internet marketing include the following:

- ◆ To get the most out of a Web page it is important to downplay the advertising aspect of the page and play up the information aspect. Viewers tend to get turned off by pages they consider too advertising aggressive (Mill, 2001:96).
- ◆ The Web page has to be integrated into other marketing efforts. Based on firms' positioning and market focus, present news, articles, facts, insights and helpful data should be in the Web page, which would show that the firm is an authority and expert in the industry.
- ◆ Use the firms / products differentiation and focus on what clearly separates the firm from the competition. Web site should cover the different points that can be locked into the minds of the prospective clients. The initial impression is important-browsers may stay for as little as five seconds before moving on. Emphasizing a customer benefit may get make them stay on the Web site.

- ♦ To compete effectively on the internet, Web site should be ranked high by search engines and directories such as Google and Yahoo! Reciprocal links with other businesses can help achieve this goal. It also is useful to link to relevant government and nonprofit agencies (Siedlecki, 2001).
- ♦ Security is important and the database used must be protected against unauthorized or malicious access and actions (Roberts & Berger, 1989:155).

Internet marketing for Yacht tourism: characteristics of Yacht tourism

Yacht tourism is a tourism type that uses water resources like sea, ponds or rivers and it is extended to accommodation, F & B activities and entertainment associated with it (Demirkol & Zengin, 2004:204). Yacht tourism is a wide concept that includes

yacht management, yachters, yacht production facilities and marinas. It also covers the issues of travel, tourism related services like F & B and entertainment.

Yacht tourism is an important sub-sector for Turkish tourism which has a high potential for growth, since Turkey uses very little of its' potential with 2.5 billion US \$ revenue from this segment (Gürbüz, 2007). The yacht tourism in Turkey goes back to 1980's when people made journeys with local boats around Turkish coasts, so called "Blue Voyage" (Kalemdaroğlu, Şeker, and Kabdaslı, 2004). New marinas were established with legislations since then, especially in costs of southern Aegean and Mediterranean. Since the spending levels of yachters are high and they are environmentally friendly, they are regarded as an excellent tourist segment for the tourism industry. The yacht statistics of Turkey (see, Table 2) indicates that the sector is improving with a high growth potential. The increased use of internet marketing for

Table 2 : Yacht Statistics of Turkey

Years	Domestic (numbers)	Foreign (numbers)
1995	460	2 580
1996	935	2 791
1997	731	2 812
1998	1 560	2 226
1999	429	2 145
2000	670	1 236
2001	808	2 434
2002	1 037	2 337
2003	1094	4167
2004	1549	3642
2005	1979	4231

Source: Republic of Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism General Directorate of Investment and Enterprises, Yacht Statistics 2006 (2007), Ankara

The general characteristics of yacht tourism may be summarized as;

- ♦ Yacht tourism is mainly concentrated on travelling. The most part of the planned time takes place on the boats.
- ♦ Yacht tourism and its' marketing is closely related to ecology of the region. It is said that the ecological pollution that yacht tourism brings

to the area is much lesser than the other tourism types when compared.

- ♦ The accommodation capacity is very limited when compared with the accommodation capacity of huge hotels of mass tourism. In relation with this aspect, yacht tourism lacks the related services that come along with large accommodation facilities.
- ♦ Yacht tourism is accomplished by

Table 3 : The Country Share of Yacht Tourism in the Mediterranean Region (%)

Country	Share as percentage
Italy	28
Spain	26
France	18
Croatia	9
Tunisia	7
Greece	4
Turkey	4

middle aged or slightly elderly group that belongs to high socioeconomic group. Main attractions for this group are recreation and environmental beauties and cultural heritage, instead of entertainment.

Given the characteristics of yacht tourism, it is clear that the marketing for it be it the operational side or purchasing, is not a simple task. Selling or buying a yacht is not an easy task even for the most talented salesmen. It takes knowledge, time, dedication and a personalized marketing effort to successfully sell a yacht. Personalized marketing strategy that is developed in accordance to customer's budget is one issue. Some investment in professional marketing and technical consultancy will result in a better sale in yachting marketing. Also, examination of clients' expectations for a yacht and their known and yet-to-be-known cruising waters is another issue. Yacht marketing should provide clients with options and alternative ways to accomplish their goals. Yet, provide an acquisition budget for a new or brokered yacht is another issue. In yachting world, marketing effectively and efficiently can be an art form and subject to the variables of the yacht itself (location, age, condition, etc.).

A survey commissioned by one boating magazine that showed over 90 percent of yachters use the Internet—he's convinced it's closer to 98 percent—and that 70 percent of them use it every day (Blackwell, 2002). Usually marinas are the places where rich, gadget-oriented people hang out. It is a good opportunity and a good market

for Internet and wireless access network marketing. Some firms have already started using this opportunity. For example Global Wireless Services Inc., has installed wireless access networks in over 50 marinas since early 2001. Another good example that uses Internet marketing in boating is Newport Yachting Center which took consultancy help to redesigning its' Web site. To do that it was crucial to determine their needs and wants for the new web site, and then to create a detailed plan for construction of the new site. The plan included a list of sections for the site, what content would go in those sections, which at the Newport Yachting Center was responsible for gathering content and deadlines for content submission. Working with in-house design, the site met all deadlines and has continued to be a valuable marketing tool for the entire staff (Newport Yachting Center, 2008). The WWW has become a major low-cost platform for many yacht and boat marketers as well as marine marketing and there are already many commercial sites on the Web. For example, "Aboard" presents the new boat-finder.com, a multi-lingual remote "On-line Boat Listing System" which allows boating companies to integrate the boat listing in their own web site, thus effectively providing a "Remote Management System" for their boats allowing them to translate them into several languages. Visitors of the site can choose the language and the currency to use when searching for a boat. The user can also change the layout of the searches and filter by location, price, etc (Aboard, 2004). Due to all these reasons Internet

accounted for 65% of online sales in the European market in 2007, intermediaries 35%. In 2007 the breakdown of the market by type of service was as follows: Air travel 57%; Hotels (and other accommodations) 17%; Package tours 14%; Rail 7%; Rental cars (and car ferries) 4% (Marcussen, 2008). The yacht segment is a way behind when compared with the other sub segments of the industry. Thus, the advantages of internet marketing yacht tourism are many. Main ones are stated below:

- ♦ Availability of huge amount of information and ease of comparability: By using Internet customers, yacht buyers or marina searchers can easily compare different types, characteristics and prices of available choices. Since visiting all differently located marinas and boat selling places is very time consuming and costly, Internet marketing provides information at any time and from everywhere.
- ♦ Convenience for purchase; time and place utility: Yachters are always looking for a bigger boat or a newer model. Therefore they are on constant search for yacht purchase be it the first hand or the second-hand. They want to compare different models and want huge amount of information on hand. Internet not only provides that but also provides on-line purchases can be made from any place at any time by using different methods of payment which is a suitable method for yacht tourist profile.
- ♦ Interactivity: Visitors to a yachting home page can review graphics, read text, as well as interact with the location, download information, send in comments, see videos, hear programs, buy and request products or services, etc. The only limitations on a WWW site are the resources supporting the site.
- ♦ Accountability: The clicks are what make the Web especially attractive; companies can monitor the results of their efforts. It's called

"accountability" (Lefton, 2002).

- ♦ Easiness in identifying prospects: The boat or yachting company may sort through the database to identify the best prospects than reaches them by other means of media in attempt to convert them into customers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001:626).
- ♦ Direct marketing opportunities and one-on-one communication: by the use of internet yacht users or customers may ask specific questions about special problems or usage of their yachts or about the yacht they are planning to purchase and receive answers tailor made for their specific questions on-line (Poon, 2002:164-167)
- ♦ Ease of data gathering, research and getting the results.
Service quality is improved meaning a set of standard non-static values for quality (Poon, 2002:164).
- ♦ Ease of up-dating the information and announcement of promotions: One of the biggest challenges that field salespeople face is accessing up-to-date information, especially when they're responding to a customer's questions. This type of information ranges from product descriptions and technical specifications to price quotes, reference sheets, and even information about competitors. Also, with the help of internet announcement of promotions and distribution may be handled very easily and in a short time.
Sales productivity can benefit in a number of ways by using the Internet or a corporate intranet. Some examples are (Rosenthal), (Tekeli, 2001:155):
 - ♦ More efficient management of resource and data handling,
 - ♦ Ease in specifying the characteristics of customer profiles and demographic characteristics of segments,
 - ♦ Online feed-back form customers,
 - ♦ Ease of identifying the key accounts,

- ◆ Cost efficiency of e-mailing: Clearly, with the rise of the Internet, e-mail has become one of the most cost-efficient ways of sharing information with large audiences. For example, it now costs Boat U.S. in excess of \$180,000 just to pay the postage on a first class letter sent to all of its members. This more than doubles when you add in the cost of letterhead, envelopes and labor. Therefore the company is kindly asking its' members by providing the Association with an e-mail address (Sciulla, 2002). Association also mentions that "obtaining an e-mail list of members willing to help the Association influence public policy will also be particularly important in the future in the event that the Congress, the federal agencies or the states propose new laws, taxes and fees which are contrary to the interests of the boating community."
- ◆ Handling customer inquiries at marinas at call centers has many advantages. Some may be stated as :
- ◆ Efficiency. The staff can create a library of commonly used responses that frees them from having to type responses to frequently asked questions over and over again.
- ◆ Tracking. Now that managers have the tools to measure e-mail service levels, they can make critical decisions regarding staffing needs, analyzing how much time is being spent responding to e-mail and evaluating the effectiveness of each individual or department.
- ◆ Customer satisfaction. Companies are able to cut the turn around time on e-mail and Web-based inquiries.

In addition to the advantages of using Internet marketing and database in yacht tourism, there are issues to consider which constraints for this strategy are. One of them is the difficulty to design a WEB site or Web page that is unique and that stands out from the crowd. There are thousands of sites on the Internet and the numbers keep growing. To turn this media into an active one requires the sites to be updated at all times, attractive and be marketed so that people know they exist and can find them (Angelo and Vladimir, 1998:510).

Also, building a data-base marketing system is expensive and operations must allow 1-2 years to achieve a working system. Adopting a data-based approach to marketing is a long term commitment, when it is considered that, for example, in USA 18% of population moves every year (Powers, 1997:109) and more than that has 3-4 different e-mail accounts which change quite often to the Spam and junk mail management. The problems encountered by the Internet users include difficulty in locating information, rising costs of Internet use, and security (Soh et al., 1997:217-227).

Branding of Yacht Tourism through Internet marketing

"According to legend, the practice of branding products originated when an ancient ruler decided that products should bear some sort of symbol so that, if something should go wrong, buyers and authorities would know who was to blame. Forced to identify their products with themselves, the story goes, producers began to take greater pride in their products and to make them better than those of their competitors, thus reversing the negative intent of the order of their king"(Zikmund & D'Amico, 1996:289). Today though branding serves very many other purposes like creating identity, protection form competition, enhancing image, facilitates market segmentation, over time, building brand equity and creating and keeping brand loyal customers, to repeat business (Powers, 1997:222). Boat companies may

Constraints of Internet marketing

putting the associations through communication vehicles. In today's crowded marketplace, getting your brand known which is called brand awareness is not an easy job. What may be even more difficult it to effectively convey what the brand stands for - brand identity (Nykiel, 1989:97). In this regard, many online businesses make the mistake of putting popularity before popularity, concentrating on "hits" rather than qualified visitors. Identification of operations' best customers is based on the "RFM principle" that is recency, frequency and munificence. The firms' best customers are those who purchased recently purchase frequently and deliver the greatest monetary earnings to the firm (Powers, 1997:109), whereas Internet can be an excellent tool to build and maintain brand management. The public perception of your company or product is often embodied by the way in which your 'brand' is presented. While consumers are more brands aware than ever before, research suggests there may even be a perceived stigma associated with automotive and boat / yachting sector. Integrating a branded concept into a boat is a way to minimize the stigma, bringing guests back to the boat company when changing into a different (usually bigger) boat. Sailing is a sports that have a strong security and luxury factor in it, so customers like the availability and consistency that accompanies a known brand name product. In order to gain the advantages of branding, the boat companies may use their databases in three ways (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001, 626-627):

Deciding which customers should receive a particular offer: Companies identify the profile of an ideal customer for an offer. Then they search their databases for individuals most closely resembling the ideal type.

Deepening customer loyalty: Companies may build customers' interests and enthusiasm by remembering their preferences, special information like birthdays and action on it. Data base management is a great help doing this

Reactivating customer purchases: The database can help a boat / yachting company make attractive offers of product replacements, upgrades or complementary products just when customers might be ready to act. A rich customer database allows a company to build profitable new businesses by locating good prospects, anticipating customer needs, cross-selling products and services, and rewarding loyal customers.

Longer duration: Audiences in traditional media, like television and radio, encounter a brand's messages in 30-second increments. However, online audiences encounter the brand for a much longer duration—often 10 minutes or more. Therefore, the depth and appropriateness of a brand's messaging and content becomes more critical online (McCasland, 2003).

Targeted promotions (Barron's, 2008): As with any database used for marketing purposes, Web-based CRM systems can also be a tool for targeted promotions, allowing boat companies and marinas to cater to their customers' needs by reviewing their customer history.

The expectancies of Yacht users from Internet marketing

For this study qualitative research is used. Today, the researchers claim that qualitative research may be certainly used in every field as well as in social sciences (Burton, 2007; Vaivio, 2008; Northcott and Doolin, 2008). Stainback and Stainback (1988) identified the "qualitative paradigm" as one where "reality changes with changes in people's perceptions"; where "reality is what people perceive it to be" and where "values will impact on the understanding the phenomena" (Lawrence and Ul-Haq, 1988:15-24).

In this study, since social sciences are proved to be a confident field for qualitative research methods, interview technique is preferred. The interviews were asked semi-structured prepared

- ◆ internet marketing service in general,
- ◆ the reasons for the choice of this channel
- ◆ the benefits associated with internet marketing they receive,
- ◆ the problems occurring with this service,
- ◆ their expectancies and their suggestions on internet marketing in yacht tourism.

In addition, though the questions were structured and prepared beforehand, the respondents were asked to state in open question format their expectancies, satisfaction and dissatisfaction reasons and further suggestions.

Results

Answers are analyzed with the help of Excel program and results indicate that:

Internet marketing for yacht tourism is especially needed when there is a problem when sailing and urgent help is needed. Frequency = 43 indicated this as the most important aspect, meaning that % 95 of the respondents agree that this is the most important advantage of internet marketing service of yacht companies. Learning about marina services before or while arriving is also very important advantage for internet

marketing (Frequency= 41, % 91 of the respondents). The third expectancy from internet marketing is the availability of data with comparable yacht pictures and detailed information including prices. (Frequency =38, % 84). Table 4 summarized the expectancies of respondents from internet marketing in yacht tourism.

Problems associated with the internet marketing in yacht tourism are summarized in table 5.

Yachters' suggestions for more effective internet marketing may be summarized as:

- ◆ Weekly 7 monthly reports from marine management about the condition of the boats etc. by e-mail.
- ◆ For sales information the pictures of the boat that is advertised for sale should show the original on sale one, not a similar one or younger picture of the boat!
- ◆ Links should be made available to other marinas or boat services
- ◆ Links to other tourism services and characteristics of the related destinations should be added
- ◆ 24 hours on call center service at marinas for emergency situations
- ◆ Newsletters on the Net that group yachters and boat lovers together which gives the opportunity to share ideas, helpful hints etc.
- ◆ Consistency in Web page, offers and

Table 4 : The expectancies of respondents of the study on Internet marketing in Yacht Tourism

The important aspects of the internet marketing	Frequency	% of Total Sample (n = 45)
Problem solution or asking for urgent help (24 hours open service)	43	% 95
Learning about marina services	41	% 91
Information availability and comparability	38	% 84
Ease in following up the trends in yachting	38	% 84
Availability of exchanging yachting information with people in yachting world	37	% 82
Direct marketing opportunity, availability of asking the special questions to yachts marketers	34	% 75
On-line purchases are cheaper	23	% 51
Communication availability	21	% 46
Interesting pass time instrument	15	% 33

Table 5 : Problems of Internet marketing in Yacht Tourism

Problems of the internet marketing	Frequency	% of Total Sample (n = 45)
Technical problems associated with lines	45	% 100
Technical problems associated with computers	39	% 86
Information not updated	38	% 84
Not receiving prompt answers to inquires	34	% 75
Too complicated yachting Web sites	25	% 55
Reveling wrong information on the Web sites or e-mails	21	% 46
Badly designed Web pages (that do not show the	14	% 31

Conclusion

Marketing for yacht tourism is a complex matter. Selling, buying or renting a yacht is not an easy task even for the most talented salesmen. It requires knowledge, time, dedication and a personalized marketing effort. Personalized marketing strategy that is developed in accordance to customer's condition is one issue. Some investment in professional marketing and technical consultancy will result in a better sale. Also, the examination of clients' expectations and their cruising waters is another issue. It should provide clients with options and alternative ways to accomplish their goals of purchasing or their expectancies from yacht tourism service while they are sailing. In marine world, marketing effectively and efficiently is subject to the variables of the marine vehicle itself (location, age, condition, etc.) and internet can provide lots of data with the availability and comparability. Also, internet marketing is suitable for yacht users since they can get almost all services 24 hours. Due to all these reasons Internet marketing may be an excellent tool for yacht tourism.

This study shows that the internet marketing can provide opportunity for solving yachters' problems or asking help in emergencies; for obtaining information on the marina services; for easily obtaining, comparing and exchanging information on the yachts and following trends with comparison. The direct marketing option of the internet marketing is also another important aspect of internet marketing

in yacht management. The problem area in Turkey is related to technical problems of computer/lines, non-updated or wrong information on web sites, and non-prompt responses to questions asked online. We suggest that for success, Web site (e.g. email, customer information) should be updated regularly, questions should be answered promptly and Web site should cover the different points (e.g. newsletters, links to other marines or boat services, links to other tourism services) that can be locked into the minds of the prospective clients. Giving uninterrupted service to yacht users is convenient and encouraging factor for present and future customers, since yacht may need repair and service at any place on the sea or at any time. This opportunity gives yacht owners and users a clear comfort and feeling of security. Additional information and links on the legislative aspects of yachting can be provided to enhance internet usage in yacht tourism.

Internet marketing provides advantages, such as convenience for buying, interactivity, accountability, easiness in identifying prospects, direct and one-on-one communication, providing up-to-date information and promotions. Nevertheless, more efficient management of resource and account information, timely dissemination of corporate information, more efficient use of sales-people's time, decrease of cost, energy and time in database marketing are required. The marketers should be aware of the difficulty in design and expense. Researches support

reliable information on name, location and coordinates of marinas as well as services (e.g. laundry, rent a car, hotels) to yacht managers and yacht customers, in following years (Kalemdaroğlu, Şeker, and Kabdaslı, 2004).

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