

TRAVEL DESTINATIONS STRUGGLE TO HANDLE DIGITAL MARKETING DEVELOPMENT



According to a report from Sojern, destination marketing organizations (DMOs) face various challenges, including keeping up with technological changes and measuring the return on investment from their promotional initiatives. The study draws on data from 200 DMO participants worldwide, with contributions from Destination Canada, Brand USA, the European Travel Commission, and the Caribbean Tourism Organization.

Experts note that DMOs are under constant pressure to deliver meaningful results. Destination marketing through complex multichannel campaigns while addressing the needs of various stakeholders is challenging for destination marketing managers.

Today, the hurdles facing DMOs in digital marketing are particularly complex. With shrinking budgets, rising expectations, and rapid technological advancements, the stakes have never been higher. However, the comprehensive study also highlighted potential opportunities for DMOs, particularly in emerging technology.

The report found that 85% of Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) are either maintaining or increasing their digital advertising budgets year after year. Additionally, 83% of DMOs utilize programmatic advertising because it allows for better tracking. However, respondents indicated they encounter challenges navigating the constantly changing digital marketing landscape.

According to the report, ninety-one percent of those surveyed also engage in social media marketing, ranked among the top five channels for 99% of participants.

Despite the widespread use of these channels, destination marketers may not be effectively measuring their success through key performance indicators (KPIs). Experts emphasize a disconnect between the KPIs that organizations prioritize, such as content engagement and clicks, and the goals of DMOs, which often focus on specific outcomes like increasing bookings.

Clicks and impressions, while easy to measure, do not always reflect the success of an online marketing campaign in achieving tangible outcomes. This gap makes it more challenging for Destination Marketing Organizations to justify their efforts and demonstrate their value. A more precise alignment between digital key performance indicators and organizational priorities is necessary to bridge this gap.

However, **emerging technologies present opportunities to overcome the above challenges.** For instance, DMOs could utilize location data to enhance performance measurement and targeting. The text also notes the low usage of advanced personalization. Although many DMOs use artificial intelligence for content creation, there is significant room for improvement in data analysis.

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