

ПРИМЕНЕНИЕ ЦИФРОВЫХ ИНСТРУМЕНТОВ ПРИ ПРОДВИЖЕНИИ ТУРИСТИЧЕСКИХ БРЕНДОВ ТЕРРИТОРИЙ НА МИРОВОЙ РЫНОК

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Аннотация. Цель исследования заключается в анализе особенностей продвижения брендов территорий на мировом рынке и роли в этом процессе цифровых технологий. Для достижения этой цели авторы используют различные методы экономического исследования, включая системный подход, сравнительный анализ и синтез, графический метод и изучение статистических данных. Авторы подчеркивают необходимость информационной поддержки туризма в продвижении туристического продукта и анализируют основные функции туристического бренда, этапы его создания и развития, компоненты имиджа дестинации. Также в статье выделены факторы, которые могут повлиять на эффективность стратегии брендинга территории. Авторы подчеркивают, что присутствие в сети Интернет в современных условиях является основополагающей частью стратегий управления репутацией бренда, в том числе в туристической отрасли мировой экономики. Авторами были изучены данные по ключевым официальным порталам, предлагающим туристические услуги на территории Российской Федерации. Были также проанализированы цифровые инструменты (прежде всего, визуальный контент), которые направлены на эффективное привлечение туристов в ту или иную дестинацию, в том числе через социальные сети, поисковую оптимизацию, e-mail маркетинг и партнёрский маркетинг; определено, что генерируемые потребителями медиа оказывают значительное влияние на процесс принятия решений относительно покупки туристического продукта. Кроме того, авторами рассмотрен успешный опыт создания туристических брендов, используемых для продвижения тех или иных регионов и стран на мировом рынке в цифровую эпоху: городов Ченду, Лешань, Синьцзян, Харбин (и провинции Хэйлунцзян), округа Аньцзи и в целом Юго-Западного и Северо-Восточного регионов Китайской Народной Республики, а также Таиланда, Словении и Российской Федерации. Анализ применения цифровых инструментов позволил сделать вывод об их основополагающей роли при продвижении туристических брендов территорий на мировой рынок в современной среде.

Ключевые слова: Туристическая отрасль, туристический бренд, туристическая дестинация, туристический маркетинг, цифровизация, цифровые технологии.

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APPLICATION OF DIGITAL TOOLS IN PROMOTING TOURISM BRANDS OF TERRITORIES ON THE WORLD MARKET

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Abstract. The purpose of the article is to analyse the features of promoting territorial tourism brands on the world market and to determine the role of digital tools in this process. In order to achieve this goal, the authors employ various methods of economic research, including a systematic approach, comparative analysis and synthesis, a graphical method and a study of statistical data. The authors emphasize the need for tourism information support in promoting the tourist product and analyse the main functions of branding, steps in tourism brand creation and development, as well as components of a destination's image. The article also highlights factors that may affect the effectiveness of a territory's branding strategy. The authors emphasize that in modern conditions the presence on the Internet is a fundamental part of strategies for managing the brand reputation, including in the tourism industry of the world economy. The article assesses data of key official Internet resources offering tourism services within the Russian Federation. The authors analyse digital tools (primarily visual content) aimed at effectively attracting tourists to particular destinations, including through social media, search engine optimization, E-mail marketing and affiliate marketing; they determine that consumer-generated media have a significant impact on the decision-making process regarding purchasing tourism products. Additionally, the authors examine the best practices for creating tourism brands used to promote certain regions and countries in the world market in the digital era: cities such as Chengdu, Leshan, Xinjiang, Harbin (and Heilongjiang province), Anji county, as well as Southwestern and Northeast regions of the People's Republic of China, along with Thailand, Slovenia and the Russian Federation. An analysis of the digital tools' application led to the conclusion about their fundamental role in the promotion of tourism brands of the territories on the world market in the modern environment.

Keywords: Tourism industry, tourism brand, tourist destination, tourism marketing, digitalization, digital technologies.

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Introduction

Currently, the development of the tourism industry faces significant challenges related to the reorientation of tourist flows due to geopolitical instability, and it is still being negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under such circumstances, competition among tourist destinations and travel and tourism companies increases, stimulating the implementation of innovations in the industry for effective promotion of tourism brands.

The rapid evolution of digital technologies has transformed traditional marketing strategies and made both companies and countries to explore how to use these new tools more effectively to enhance the visibility of territorial tourism brands. Modern travellers increasingly rely on information from digital platforms in their decision-making process. Therefore, tourism industry actors must ensure that their digital presence resonates with the expectations and preferences of consumers.

The need for effective round-the-clock online communication increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, as potential tourists sought reliable sources of information and reassurance regarding travel safety. Moreover, in the post-pandemic period, it is important to continue maintaining a high level of content on social media and official portals. Otherwise, the tourist brand of a territory will be forgotten and people will be less likely to make another purchase.

In fact, as the world tourism market is highly competitive, it is almost imperative for regions to differentiate themselves through using digital tools in their branding strategies. Social platforms and data-driven marketing approach enable tourism companies to effectively promote their unique natural and cultural heritage.

Many authors have addressed the issue of applying modern technologies in tourism, such as Shostak, M.A., and Yakovleva, M.A. [1], Bogolyubov, V.S. and Bogolyubova, S.A. [2], Tufft, C., Constantin, M., Pacca, M. et al. [3], Znaidyuk, A.N., Emel'yanov, A.V., Lysanova, S.K., and Kirilova, T.K. [4], and Pan, Sh. [5]. Some researchers have explored the opportunities of travel-related consumer generated media: Li, J., Zhu, K., and Jang, J. [6], Li, W., Kim, Y.R., Scarles, C. [7].

Sholukh, N.V. and Borodina, A.V. [8] in their research described the theoretical base for creating tourist products, Voronina, E.E. and Monakhova, D.O. [9] studied territorial branding as a tool for developing the tourist attractiveness of the city, and Shtrik, P. V. and Har'kova, D. V. [10] identified the main functions of branding in general and analysed the use of visual and textual materials as tools for brand development. The issue of the structure of a destination's image was elaborated by Ukpabi, D., Quarshie, B., and Karjaluoto, H. (as well as the post-COVID-19 branding strategies of African destinations) [11]. Krasnozhenova, G.F., Lyakhova, N.B., and Lebedev, K.A. [12] noted that the creation of a brand has become a prerequisite for

survival in the highly competitive international market of travel services.

In fact, many authors in their research focus on certain tourist resources (Kuzhel, Yu.L. [13], Yezhel, A. and Liashkova, A. [14]) or analyse tourist branding in certain regions (Putrik, Iu. S. and Solovyov, A. P. [15]). For instance, some researchers have explored best practices of China's cities, provinces and regions, such as Chelnokova-Siejka, A.V. [16], Zhang Hengjie, Zh.H. [17], Guangmin, G. and Nechaev, M. [18], Chen, Y. [19], Miroshnichenko, T.A. [20], Safina, S.S. and Bychkova, A.A [21] and many others.

At the same time, few authors conduct a comprehensive analysis of the interconnection among official web-portals of destinations, consumer generated media and other tools of modern digital marketing. This is the scientific gap that the article proposes to close. Additionally, the authors tend not to focus on a specific tourism resource and destination, and instead they explore several cases of tourism branding across various regions of the world.

The purpose of the article

The purpose of the article is to analyse the features of promoting territorial tourism brands on the world market and to determine the role of digital tools in this process. In order to achieve this goal, the authors posed several objectives of the study. First of all, to examine tourism web-resources in Russia and determine the role of official web portals in a territory' promotion. Secondly, to explore the main digital tools (primarily visual content) which are aimed at the effective attraction of tourists to particular destination. Thirdly, analyse the best practice of creating tourism brands which is used to promote certain regions and countries in the world market in a digital era.

Scientific novelty of this article consists of the authors introducing an innovative framework for understanding how various digital strategies (primarily visual content and consumer-generated media) influence tourist decision-making processes. Furthermore, by analysing case studies

from diverse regions, including China's several cities and regions, Thailand, Slovenia, and the Russian Federation, this study explores best practices in digital promotion of tourism branding. The article emphasizes it is crucial to adapt branding strategies to leverage digital advancements to enhance the effectiveness of tourism brand promotion in a highly competitive global market.

Methodology

In order to achieve this goal, the authors use various methods of economic research, including a systematic approach, comparative analysis and synthesis, a graphical method and a study of statistical data.

Results and discussion

The marketing system is responsible for promoting a particular company or brand. In addition to analysing the external environment (including competitors and potential partners), it also focuses on the resources that this entity has and approaches to turn those specific features into a competitive advantage. Tourist resources [8, p. 146] are understood as phenomena and objects attractive to tourists, both in nature (natural resources, such as mountain areas used by recreational tourists) and society (anthropogenic resources, such as pools, concert venues within the hotel complex), including cultural resources and goods. Historical monuments, including religious ones, have significant potential for attracting tourists. Thus, many regions of Russia attract religious tourists who practice Orthodoxy, such as Trinity Lavra of St. Sergius in Moscow Oblast, Valaam monastery, Kizhi Pogost in Karelia, Solovetsky Monastery in Arkhangelsk Oblast, etc. [15, p. 57-58].

Tourist resources include, for example, a traditional Japanese drink – sake, as well as wine, beer, whiskey produced in the country. The Japanese tourism industry utilizes this resource to organize alcohol tours for both domestic tourists and foreigners in regions historically associated with the production of these beverages (Yamanashi, Niigata, Kyoto, Hokkaido,

etc.) [13, p. 25]. Intangible cultural heritage also serves as a resource for the development of a tourist offer; event tourism and areas of cultural leisure (such as amusement parks, theme, ethnographic parks) can be organized and based on local folklore and folk arts.

These days, the territory's tourist resources are also promoted through cinematography (In 2018, there were over 4,500 tours for "Game of Thrones" fans in Croatia as the demand increased significantly. Before the

COVID-19 pandemic, Dubrovnik experienced overtourism, and the number of tourists visiting the city's Old Town was limited to 4,000 at a time as per the local authorities' plan "Respect the City" [22]) and even video games (Gdansk and Wroclaw, Poland, which served as inspiration for Novigrad and Oxenfurt from "The Witcher 3" respectively, Zhangjiajie National Forest Park and many other attractions of China, reflected in "Genshin Impact").

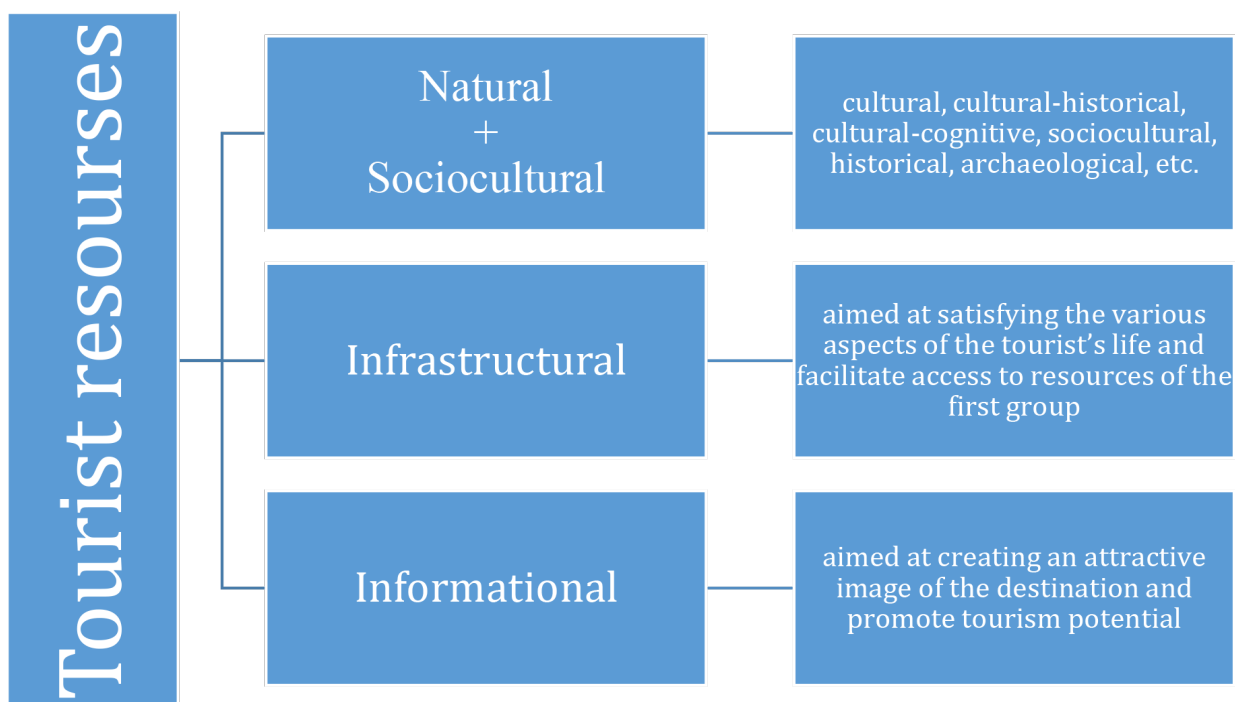


Рисунок 1. Классификация туристических ресурсов [14, с. 106, 109, 112]
Figure 1. Classification of tourist resources [14, p. 106, 109, 112]

Yezhel A. and Liashkova A. provide a comprehensive classification of tourist resources (Fig. 1). From their research, it can be concluded that informational tourist resources are equally important in ensuring the tourist flow as other types of resources. Providing informational support enables tourism companies to adjust the content of the tourist products according to consumer needs and even to create personalized products. Additionally, it establishes a foundation for transforming the nature of the tourist flow from sporadic to permanent, considering the seasonality of some destinations and activities.

However, when conducting a marketing campaign, it is very important to determine which exact features of the territory should draw attention of the audience. This is what tourism branding is responsible for, it is a set of marketing activities aimed at creating and promoting the image of a destination. It is extremely important for enterprises whose services have many analogues, such as international tourist enterprises, that mostly offer the same facilities and a similar range of services. In the highly competitive international tourism market, the creation of a brand is an important part of the marketing system [12, p. 772].

The image of the destination itself consists of three components: cognitive, affective and conative, which reflect the tourist's perception of the destination, the feelings associated with the destination, and the behaviour of tourists in relation to the destination respectively. Based on that, it is obvious that any tourism brand, in addition to helping to emphasize the distinctive features of tourist destinations, is also aimed at strengthening emotional attachment to the territory [11, p. 218].

Shtrik P. V., Har'kova D. V. [10, p. 684] highlight the following functions of branding: regulation of brand recognition, enhancement of consumer loyalty, increase in sales and profitability (due to the inclusion of marketing and advertising costs in the price), and differentiation among competitors to strengthen market positions. The general stages of creation and development of a brand, as shown in Figure 2, apply not only to tourism branding, but also to other forms of branding.

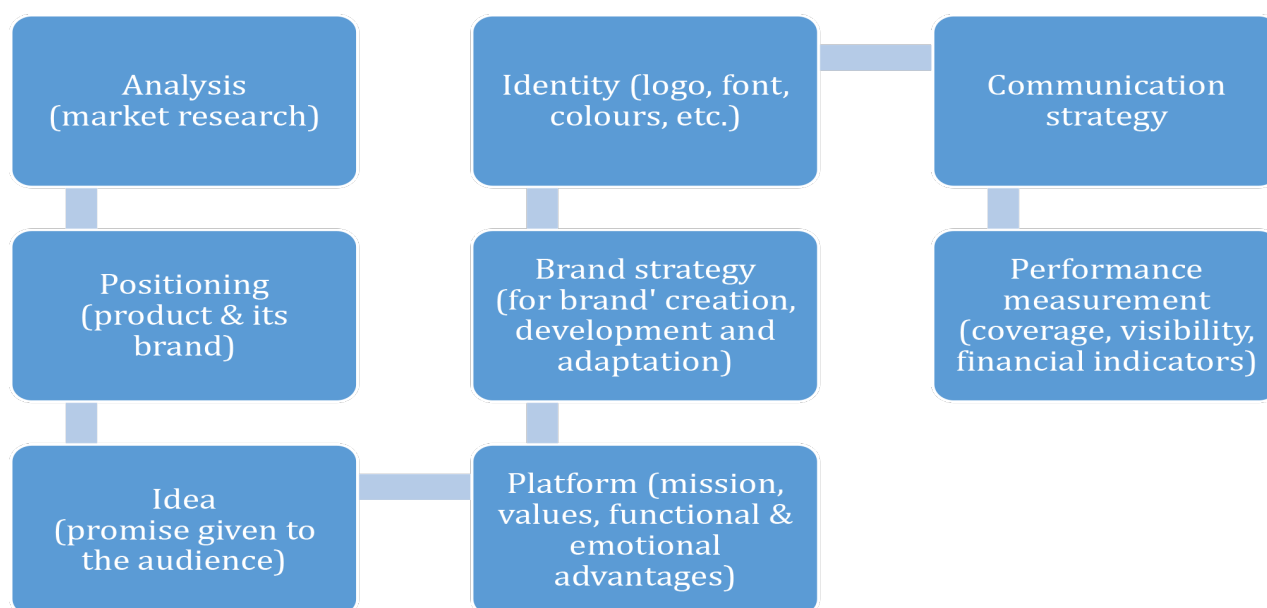


Рисунок 2. Этапы создания и развития бренда [9, с. 105-106]

Figure 2. Steps of brand creation and development [9, p. 105-106]

There are several key factors that may affect the effectiveness of branding strategy in this context:

- clear understanding of the target audience and its needs;
- taking into account the historical and cultural features of the region when compiling a unique selling proposition;
- continuous monitoring and analysis of the effectiveness of the branding strategy implementation for immediate adjustments if necessary;
- involving all interested parties: local authorities, businesses, the public and tourists;
- creating a content marketing strategy for promotion in social networks: information and inspiration

for the audience, advice from insiders, etc.;

- search engine optimization of a travel company or tourist destination website.

In the modern era, presence in the digital space is becoming an essential part of the brand reputation management strategy. The availability of widespread access to the Internet for consumers creates a twofold situation. On the one hand, the large amount of information offered in social networks, forums and online marketplaces allows for gaining insights into consumers and segment them in order to identify the target audience, and on the other hand,

it forms a reviews-based profile of the territory. The use of official web portals of destinations becomes the key aspect of territory promotion.

Speaking about tourism branding practice in Russia, it should be mentioned that in December 2021, HSE University [23] ranked tourist websites of all Russian regions using three blocks of criteria: functionality, availability and quality of mobile applications, attendance. The leaders were the tourist portals of Saint Petersburg (56.6%), Moscow Oblast (49.2%), two federal ones – Russia.Travel (47.5%) and RussPass (47.1%), as well as the website of Novosibirsk Oblast (43.1%). Omsk Oblast website gained only 0.8% and was the last in the ranking.

By analysing more current attendance data (Table 1), it can be noted that there was a significant interest among the audience in the RusPass portal from May to June 2024. It offers information on places and events in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and the Oblasts of Nizhny Novgorod, Kaliningrad and Murmansk. The

number of visitors to this website during this period is much higher than that of the federal portal “Russia.Travel”, which was developed within the framework of the national project “Tourism and hospitality industry” (Table 1). As an example of a website that covers news about the travel and tourism industry and provides expert assessments, the portal of the Association of Tour Operators (ATO, “Ассоциация туроператоров”) mentioned. The number of visits to this website is significantly higher than that of the above-listed portals. The Big country (BC, “Большая страна”) portal is close to ATO. BC includes 347 local tour operators with the same booking service. This large variability in the rates may be due to the “youth” of the Russia.Travel website in its current form: only in December 2023 [24] it collected the entire database of proposals of regions, presented official registers of tour operators, travel agents, classified hotels and national tourist routes, and gained the ability to integrate with RusPass to link to specific places and products.

Таблица 1. Доля трафика веб-ресурсов в категории «Путешествия и туризм» в России, март-май 2024 г., % [составлено по данным [25]]

Table 1. Web-resources traffic share in “Travel and tourism” category in Russia, March-May 2024, % [compiled according to [25]]

Web-resource	Monthly visits, thousands	Unique visitors monthly, thousands	Duration of stay on the site, min.	Page views	Launch year
RussPass	985,049	604,981	02:57	2544	July 2020
Russia.Travel	89,605	63,489	01:22	138,777	2013; substantially updated in December 2023
Association of Tour Operators (“Ассоциация туроператоров”)	1035	609,343	00:47	1509	2007
Big country (“Большая страна”)	1006	605,214	03:29	3342	2015

At the same time, according to SimilarWeb data [25], websites responsible for ticket purchases have the highest rates in the category “Travel and tourism” by total share of traffic in Russia (Fig. 3).

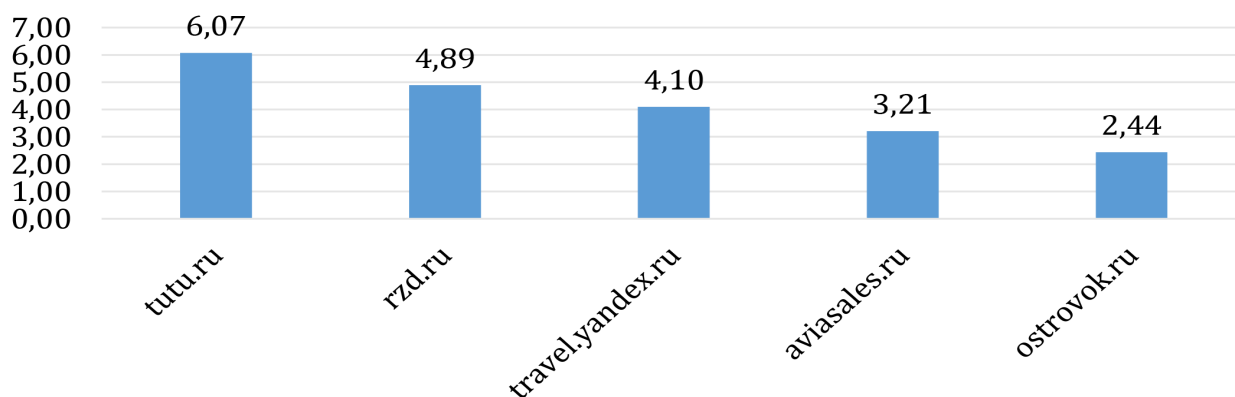


Рисунок 3. Доля траффика веб-ресурсов в России в категории «Travel and tourism» за март-май 2024 г., % [составлено по данным [25]]

Figure 3. Websites traffic share in “Travel and tourism” category in Russia, March-May 2024, % [compiled according to [25]]

In general, several features of modern tourist Internet services can be identified [1, p. 1466]: the predominance of mixed types of services over highly specialized ones (which involves a combination of various functions), the predominance of marketplaces, and the operation of these services in both online and offline modes. Additionally, these services target different audiences, including tourists, tourism companies, and government agencies, with the main function being the provision of information.

The model of mutual dialogue between territory and consumers becomes an important aspect of using digital tools in promoting tourism brands. It involves compiling reviews, discussions on the Internet, and, in general, – creating content by users themselves, even their participation in the formation of tourism products. Users become subjects of the tourism branding strategy, thereby enhancing the brand’s value.

In their study of the travel behaviour of users of travel-related consumer-generated media (CGM), researchers from China Li, J., Zhu, K., Jang, J. [6, pp. 122-123] conclude that these CGM have played a major role in decision-making in recent years. Their

findings indicate four main points:

- users can gain pleasure from content sharing;
- they are willing to express themselves by sharing content and obtaining useful information from others’ feedback;
- they want to receive some financial benefits from sharing content;
- gaining reputation and visibility, acquiring social satisfaction, and alleviating boredom are not significant influencing factors for users’ attitudes.

Two possible reasons for these results: the low frequency of content posting, which makes it difficult to obtain all social benefits, and differences in cultural backgrounds.

The promotion of tourist destinations in the global market primarily involves the distribution of visual content: photos and videos on X, Pinterest, Snapchat, VK and other platforms. In order to attract the audience, this type of content should have high quality and clarity (although this is not always the case, as “aesthetic” blurred photos done by using filters are also in fashion), unusual angles (for example, shots taken using a drone; one such location is Pedra do Telégrafo in Rio

de Janeiro, Brazil, where visitors can capture a unique perspective of being at the edge of the cliff), highlighting the features of the region (focus on local food; this approach has gained popularity in Asian countries, especially China and Japan (street food) and South Korea (street food, convenience stores). In recent years, gastronomy advertising and travel vlogs (video

blogs) have become some of the trends in destination marketing.

Li, W., Kim, Y.R., Scarles, C. highlight that food travel blogs have several competitive advantages over short videos (despite the short attention spans of modern people), videos produced by destination management organizations (DMO), and live videos (Table 2).

Таблица 2. Конкурентные преимущества туристических гастрономических влогов [7, с. 156-157]

Table 2. Competitive advantages of food travel vlogs [7, pp. 156-157]

	Shorts	Destination Management Organization promotion videos	Live videos	Vlogs
Storytelling	They showcase life experiences but lack details	They resemble advertisements and collages of beautiful visuals, essentially functioning as commercials	They have a longer duration (up to several hours) compared to vlogs, making them less competitive due to viewers' short attention spans	They last approximately 10 minutes. They generally include a storyline, enabling the audience to gain a more in-depth understanding of the destination's food experience
Authenticity	They primarily showcase the positive or aesthetic aspects of attractions to drive traffic; due to their short duration, they tend to focus on food while neglecting the dining environment and overall experience		Live videos are unpolished formats that allow broadcasters to engage with the audience in real time	Vlogs shot with smartphones capture raw and original scenery and experiences, showcasing the perspective of travellers rather than marketers while providing sufficient length to depict the complete food travel experience as it occurs in reality
Intimacy	Videos tend to be created by professionals		Video creators are generally more involved. A strong connection exists between streamers and viewers because of instant interactions	The similarity between a vlogger's personality and opinions (and their resemblance to those of the audience) fosters a sense of closeness, thereby influencing viewers' behavioural intentions towards travel
Presence	They effectively provide sensory stimulation, but achieving full immersion can be challenging	There is a low level of presence	A poor internet connection constrains live videos	Vlogs may be the most effective way to immerse the audience and create a sense of presence compared to other formats

In order to attract tourists to the destination more effectively, it is necessary to carefully choose both the content platform and the content itself. Thus, Bogolyubov and Bogolyubova [2, p. 160] highlight the following key aspects of the travel planning process that a travel company needs to take into account: dreaming (formation of preferences and the search for “inspiration” through the learning about culture, local cuisine, sights etc.), planning (choosing a tour based on individual preferences and creating a personalized tour), booking (the transparency of pricing on the platform plays an important role), visiting (information on the accessibility of tourist facilities, visiting rules, schedules, and contact details for tourist attractions enable tourists

to create more saturated routes and stimulate higher spending), sharing impressions (the benefits of receiving feedback both on social networks and the platform are undeniable).

To a large extent, the target audience of tourism companies is determined by the preferences and behaviour of different generations. Millennials and Generation Z are becoming a driving force behind the changes. Research by McKinsey & Company [3, pp. 21-22] confirms that younger generations are more likely to pay for travel experiences (Fig. 4). For 92% of young travellers, their last trip was motivated in some way by social media, with friends and family as the major sources of social inspiration (42%), followed by influencers or celebrities (30%).

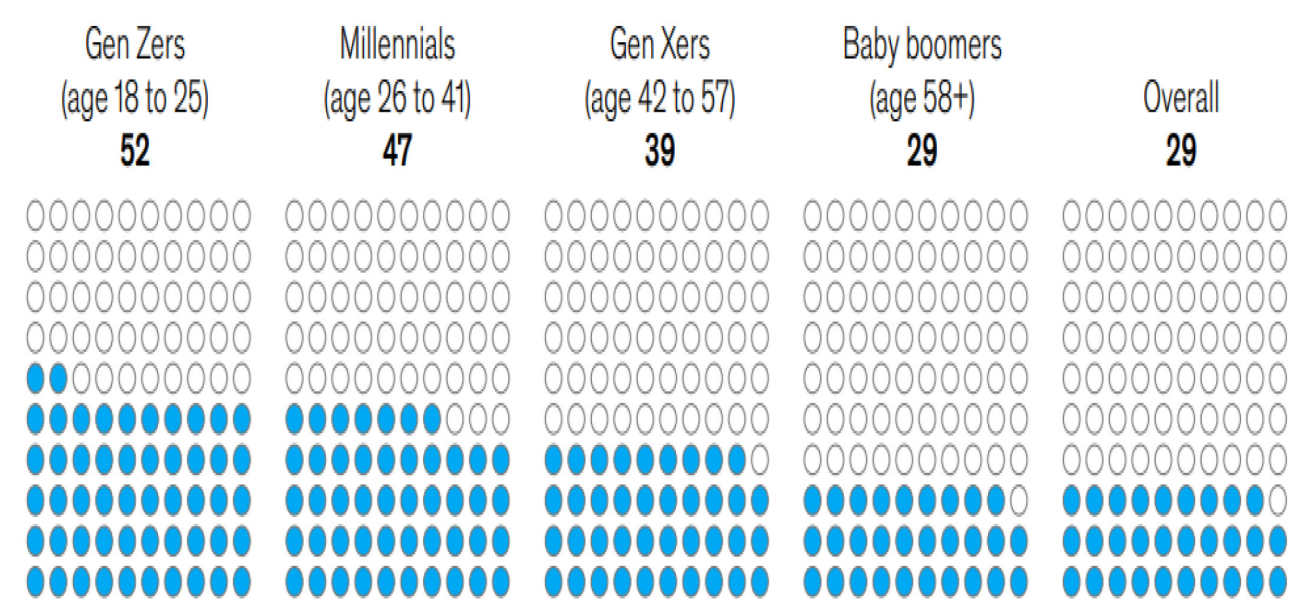


Рисунок 4. Доля респондентов, сообщивших о трате средств на впечатления во время поездок, % [3, с. 21-22]
Figure 4. Share of respondents reporting splurging on experience while travelling, % [3, pp. 21-22]

It can be confidently stated that one of the primary tasks in implementing a territory marketing strategy in digital space should be search engine optimization, as this significantly increases brand visibility. Search engine marketing, as a distinct form of marketing, is responsible for redistributing audiences in favour of the tourist destination's website.

Social media marketing is equally important. According to GWI research presented in the Digital 2024 report [26], a typical social media user spends an average of 2 hours and 23 minutes per day using social media. Instagram is the most widely used platform, with 16.5% of internet users aged between 16 and 64 preferring it to others. Instagram is followed by WhatsApp (16.1%), Facebook (12.8%), and WeChat (12.8%; this platform primarily targets a Chinese audience), TikTok (7.4%), and Douyin (6.6%; the version of TikTok for the Chinese market). It is noteworthy that platforms may sometimes be banned in certain countries. For example, Meta has been added to Russia's list of "extremist and terrorist" organizations, and its products Facebook and Instagram are officially banned in Russia and inaccessible.

The rest of social media platforms, including Telegram (2.4%; it is extremely popular in Russia), have a much smaller percentage of the global audience. However, it should be noted that Telegram is widely used in the CIS region, making it both possible and necessary to utilize this platform to attract the relevant audience. Furthermore, as it is common for social media users to have accounts on multiple platforms, it is highly recommended to adopt a different approach for maintaining profiles across various social networks to avoid repetition and maximize the effectiveness of using each platform's tools.

It also worth noting that providing easy access to the Internet resources of the travel company through mobile devices is necessary; this includes a mobile version of the website, automatic translation into various languages, intuitive navigation, and links to social networks.

Speaking about mobile devices, Znaidyuk A.N., Emelyanov A.V., Lysanova S.K. and Kirilova T.K. [4, p. 14] present their own model of a multifunctional application within the "Tourist

digitization" ecosystem. This application provides users with tools for creating routes based on feedback from other tourists, includes a hazard warning function, an affiliate programme with small business representatives (such as rental houses, guides, transport services, etc.), a voice assistant to share information about interesting tourist spots and facts about locations, a bonus system, and a tourist forum. Such an application utilizes digital tools to ensure tourists' safety and simultaneously creates synergy among tourism companies.

In general, it can be confidently noted that active interaction with the audience through social networks increases audience loyalty and improves the quality of services provided by receiving feedback. Introducing interactive elements to increase engagement is important; this can be done, for example, via conducting surveys, providing mini-games, etc. A travel company may also motivate its audience by providing information about discounts and special offers (for example, when visiting a tourist object in a group of N people). The introduction of E-mail marketing allows to maintain communication with customers and creates an incentive for repeat purchases.

For Russian travel companies targeting Chinese tourists (such as those operating in the Far East), having an account in WeChat would be beneficial. Chinese users experience higher load speed on this app compared to any foreign website; WeChat offers automatic content translation and convenient tools for corporate account analysis.

When analysing a project, emphasis should be placed on the necessity of monitoring the parameters of project implementation and assessing the progress of territory brand development. It is important to promptly identify which approaches increase brand recognition and which are ineffective or even detrimental to the brand's reputation. This helps to reduce marketing costs and increase conversion.

Additionally, it is important to consider affiliate marketing, which provides rewards for specific actions taken by subscribers or buyers (such as visits, registrations, reposts, etc.). This can be implemented through ongoing

collaborations with bloggers or online magazines. Bloggers are often considered opinion leaders by their audiences, which is a significant advantage of this promotion channel. Pan Sh. [5, p. 70] points out that, despite the fact that every individual collects photos, videos, and other materials about the places visited during their trip, not everyone is capable of processing the obtained data. Additionally, not all individuals can create detailed new routes or familiarize their subscribers with the culture of a country. Thus, a blogger is an individual who knows how to utilize digital tools effectively and create engaging content.

Thanks to the Internet, many travel and tourism destinations have already developed strong associations. For instance, Kevin Tjoe highlights the characteristics of several territories based on the four main segments of travellers in 2024 [27]:

- “nature enthusiasts”. They may be interested in visiting Halong Bay (Vietnam; nature and wildlife tours, paddleboarding, spas, kayaking tours), Jeju Island (South Korea; nature and wildlife tours, resorts, climbing, bars) и т.д.;

- “foodies”. They are interested in the local food culture and would like to visit Tokyo (Japan; Sushi, udon noodles, and wagashi (Japanese sweets), karaoke bars, Toyosu Market fish auction, cherry blossom tree-lined Sumida River) and other such places;

- “adventure seekers”. Pattaya (Thailand; watersports at Jomtien Beach, Giant Buddha of Wat Khao Phra Bat, Wang Boran Sanctuary of Truth, bars and strip clubs for nightlife), Huaraz (Peru; nature and wildlife tours, hiking tours, archaeology tours, winter sports);

- “cultural explorers”. Brasov (Romania; traditional charm and modern city life, Strada Sforii – narrowest street in Europe, fortified church of Prejmer, Dracula’s Castle (Bran Castle)), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia; Petronas Twin Towers, Sri Mahamariamman Hindu temple, central market for handicrafts, cultural hub with diverse experiences) etc.

It is also beneficial to examine tourist geo-brands of China’s regions and cities. Chengdu was one of the first regional governments in China to introduce its official social media

profiles; this city is famous for giant pandas. In China, it is even informally referred to as the “city of pandas”. The geo-brand was named “微成都” (WeChengdu), and it features a panda in its logo. [16, p. 167]

The city of Leshan is famous in China and worldwide for three main reasons: first, due to the delicious food (the city is located in Sichuan province, which is renowned for its rich and spicy local cuisine); second, the Leshan Giant Buddha; and third, due to influencer marketing by the young Chinese actor and singer Dylan Wang (Wang He Di). In his interviews, he often points out his hometown, Leshan in Sichuan province, leading many of his fans to visit this city in the hope of meeting him in his father’s restaurant.

In his research, Zhang Hengjie Zh.H. [17, pp. 5, 9-11] explores the features of the Southwestern China region, which includes the provinces of Sichuan, Chongqing, Guizhou, Yunnan, and Xizang, as an object of cultural tourism. He emphasizes that favourable conditions have been created for regional cultural tourism due to the combination of ethnocultural patterns and values with the unique terrain. This region utilizes the advantages of its rich historical and cultural heritage, including the preservation the cultures and traditional lifestyles of small ethnic groups, as well as the development of its flower festivals and unique reserves.

A successful example of the brand image of the territory is the practice of Anji County, Zhejiang Province. This county is recognized as the first national ecological county, “Bamboo Township”. The essence of the county’s brand is summarized in the saying: “To understand the world’s bamboo, look to China; to understand China’s bamboo, look to Anji”. According to Guangmin G. and Nechaev M. [18, pp. 85-89], Anji County fully leverages the unique advantages of its local ecological environment and aims to establish a tourist resort within the framework of ecotourism. Furthermore, the researchers highlight that when constructing the region’s brand, including for the development of both rural and urban areas, it is necessary to base it on the regional culture.

In June 2022, the slogan of Xinjiang’s WeChat account, a phrase from the

popular song “新疆是一个好地方” (“Xinjiang is a good place”), was ranked first among the most influential accounts in China related to promoting culture and tourism. [16, p. 169]

As for Northern China, it is important to consider the example of Harbin, the city in Heilongjiang province, which is renowned for winter sports, Russian architecture (Saint Sophia Cathedral), and the theme park “Big world of ice and snow”. This city has become an Internet sensation. In the Chinese social network Douyin, a video with the hashtag “来哈尔滨当一回俄罗斯公主” (“Visit Harbin to become a Russian princess”) went viral. Chen Y. [19, pp. 121-122] notes that mass media play an important role in forming this city's image in three main areas: content distribution, interaction with users (feedback), and participation of official organizations (answers to user questions and publications by authorities).

The last point may be illustrated by the fact that video footage of tourists in winter clothes dancing to music in Harbin, posted by China Media Group, has attracted more than 13.18 million views on Sina Weibo as of January 5, 2024 [28]. Therefore, during the three-day New Year period from December 30 to January 1, Harbin received about 3.05 million tourist trips and a total tourism revenue of about 5.91 billion yuan (\$832 million) – both of which historical highs, according to local official data. Later, the municipal bureau of culture, radio, television and tourism [29] reported that from February 10 to 17, 2024, Harbin was visited by more than 10 million tourists – an increase of nearly 82% compared to the same period last year. The city earned a record 16.42

billion yuan, representing an increase of more than three times. In June 2024, China Media Group signed a cooperation agreement with Harbin city authorities “国潮城市” (“China-Chic City”) [30] to promote the urban brand of Harbin and ensure its economic and social development.

Speaking about Heilongjiang province in general, Miroshnichenko T.A. notes [20, pp. 315-316] that Chinese mass media should pay more attention to the promotion of regional cuisine due to the lack of the province's gastronomic tourism brand. At the same time, this province has unique advantages in this direction due to its border position and the combination of Chinese and Western Russian cuisine. Safina S.S. and Bychkova A.A. [21, pp. 127-128] in their research on the economic development of Heilongjiang province, emphasize that the idea of reviving the entire North-Eastern region of China is based on the harmonious and integrated development of industry, creative design, and tourism. The “Ice and Snow” industry (ski resorts, the aforementioned festival) is one of the key areas that should be elaborated upon in the upcoming decades in this region.

The Tourism Authority of Thailand uses the brand “Amazing Thailand”, which has a bright logo (Fig. 5). The YouTube channel of the brand is regularly updated; it focuses on short videos (ranging from 1 to 3 minutes). Across all its social media profiles, “Amazing Thailand” showcases beautiful natural and cultural attractions, introduces various types of tourism and shares news about interesting tourist activities, including live broadcasts.



Рисунок 5. Логотип туристического бренда Таиланда
Figure 5. Thailand tourism brand logo

The Slovenian Tourist Board has created a brand “I feel Slovenia” that contains a word game (Fig. 6). Thanks to this

brand, Slovenia is associated with eco-friendly, active, and healthy vacations. Furthermore, the brand logo is designed in green.



Рисунок 6. Логотип туристического бренда Словении
Figure 6. Slovenia tourism brand logo

In November 2017, Russia launched a tourism brand too: “The Whole World Within Russia” (Fig. 7). It is based on the idea of the diversity of the Russian Federation, its natural wealth, numerous climatic

zones, and the union of cultures and traditions among diverse nationalities living together across a vast territory. The brand is also used to tell about Russia’s contribution to global culture.

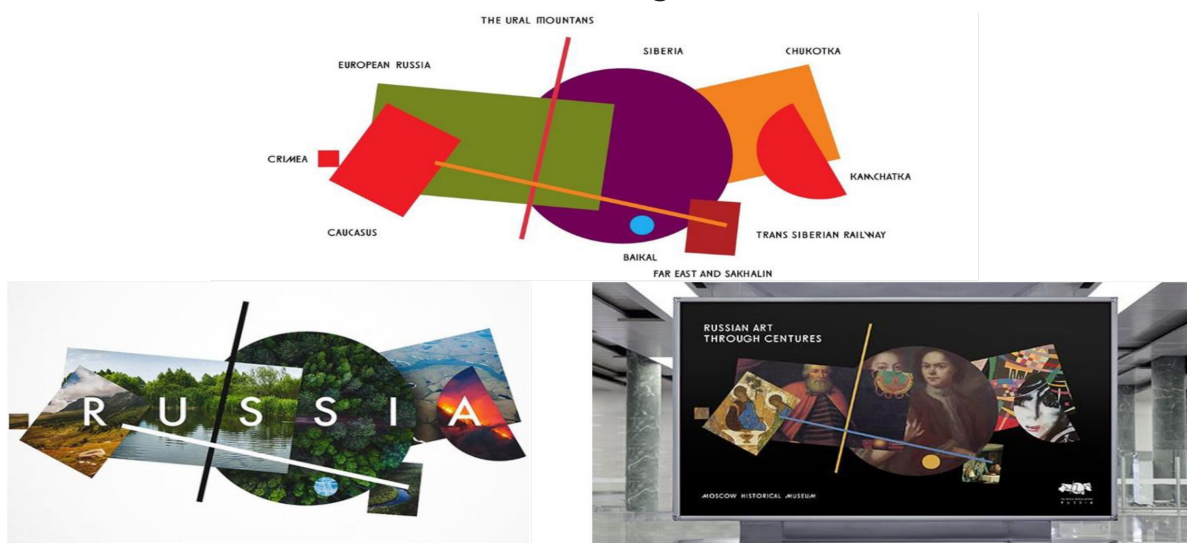


Рисунок 7. Логотип туристического бренда России
Figure 7. Russia tourism brand logo

Conclusions

In summary, it can be concluded that successful management of tourist resources at destinations requires identifying key features of a territorial brand in order to understand how to make a tourist destination stand out in a highly competitive environment. In the light of the digitalization trend, it is crucial to apply comprehensive approaches to promoting tourism products, actively maintain social networks, and attract opinion leaders.

Creating a vibrant image and offering personalized, unique experiences are essential for achieving success with the millennials and generation Z, who are expected to constitute the majority of wealthy tourists in the near future. In general, it can be noted that the development of tourism brands is fundamental to the existence of tourist destinations, and digital tools play a key role in promoting tourism brands of territories in the global market.

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