

TRADITIONAL VS. DIGITAL PR IN ROMANIAN AGRITOURISM: THE CASE OF MANSIONS

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Abstract: *A lot of things have changed in the Public Relations (PR) field in recent years. Thus, bloggers, customer relationship management, customized e-mail management tools, Excel sheets, influencers, journalists, mass press releases, etc. – all are rooted in the evolution of an industry where information is available to anyone, anywhere, at any time. Traditional PR and digital PR are compared in this study. The comparative method has been used in this study with focus on the way each mansion operator has emphasised the best assets of his/her mansion in online PR. Though Romanian practitioners understand the rules and ideas around social media, they have not necessarily adopted them in their practice; in addition, they lack a strategic approach to the use of social media to achieve PR objectives. The limitations of the research concern the sample choice. This study suggests strategies about how to use digital PR in Romanian agritourism (with focus on mansions) to make it more attractive.*

• Introduction

Traditional PR managers ignore the importance of involving a blogger / influencer in their communication campaign because they do not understand the importance of the digerati / digirati (“people with expertise or professional involvement in information technology”) to expand a campaign’s digital footprint. However, research shows that communicators of corporate online communication are responsible, trustworthy, and efficient informants, while receivers of corporate online communication are confident and perceptive.

• Material and method

The material of this study consisted in the presentation of Romanian mansions on the site “Ghid turistic România”, more precisely, the section “De vizitat” (Conace renumite din România care merită vizitate). The eight mansions presented are SWOT-analysed and compared to see what is right and what is wrong from a PR perspective in an attempt to show how they could become more attracting agritourist destinations.

• Results and discussions

Unfortunately, as far as Romanian agritourism is concerned, digital PR is not yet the norm across the industry. Robson & James (2013) conducted a qualitative study on the use of digital PR by American practitioners over a decade ago and found that “All participants understood the rules and ideas around social media (authenticity, interactivity, two-way communication, etc.) but they are not necessarily adopting them in their practice: they primarily used social media platforms, or believed they are best for, one-way communication and message dissemination; All practitioners lacked a strategic approach to the use of social media to achieve public relations objectives; The majority of interviewees suggested that passion for and interest in social media plays an important role in overcoming barriers to use; The majority of interviewees used social media to achieve public relations objectives on an ad hoc basis [...]”

Unfortunately, this seems to be the case of Romanian practitioners as well. The investigation of an online Romanian tourist guide shows that Romanian practitioners understood the rules and ideas around social media but did not necessarily adopt them in their practice, and that “they lacked a strategic approach to the use of social media to achieve public relations objectives” Robson & James (2013). the button “To Visit” invites tourists to visit caves, cities & towns, mansions, monasteries, and tourist destinations, places, and sites.

• Conclusions

The following general conclusion can be drawn: the presentation of the eight Romanian old and new mansions lacks a common vision – the “black holes” could have been completed with details supplied by the mansions’ websites.

