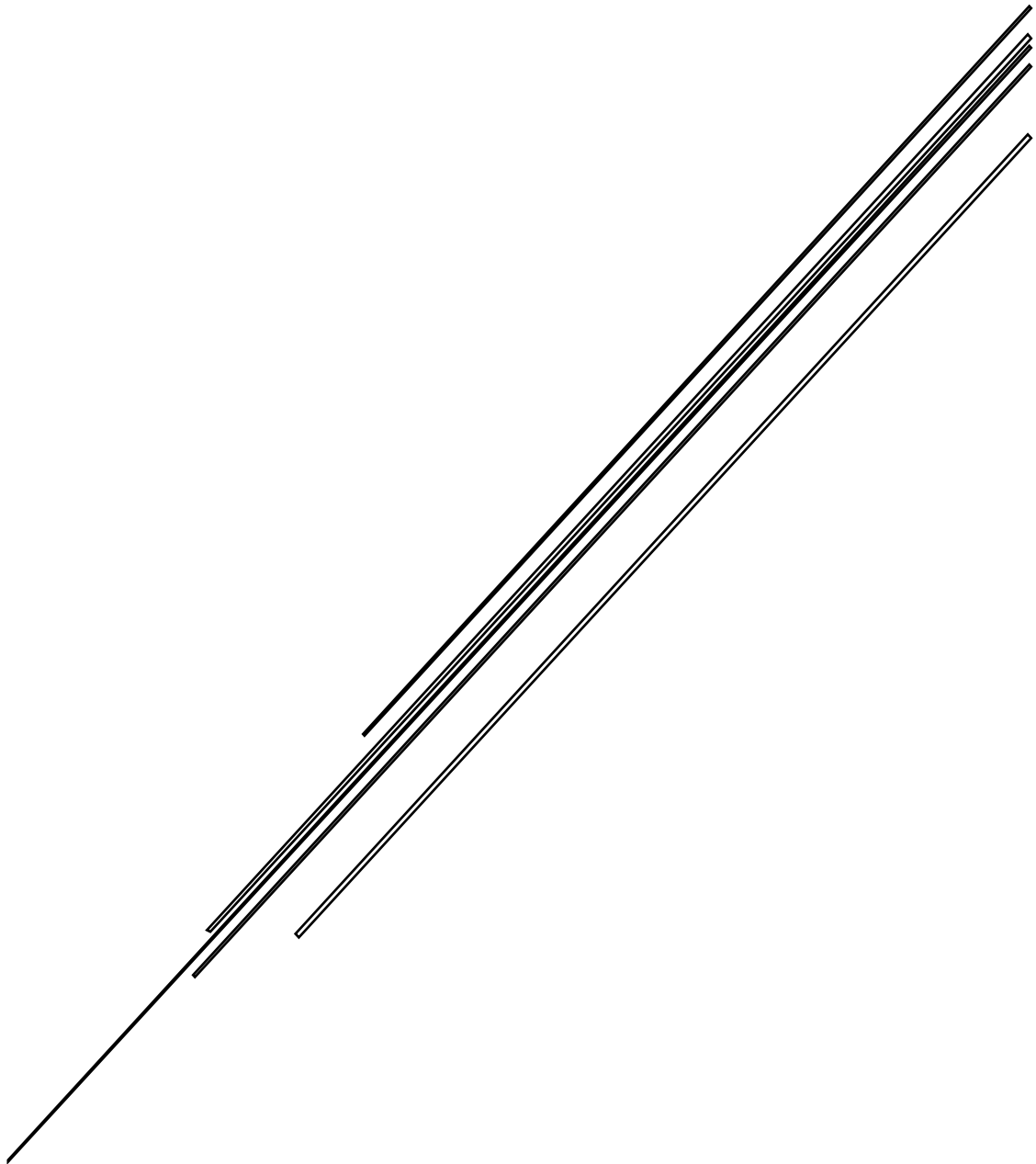


SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND MARKETING EFFICIENCY

MARKETING ESSENTIALS | M4X01916



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Introduction

Marketing information system (MIS) is defined by Kotler (2017) as a process which “consists of people and procedures dedicated to assessing information needs, developing the needed information, and helping decision makers use the information to generate and validate actionable customer market insights.” This report is made in order to analyse the importance of MIS in a company related to the tourism and travel sector, specifically Intrepid Travel which is one of the most ethical tour-operators in the world. (TheGuardian, 2019) Moreover, Intrepid Travel will be analysed in an in-depth approach in order to identify the effectiveness within this company of MIS and the steps which need to be processed (collecting the data, analysing the data and how the data is used).

Marketing Information System and its effectiveness

As MIS was described before by Kotler (2017), Ismaeel (2015) gives another definition to this process: “a continuous organized process to record, categorize, store and analysis of past, current and future information related to hotels business and the factors affecting it in order to obtain accurate marketing decisions to achieve the aim of the businesses.” So, the effectiveness of the whole cycle could be seen in the outcomes which are generated at the end when the decision were taken are reached the customer/traveler directly. Moreover, the marketing information system helps the marketing mix to develop and to orientate the values to the desired targeted customer segment. Most trips organized and designed by Intrepid Travel are sailing ones with a lot of comfort which means that they are targeting a financial medium-class family or couple.

The outcomes are to be found especially in the promotion and other marketing activities such as “attracting customers, evaluating services as well as advertisement” (Abu Qahf, 2002) which can be developed gradually over the time. The promotional activities are because of the number of customers/travelers Intrepid Travel has because of their vision and mission related to the environment. Being sustainable and following the ethics in order to maintain a balance in the nature and society is what makes this company special. For example, after the earthquake in 2015 in Nepal, all of the trips which were designed to enrich the travelers’ knowledge, would have donated 100% of their profits to rebuild the homes once destroyed. (TheGuardian, 2019) This act of help was seized after one statistic when the growth of sales arisen for the sustainable products. (Nielsen, 2018) Therefore, people nowadays would pay more for keeping the environment safe and would be more appealed to charity considerations like the one mentioned before. Plus, even if they have paid for their promotion, it is a move that would bring benefits in the future after the customers would test the value proposition of Intrepid Travel.

The effectiveness of the marketing information system is, of course, relevant. The reasons behind this answer are related to the concept of growing the customer base by giving the traveler/customer the tour tailored for them. What is more is that Intrepid Travel does not only support different charity events, but also raise awareness in the same time. The effectiveness could be seen on the huge difference between two “backpackers to \$129 million a year” (Traveller, n.d.) Hence, the sustainability (“company maintains its commitment to grassroots experiences” (Traveller, n.d.)) they have put into light, brought them profit. This commitment that they are keen to keep up is not only ethical, but it also promotes itself.

Structure of MIS

The marketing information system is a process that takes place in a couple of steps until the company reaches the outcomes. Therefore, the first step is to gather the data. The data could be collected in two ways which are the primary and the secondary ones. (Armstrong, et al., 2017) Both of them have advantages and disadvantages. For example, the primary data refers to the direct approach to the travelers regarding their experience from Intrepid Travel. This primary data can be categorized in a couple of classes according to the type used when interfering with the traveler: the class of

experiments (whether the company tries a new idea directly with the travelers or they bring in a new concept), a social survey (especially during the tour to assure the company that they are on the right path to satisfy the traveler's needs) etc. This is rather a qualitative and quantitative research, based on how many details Intrepid Travel would like to acknowledge. Then, there is the secondary data which is gathered from the internet and could bring new trends (like the sustainable one) and could forecast new ones according to the manifestos ongoing and to the future ones. The secondary data is the easiest way of researching. However, there might be slight issues because of the difference between the customers a company is aiming to target and Intrepid Travel. Therefore, a global research with generalized sections is more suitable for a company like this one.

After gathering data, there is the analyzing step which includes the systems and programs which offer a clear prospective regarding each choice the decision makers will have to pick. "The preferred strategic option is determined primarily by the existing market conditions." (Dickson & Ginter, 1987) So, in order to pick the next strategy, Intrepid Travel needs to analyze the current data they hold and refresh it in order to obtain accurate answers according to their customer base. Moreover, as the external factors are unpredictable, after any event unfavorable for the tourism in the specific area (e.g. after some political issues in Turkey, the tourism sector fell in sales, especially from the Russian customers (BBC, 2016)) it might fall and rise again. So, this type of data needs to be checked regularly in order to analyze where are either the new travelers heading to, or where they would desire to travel.

Collecting data, analyzing it and taking decisions based on the information given represents the whole MIS. Therefore, the responsibility of the decision makers is undertaken, and the new strategies are formed. Intrepid Travel has the sustainability strategy and promotes the "roots" of humanity and the pure people to the rest of the world. The decisions taken after every new research conducted whether the nature of it is primary or secondary one, the steps after collecting the data are the same. "Marketing information has no value until it is used to make better marketing decisions" (Kotler, et al., 2016)

The effectiveness of the marketing information system could be observed on a financial level, especially after taking the decisions. "In some cases, this [e.g. the situation where the managers need to take decisions] means providing regular reports and updates; in other cases, it means making non-routine information available for special situations and on-the-spot decisions." (Kotler, et al., 2017) The marketing information system, then, applied on Intrepid Travel refers to the way that managers take actions as fast as they can to the customers' needs and how to they add value to their services of tour-operating. Therefore, at every 500 trips, annually, there is an evaluation to ensure that the company is following their vision and mission. (Traveller, n.d.)

Conclusion

To conclude, Intrepid Travel is following their conduct and ethic in a very innovative manner raising awareness in the same time among people about the health care, human rights and child welfare as well as environmental protection. Because the business is considered to have a large base of customers, with over 550,000 appreciations on social media platforms, it can influence as well other companies and other people to follow their beliefs regarding the sustainability. Moreover, the marketing information system within the company is very effective because of the continuous data that is refreshed daily, weekly or monthly according to the customers' needs. Thanks to the developed technology, companies can now have an intranet and internal systems along with the big data bases. Therefore, the action of deciding is much easier at a single move as long as there is internet and the device used is connected to the data base from where the manager could choose to see any report or statistic he/she would like to.

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