

Summary of doctoral dissertation

„The use of online marketing in companies' business activities based on the example of the hotel industry - a diagnosis, an evaluation of effectiveness, and a proposal of model solutions.”

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The Internet offers business enterprises a wide range of possible applications in their marketing activities, including promotion. Businesses around the world are increasingly using online advertising in their marketing activities, as the Internet, compared to other media, enables them to analyze the effectiveness of their advertising efforts using commercially available analytical tools. It also allows them to reach their ever more precisely defined target groups. In addition, the Internet offers a wide variety of forms of advertising. Although companies in Poland are increasingly more eager to advertise their goods and services through the Internet, seeing it as a possible means of effective customer acquisition, and thus fulfilling their own business objectives, in the domestic market there are very few studies on the degree of use of online advertising by businesses, and even fewer publications explaining the effectiveness of the various forms of online advertising. The few Polish studies on the subject of Internet marketing (mainly in the form of articles available through electronic publishing) only list forms of advertising offered by the Internet, often detailing their attributes, but do not provide sufficient information on the extent to which Polish companies use such advertising via the Internet or whether these measures are effective in terms of their purpose. Because of the lack of availability of information on the effectiveness of online advertising, companies have been forced to self-experiment with advertising activities on the Internet and it is mainly thanks to their own experience that they are in a position to judge which of these measures have proved effective. Foreign studies on the use of online advertising and its effectiveness in business activities also appear to be insufficient and often inadequate for the reality in which Polish companies have to compete. Therefore, this information does not give Polish companies a basis for effective use of online advertising in their marketing management. With this in mind, it seemed desirable to establish the extent to which Polish companies use online advertising to advertise their goods and services, to create an evaluation system of the effectiveness of such

advertising activities, as well as to attempt to build a concept model of the application of online advertising by businesses, which in turn will allow a more effective marketing management in those businesses.

The main objective of the doctoral dissertation was to investigate the scope of the use of online advertising by companies, as well as to assess the effectiveness of these measures and to develop, in the light of the diagnosed situation, a model of the use of online advertising in hospitality-industry companies. Specific objectives of the dissertation included:

1. Diagnosing the state of knowledge of the use of the Internet for advertising purposes as shown by hotels in Poland.
2. Defining the determinants of choice of particular forms of online advertising.
3. Evaluating the effectiveness of advertising activities carried out by hotels on the Internet.
4. Proposing the most effective course of action related to online advertising based on the example of the hospitality industry.

The methodological aim of the study was an attempt to establish a set of methods with which to measure the effectiveness of advertising on the Internet and methods which would allow the development of a model of applications of online advertising. The application aim of this work was to identify the possibilities of using the research results in the advertising activities taken by enterprises, in particular, the selection of effective forms of advertising on the Internet, in the hotel industry.

The scope of the research in terms of the sample group included hotels operating in the Polish market. The selection of the hotel industry for the research was not accidental as it was dictated by the author's good understanding of its specificity, as well as his personal fascination with this industry. The author used his own professional experience related to business consultancy in the field of advertising, provided largely for the hospitality industry. The choice of the industry was also dictated by the relative importance of that sector for the Polish economy, as well as the expected ease in extrapolating the findings related to the performance of advertising in this sector, to other sectors. The scope of the study included, among others:

- 1) the scope and forms of Internet advertising used by hotels,
- 2) the reasons for the use of particular forms of advertising,
- 3) methods of analysis of the effectiveness of advertising activities,
- 4) the effectiveness of the various forms of advertising,
- 5) expenditure on the online advertising.

The research questions formulated by the author focused, therefore, on the following issues:

1. To what extent do the surveyed hotels use online advertising in their advertising campaigns?
2. What forms of Internet advertising are chosen for their advertising campaigns and why?
3. Do the surveyed hotels verify the effectiveness of their advertising on the Internet, and if so, how?
4. How effective are the advertising activities, depending on the form of advertising?
5. To what degree do the surveyed hotels expect to use online advertising in their advertising campaigns in the coming years?

Obtaining exhaustive answers to these questions has contributed to the effective fulfilment of the objectives set for the dissertation. The time frame for the research, and then for the analyses carried out on the basis of its findings took place at the turn of 2013/2014, when the author of the work, in collaboration with a professional research company, Bureau for Social Research Obserwator, conducted his own empirical research on a representative group of hotels operating in the Polish market, and then submitted the results of the study to an in-depth analysis. The study covered, therefore, the current situation in the use of the Internet advertising in the market of hotel services, and the analysis on the operation of the hotel services market in Poland was carried out in the years 1991-2014.

The study provided evidence for the verification of the main hypothesis, which was as follows: it is believed that hotel enterprises in Poland extensively use online advertising in their promotional activities. The use of online advertising is effective. In addition, the following specific hypotheses were formulated at the outset of the study:

1. Hospitality industry enterprises use a variety of forms of online advertising in their advertising activities.
2. Hotel enterprises study the effectiveness of their advertising operations.
3. Hospitality industry enterprises view the effectiveness of advertising as the degree of attaining their business objectives.

The selected research problems, the formulated objectives of the work goals and the working hypotheses adopted required the author to collect information from both secondary and primary sources. As for the secondary data, the following sources were used:

- 1) the literature on the subject, both in Polish and English,
- 2) data from specialist websites and web portals dealing with the issues of online advertising, as well as sites dealing with the subjects related to the operation of hotel enterprises,
- 3) comprehensive statistics from statistical yearbooks of Poland.

The data obtained from secondary sources were the basis of theoretical investigations. They also allowed the making of a critical analysis of the existing state of knowledge about the use of Internet advertising in the business activity of hotels, the forms of online advertising available as well as the measurement of the effectiveness of advertising activities with the use of the Internet. They also allowed for describing the specifics of the hospitality market in Poland.

The author's own empirical research conducted for the purposes of the dissertation was carried out using two research techniques, i.e. online survey CAWI and telephone interviews CATI. The study was conducted in two stages. In the first part, an attempt was made to obtain the largest possible number of on-line interviews using the CAWI Support software, completing 4 cycles of the study and then the project was complemented with the use of CATI telephone interviews in order to achieve the target representative sample of 300 interviews. In order to verify the working hypotheses adopted for the study, for the purposes of analysis of the studied phenomena, statistical description was used. The study used the characteristics of qualitative variables measured on the nominal and ordinal scales. The results of the study were presented in the form of frequency tables as well as bar and pie charts. For a more comprehensive analysis of the research results, in necessary situations, the effect of additional variables on the studied phenomenon was verified using cross tables, which allowed the presentation of the distributions of a greater number of variables at one time. For a thorough analysis of the results of the research undertaken, analyses of correlations were carried out between certain examined characteristics and the most important variable differentiating the advertising activities employed by hotels – the category. A computer database of the results obtained and statistical calculations were performed using the SPSS/PC software.

The dissertation consists of four chapters, an introduction and a summary. The first, theoretical chapter takes up the issues concerning the determinants of the development of the Internet and its use as an advertising medium. A number of various advertising possibilities and forms of online advertising available on the network are presented here; the methods of conducting effective advertising campaigns on the Internet are discussed using the example of a campaign carried out in a search engine and an e-mailing campaign. This chapter also points to the possibilities of conducting in-depth analyses of the effectiveness of specific advertising activities carried out on the Internet as well as available means of measuring effectiveness. The second chapter of the work is theoretical and empirical. Its content focuses on conceptual and methodological issues relating to research on the use of online advertising in the hospitality industry. It extensively discusses the issues concerning the growth and functioning of the hospitality market in Poland. A particular emphasis is placed on the

functioning of the hotels operating in the Polish market, including their advertising and promotional activities. This chapter also contains methodological issues pertaining to the organization of the author's own direct research. It discusses the methods of data collection and the methods of analysis of the studied phenomena applied. It also defines the research objectives and working hypotheses and describes in detail the selection of the sample for the study. Furthermore, the characteristics of the surveyed entities are analyzed. The third chapter is essential in terms of the achievement of the objectives of the dissertation and the verification of the research hypotheses adopted. It presents the results of the empirical studies carried out. In this chapter, there are answers to the research questions, relating in particular to the following issues: the degree of the use of online advertising in the advertising activities of hotels in Poland, the determinants of the choice of online advertising forms and the methods of measuring the effectiveness of online advertising used by the selected group of enterprises. In this chapter, the advertising activities conducted by the hotels on the Internet are submitted to evaluation. The conclusions resulting from a careful analysis of the phenomena described provided a basis for the verification of the main research hypothesis as well as the secondary hypotheses. The fourth chapter of dissertation presents the concept of building a model of the use of online advertising in hospitality enterprises. In this chapter, readers will find the assumptions for the construction of such a model and a diagram of the model of the optimal use of online advertising by hotels, together with its detailed description and substantiation. The last subchapter of the dissertation indicates the possibilities of the practical application of the research results by hotel enterprises in the process of optimizing their market activities, as well as their marketing management.

The dissertation ends with a summary, which contains conclusions from the analysis of both cognitive and practical nature. The author describes the degree of attainment of the objectives adopted for the work. He also refers to the results of verification of the working hypotheses. The summary also highlights the contribution of the author to the development of the scientific discipline of company marketing management.

Research shows that the market of hotel services in Poland is a fast growing market. The increase in the number of new hotels during the period 1991-2014 amounted to over 440%. In Poland, there are currently more than 2,250 facilities, which represents almost 23% of all collective accommodation facilities. With the increase in number of hotels in Poland, there has been a rise in the number of beds available in these facilities, which in 2014 was already 226532 beds. The appearance of new hotels and other collective accommodation facilities is taking place as a result of economic development as well as financing from structural funds, which

many newly established facilities have benefited from. Today, hotel facilities in Poland provide services for the largest part of the tourist traffic. In 2014, out of 25 million tourists, more than 18.6 million spent the night in a hotel facility. The vast majority of them chose hotels. This represents a 10% growth compared to 2013, when hotels provided accommodation for 14.5 million visitors. This translates in great degree to the occupancy rates at these facilities – in 2014 there were 18.5 million hotel rooms rented out. In Poland there are currently fourteen international hotel networks having from one to a few dozen hotels of different standards. The largest is the Accor group with 61 hotels across Poland. In terms of categories, the largest group on the Polish market are the hotels classified as three-star facilities, while the largest increase in new hotels, amounting to up to 61.1% (during 2010-2013), was recorded for four-star facilities. Studies show that hotels operating on the Polish market use a variety of forms of advertising in various media to attract customers for their services. For this purpose they use largely online advertising. The research results led to the conclusion that Polish hotels spend on average up to 29.12% of their total advertising expenditure on Internet advertising. Furthermore, research shows that hotels operating on the Polish market use up to seventeen different forms of online advertising, which include:

- 1) a website www,
- 2) offers placed on online reservation systems, such as: booking.com, hrs.pl, trivago.pl, hotele.pl, turez.pl, rezerwuje.pl and other,
- 3) search engine optimization,
- 4) promotional mailing to their existing mailing list (newsletter),
- 5) advertising on social media networks,
- 6) advertising banners on portals / websites,
- 7) business cards in web directories,
- 8) Internet classified advertisements,
- 9) partnership programmes,
- 10) sponsored links (Google Adwords) on Google search,
- 11) promotional mailing to a purchased mailing list (newsletter),
- 12) public relations (p.r. activities conducted on the Internet only),
- 13) deals placed on online deal marketplace sites, such as:groupon.pl, citeam.pl, gruper.pl or other,
- 14) sponsored articles in thematic websites,
- 15) advertisements on Google Display Network,
- 16) TrueView advertisements on YouTube,

17) AdTaily advertisements.

The most common form of advertising used by hotel facilities is their own website. Research shows that hotel facilities use a number of different forms of advertising on the Internet. This demonstrates a high degree of use of online advertising by Polish hotels in their advertising campaigns. The inferential statistical analysis revealed that hotels of higher categories, namely five- and four-star hotels, more often use a wide variety of forms of advertising available on the network in comparison to hotels of lower category, i.e. two- and one-star hotels. This proves that between such characteristics as the hotel category and the degree of its use of various forms of online advertising there is a statistically significant relationship. The results of direct studies also indicate that hotels operating in the Polish market are motivated by various factors while making a choice of advertising forms for their promotional efforts. The statistical analysis of the research results showed that out of six reasons to choose a particular form of advertising available on the Internet, hotels operating in the Polish market pointed to high effectiveness of a given form as statistically the most important reason, followed by the desire to try it out, low costs of advertising and its availability. The study also revealed a statistically significant number of responses for other reasons behind the hotels' choice of particular forms of advertising, with the possibility of reaching a wider audience being most frequently indicated. As research has shown, statistically the most effective form of online advertising indicated by hotels in Poland was search engine optimization. Offers placed on online booking systems appeared to be the second most effective form of advertising. The third most effective form of advertising on the network are offers placed on online deal marketplace sites. Among the studied forms of advertising available on the web, which are considered effective, a relatively low effectiveness is attributed to business cards placed in Internet directories. Two other forms of online advertising which are considered to be less effective are YouTube-based TrueView advertisements and AdTaily advertisements.

The results of the study also showed that the vast majority of hotel facilities operating in the Polish market do analyses of the effectiveness of their online advertising. Conducting this type of analyses appears to be important to them as it identifies the advertising activities which bring the expected results, fulfilling the hotels' marketing and business objectives, while giving an answer to the question whether the resources invested in online advertising bring a return on investment. The data obtained indicate that the analysis of the effectiveness of online advertising activities is very important for hotels. The survey also revealed the following pattern: the higher the hotel category, the more frequent the analyses of the effectiveness of online advertising efforts, as well as the greater importance of such analyses for the hotel.

When it comes to the ways of analyzing the effectiveness of advertising activities by hotels, statistically, hotels most often use their own analyses as well as popular tools for analyzing website statistics. The study also found that the hotel staff members involved in the analyses of the effectiveness of advertising are, in most cases, employees of the marketing department.

As a result of the analysis of research problems, the author constructed a working model of the optimal use of online advertising by hospitality enterprises to assist with the selection of the most effective forms of online advertising so as to ensure the successful fulfilment of their marketing and business goals. The model of the optimal use of online advertising for hotel enterprises indicates that such enterprises should invest about 70% of their advertising funds in online advertising. The most important form of advertising for them should be a website which must be responsive, i.e. capable of easily adapting to any device's resolution and screen size that the potential customers may choose to view it with and have features such as its own internal reservation system, a newsletter subscription panel and a facility promotional video. The vast majority of reservations should be done directly by the hotel's own reservation system, and the advertisements which should lead potential customers to it should include: deals placed on online reservation systems in first place, followed by newsletters sent to the hotel's own customer base, followed by sponsored links on Google search engine, advertising in social media and in the last place(s) video advertisements on YouTube, advertisements on Google Images and promotional mailing campaigns to external customer bases. All of these forms of advertising should lead users to the hotels' own websites, where potential customers will hopefully convert into online buyers of hotel services. Such a model of optimal use of online advertising for hotel enterprises in Poland will ensure successful implementation of their marketing and business objectives.

The author's extensive studies of the literature and the direct research carried out on a representative group of hotels operating on the Polish market, make a contribution to the extensive scientific achievements of the management sciences, and in particular highlight the significant role of the Internet as an advertising medium in business marketing management. The particular achievement of the dissertation is the assessment of the effectiveness of various forms of online advertising and the development of a descriptive model for using these forms of advertising in order to attain business objectives set by enterprises in the hospitality industry. Furthermore, as an achievement of the work, it should be noted that there is a possibility of using the research results by Polish companies, primarily in the following areas:

- 1) the selection of such forms of online advertising that would be most appropriate in terms of promotional and advertising objectives adopted,
- 2) the selection of specific tools of online advertising to ensure the achievement of the assumed effectiveness of advertising,
- 3) conducting advertising cost-effectiveness analyses,
- 4) optimal planning of online advertising spending in relation to advertising spending on other media.

Due to the economic relevance of the issues discussed, as well as a clear need for research on the use of online advertising by Polish companies, the relative ease of extrapolating the finds in the hospitality industry to other sectors of the economy appears to be of real importance. Therefore, this dissertation work may and should be food for thought for management practitioners who, in the process of taking actions and business decisions, should be familiar with the advertising opportunities that the Internet offers to businesses and know which online advertising efforts are capable of contributing to the effective fulfilment of marketing and business objectives set by companies, giving them the chance of optimal management in the conditions of globalization and growing competition. The research carried out for the purpose of this dissertation has a large practical value for a planned and responsible development of hotel enterprises. In particular, this value is confirmed in taking optimal economic decisions on the planning and carrying out of responsible advertising actions. Thanks to the research findings and their appropriate, consistent use in pursuit of companies' own objectives, it appears to be possible to improve goal management processes, which is crucial for achieving the required economic results. With the knowledge gained from the research on the use of online advertising in the hospitality industry, as well as the acquaintance with the model of optimal online advertising, Polish hotel enterprises will be able to fulfil their marketing and business goals.

