

HOW CAN VIETNAM101 SUCCESSFULLY ATTRACT VISITORS TO ITS WEBSITE?

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>E-marketing activities are popular nowadays due to their significant benefits for organizations. The key objective of this thesis was to build an e-marketing plan for a startup project with low budget. The thesis was conducted by applying the SOSTAC's planning model to the case of a website which provides Vietnam's tourist information.</p> <p>In the thesis, a marketing research was made using a qualitative method. Several tourists were interviewed to generate ideas and identify target segment. With the information from the research and secondary data, the current situation was analyzed to realize the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the website. Then, with clear objectives, the marketing strategies and tactics were identified using 8P's marketing mix to emphasize the online value proposition of the website. Finally, the detailed action plan for marketing activities was set up with time scale and budget. With the defined purpose, the study focused on using low-cost or free-cost marketing communication methods to increase the traffic of the website. In this thesis, the author created a detailed plan for marketing the brand Vietnam101 using its website and suggested some activities for successfully attracting visitors such as Search Engine Optimized, e-PR through online networks and email marketing. As a conclusion, the author proved the possibility of using free-cost or low-cost e-marketing activities to build the brand for start-up companies.</p>			
Keywords: e-marketing plan, SOSTAC, PESTLE, SWOT, marketing communications, tourist information, website, Vietnam, Internet, social network			

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1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an introduction of the topic of bachelor thesis. It begins with background information of the context and significance of the question addressed with its limitation. Then, the contribution of the thesis is provided. And finally, the outline is presented for summarizing the whole thesis process.

1.1 Background information

Vietnam is a Social Republic country located in the Southeastern Asia area. The country has potential for tourism with its diverse natural environment, geography, history and culture. Lonely Planet introduced Vietnam as: “blessed with a ravishing coastline, emerald-green mountains, breathtaking national parks, dynamic cities, outstanding culture interest and one of the world’s best cuisine, Vietnam has it all” (LonelyPlanet 2014).

The amount of foreign tourists visiting Vietnam is increasing. According to VNAT (the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism), the number of foreign tourists coming to Vietnam in 2013 is 7.5 million, with a 10.6 percent rise over 2012, having 7 % return rate. Even though, it is still small compared to nearby countries, for example: Thailand (22 million visitors in 2012, 40 % return rate). One of the main reasons is that Vietnam lacks the promotion for country’s tourism image in the international market. For example, according to a survey made by the Ministry of Industry and Trade of Vietnam, tourists spend half of world’s average time searching information at a local tourism website due to the “unattractive” website content. It means the local tourism websites don’t have information that is interested and useful enough for visitors to stay. In top listed countries which have most residents travelling abroad, Vietnam is first known through Vietnam – America War, not as a potential travel destination. (ThanhNienNews 2014.)

The project Vietnam101.info is created in that context with the support of UN Habitat in Vietnam. The mission of Vietnam101.info is to bring attractive and useful information about Vietnam’s tourism to foreign visitors.

1.2 Thesis questions and limitations

As a new born project that's still on paper, Vietnam101.info needed to have a good research and marketing plan to find a suitable strategy for developing and promoting.

What is the useful information that is attractive to foreign tourists? How to introduce the site to Internet users? How to reach to potential niche with the minimum cost? This thesis is written to find the answers to these questions.

However, there are some limitations for this thesis. Firstly, because Vietnam101.info is an individual project with low budget, therefore all the promotion techniques are free or low-cost. It will limit the techniques and tools that can be used. Secondly, the project is currently still in paper. Hence, there are some parts which will be cut off or shortened such as detail activities of the plan or statistical check and control of running the website as well as the calculation of budget and cost.

1.3 Contribution and outline

The topic of the thesis is not new. There are several researches with similar topics. However, the author still finds this thesis helpful due to two reasons. Firstly, this thesis will help the writer to convert theoretical knowledge of marketing into practice. It will be very useful for the writer's future job as a marketer. Secondly, there are several promotion approaches that use free internet marketing tools provided in this thesis. Hence, it will help to build a low cost marketing system that is useful for any start-up.

The structure of this paper consists of five sections. Chapter 1 gives an introduction to the thesis, and a context of the thesis. This section also provides the contribution of this paper to future work and its limitation. Chapter 2 includes the literature study about e-marketing. This chapter gives the definition of e-marketing, describes the e-marketing plan process and e-marketing communication approaches. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology which is used, how data is collected and analyzed. Chapter 4 presents the implementation of e-marketing plan process and e-marketing communication approaches introduced in chapter 2 in the case of Vietnam101.info. The last session closed the study with a conclusion based on the main finding of the study. It also provides recommendations for future work.

2 E-MARKETING – DEFINITION, PLANNING PROCESS AND COMMUNICATION METHODS

This chapter contains literature information about e-marketing definition and methods. It also describes the SOSTAC framework which is popular for planning process.

2.1 E-marketing definition and benefits

Invented in 1950s, the Internet was developed as a method to connect people. According to Internet Live Stats (2014), the amount of Internet users in 1994 was 25 million, 0,4 % of world population. In 2014, the amount of Internet users is 2,9 billion people, meaning 40 % of global population. Within 20 years, the Internet had an unbelievable development and become an essential part of the human life. Nowadays, Internet is considered as a virtual world, which not only help people communicating with others, but also doing business and managing daily life.

With the popularity of the Internet using, the methods of marketing have changed. Marketers have a more efficient way to give the marketing message. E-Marketing, also called internet marketing or online marketing, is the new way of using modern communication technologies for marketing purposes. According to Quirk (2006), "E-marketing is the process of marketing a brand using the Internet which includes both direct response marketing and indirect marketing elements and uses a range of technologies to help businesses connect to their customers". E-marketing aims to attract new business, to retain current business and to develop its brand identity.

Why does business need e-Marketing besides of traditional marketing strategies?

Through the natural characteristic of Internet, e-Marketing bypass the traditional marketing with matters related to time and space. When using the Internet, one person can stay in a place and connect to the whole world. On the journal article "e-marketing101" published in 2006, the Quirk team provided 6 benefits of e-marketing over traditional marketing. They are Reach, Scope, Interactivity, Immediacy, Targeting and Adaptivity. Firstly, e-marketing helps marketer to have truly global Reach. New businesses can easily access to potential customers in all over the world with smaller budgets. With Scope, e-marketing also helps marketers offer a wide range of products and services. Customer service, PR, sales will grow with the development of technology. E-marketing increases Interactivity, allows marketers to create a better interactive

campaign with music, graphics and video. The new two way communication helps marketers send brand messages and receive feedback from customers more quickly and easily. Moreover, e-marketing helps to provide the immediate impact effectiveness. For example, the customer can purchase products easily 24/7 any day of the week. Dividing and targeting suitable potential customer group is very important for marketers. The Internet creates the perfect environment for niche marketing to target group. Normally, a traditional marketing campaign takes long time to measure and analyze the process and result. However, with e-marketing, the results can be analyzed in real time. For example, the amount of website viewer can easily be counted daily with Google analytics, Alexa. Then, marketers can modify the strategy and reduce costs by stopping all ineffective campaigns. (Quirk 2006.) In conclusion, the Internet has supported to open a new age of marketing. Effective e-marketing strategies will help companies to gain more profit and satisfy the customer's requirement better. As Quirk team said, "E-marketing will improve business Return of Investment (ROI), get more customers and happier customers." (Quirk 2006).

2.2 E-marketing plan

To help develop a successful business, it is necessary to have a marketing plan. A marketing plan helps to analyze and answer some key questions for entrepreneurs such as: What is the current situation? How to differentiate with competitors? How to reach customers? How to use resources effectively? And nowadays, for successful using Internet channel, it is necessary to have the e-marketing plan. E-marketing plan is a strategic document aiming to achieve marketing object through electronic medium. E-marketing plan integrates with the traditional marketing plan to support general business strategy. The only difference between e-marketing plan and traditional marketing plan is the unique characteristic of the Internet environment. (Chaffey & Smith 2008, 440 - 441.)

SOSTAC model is a marketing planning model which has developed by PR Smith since 1990s. It is one of the most easy to use models for a marketing plan that is recommended by internet marketing expert, Dr Chaffey. SOSTAC focuses on the six most important elements which name is started with each word of SOSTAC. They are Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Actions and Control. Each element gives a strategic question which is a key step in the process as in table 1 below. (Chaffey et al. 2008, 442.)

TABLE 1. SOSTAC model stages and questions (Chaffey et al. 2008, 442)

Elements	Strategic Questions
Situation	Where are we now?
Objectives	Where do we want to get to?
Strategy	How are we going to get there?
Tactics	How exactly do we get there?
Action	What are the details of the tactics?
Control	How do we monitor performance?

When planning, it is also necessary to consider about the resources that the business has. Chaffey (2008) recommended in his book the 3Ms key resources which are “Men”, “Money” and “Minute”. “Men” refers to the human resource that company has. Money is the budgets of the company. And Minute means the time scales and time horizons for production, delivery, service, etc. In this chapter, the SOSTAC planning model and the resources will be discussed in detail

2.2.1 Situation analysis

This stage helps marketer answer the question “Where are we now?” to understand the current position of the business. In his book, Emarketing Excellence, Chaffey pointed out that at this stage, marketers need to analyze both internal and external factors that are related to business situations. The internal analysis examines the condition of the business through its Key Performance Indicators such as Sales, Market Shares, Return of Investment (ROI), online revenue or service contribution. Then, it analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the business. The external analysis helps to understand the customers, competitors and uncontrollable market characteristics such as Political, Economic, Social and Technological. Through those factors, marketers will analyze the opportunities and threats for the business. (Chaffey et al. 2008, 444 – 451.)

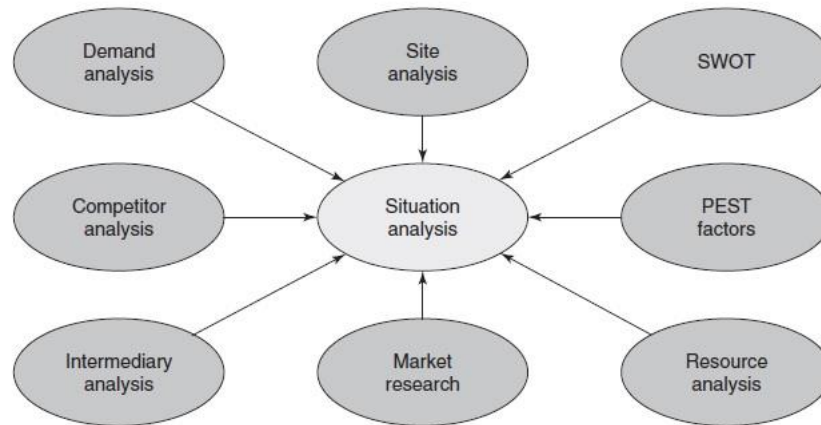


FIGURE 1. Elements of situation analysis for e-marketing (Chaffey et al. 2008, 445)

Marketers analyze internal factors (internal audits) firstly by assessing the current contribution of the Internet to the organization. It includes business effectiveness, marketing effectiveness and Internet-use effectiveness (site analysis). Secondly, the internal audit will also include the resource analysis. Resource analysis is the capability of the organization to deliver its online service. It includes: Financial, technology infrastructure, human, structure and the strength and weakness of the company. (Chaffey 2006, 160-162.)

External audits consider the business and economic environment in which the company operates. Pertinent factors for the Internet's business environment include demand analysis, customer analysis, competitor analysis, intermediary analysis and channel structure. (Chaffey 2006, 166.) Beside, PEST analysis is used to understand the political, economic, social and technological factors of the macro-environment where business is conducted.

Current and future level of customer demand is the key factor driving e-marketing strategy objectives. Demand analysis indicates the scale of the opportunity for influences sale online. Customer analysis is used to identify and segment customer characteristics and behaviors. Customer personas and scenarios are developed to help inform understanding of online buyer behaviors. (Chaffey 2006, 166-167.) Competitor analysis is for identifying competitors and evaluating their strategies to determine their strengths and weaknesses relative to those of company's own product or service (Entrepreneur, n.d). Competitor analysis provides strategic context to identify opportunities and threats. Intermediaries are firms that can help a company to promote, sell and distribute its

products or services (Chaffey 2006, 85). Examples of famous online intermediary sites are: Google, Yahoo and MSN. By finding suitable intermediaries, the company will have a chance to build better traffic and provide better service. PEST analysis is a marketing tool used to track the external environment of the business. It includes Politics, Economics, Socio-Culture and Technology. Political factors are all about how government intervenes in the economy. They are government policy, level of stability, law, restrictions. Economic factors refer to how one country impacts the business through indicators such as economic growth, inflation, exchange rates. Social factors relate to cultural aspects, attitudes, beliefs which affect the demand of product such as Demographics, lifestyle, religions. Technological factors are technological aspects, innovation that impact business. (QuickMBA 2010.) The company should conduct a structured analysis of the external opportunities and threats presented by the Internet environment. This analysis combines with company's own strengths and weaknesses from the internal analysis to find suitable strategies.

The SWOT analysis is a useful marketing tool to combine the results found out by the internal and external analysis. SWOT is the synonym of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Strengths and Weaknesses are the positive and negative internal factors that are found out by the internal analysis. Opportunities and Threats are the positive and negative external factors that are found out by the external analysis. The main purpose of SWOT analysis is to add value to our products, services by turning weaknesses into strength and threats into opportunities. If undertaken successfully, SWOT analysis will help to increase the Return On Investment (Friesner 2014.)

2.2.2 Objective setting

Marketers find the overall goal of business by answering the question "Where do we want to go?". Chaffey and Smith (2008) suggested five boards of reasons, benefits or objectives of e-marketing. They are: Sell, Serve, Speak, Save and Sizzle (5Ss).

- Sell: Grow the sales online
- Serve: Give better value to consumers online
- Speak: Get closer to the consumer online
- Save: Save cost
- Sizzle: Extend the brand.

Marketers must decide whether all or only some are going to drive the marketing plan.

From defining the objectives, as relating to the 5S, to make it measurable, Chaffey recommends that marketers should turn each objective into a SMART object which mean:

- Specific: Be precise about what is going to be achieved
- Measurable: Quantify objectives
- Actions: Possible to be attempted
- Realistic: Have enough resources to make the objects
- Time limited: Have deadline, time to be achieved.

(Chaffey et al. 2008, 451-454.)

An example of SMART object is: "The website will get 20000 page views per day by January 1st, 2015".

2.2.3 Strategy

While objectives help to find the target by answering the question "Where do we want to go", the strategy part answers to the question "How do we get there?". Strategy part summarizes the way to achieve the objectives and guide for detail tactical decisions. It is influenced by five boards of reasons that is analyzed in the previous part (Sell, Serve, Speak, Save and Sizzle). (Chaffey et al 2008, 454.) It is important that the Internet marketing strategy should be consistent with the types of customers that can be effectively reached through the channel. It should also provide unique and differential propositions, which attract visitors and convert them to potential customers. (Chaffey 2006, 175.)

According to Chaffey (2006), there are 8 decisions related to Internet marketing strategy development.

Decision 1: Market and product development strategies

Decision 2: Business and revenue models strategies

Decision 3: Target marketing strategy

Decision 4: Positioning and differentiation strategy

Decision 5: Multi-channel distribution strategy

Decision 6: Multi-channel communications strategy

Decision 7: Online communications mix and budget

Decision 8: Organisational capabilities.

On this stage, the STP (Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning) model is recommended to find the suitable strategy. The STP model helps to prioritize propositions and develop personalized and relevant messages to engage with different audiences. It includes Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning. (Hanlon 2013.)

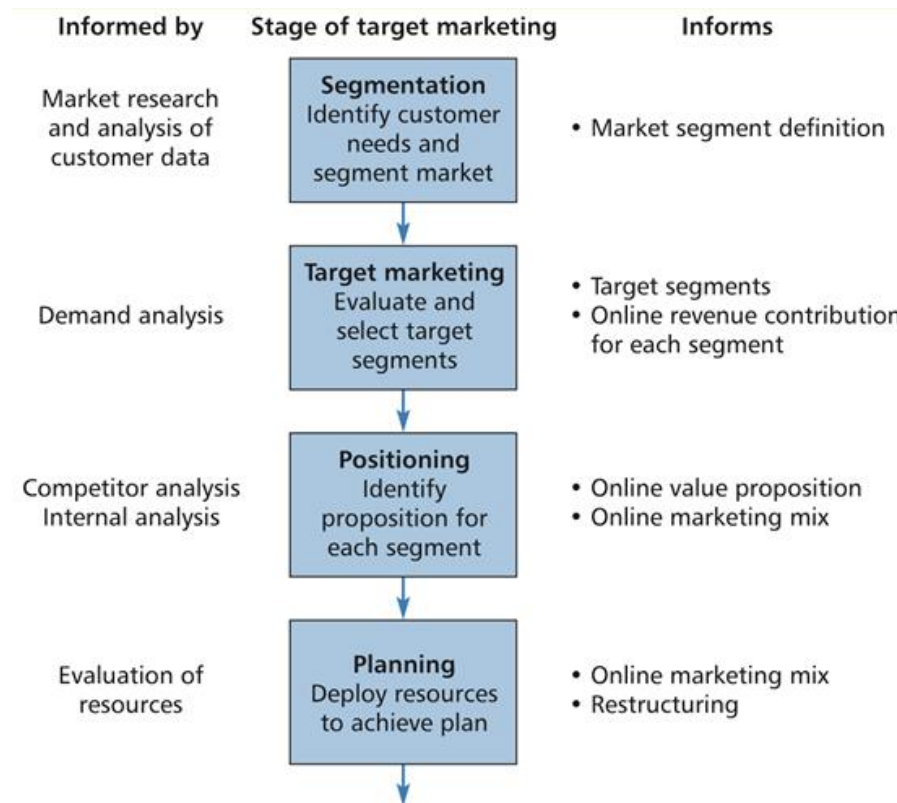


FIGURE 2. Stages in target marketing strategy development (Chaffey 2006, 181)

The STP model includes three stages which tightly connect to each other.

- **Segmentation:** On this stage, marketers analyze and divide the market based on different criteria. Kotler (2012) introduced four criteria groups for segmentation including Demographics, Psychographics, Geography, and Behavior. He noted that market segments must rate favorably five key criteria requirements. They are Measurable, Substantial, Accessible, Differentiable and Actionable.
- **Market targeting:** Marketers evaluate and select target segments. There are three different strategies to target the market. They are undifferentiated marketing – ignore segment, treat all groups the same; focused strategy – target a particular segment; differentiated marketing – use a different marketing mix for

each segment. Market targeting helps to focus resources for most profitable segments, hence effectively develops the business.

- Marketing Positioning: Marketer identifies proposition for each segment, create the online value proposition using the online marketing mix.

2.2.4 Tactics

Tactics describe the detailed implementation of the strategy. They answer the question “How do we implement the strategy?”. Tactics are short and flexible while strategy is longer term and more enduring. (Chaffey & Smith 2008, 464.) In e-marketing, tactics are decided by using the remix of 8Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical Evidence and Partnership). The marketing mix 8Ps are described as follows:

- Product: Product element of marketing mix refers to the characteristics of a product, service or brand. Product decisions are decided by market research and analyze of customer need (Chaffey 2006, 217). Marketers exploit distinctive competitive advantage by having clear and strong OVP (Online value proposition). OVP is a proposition that exploits unique advantages of being online which include: immediacy, interactivity and depth of content, faster, more convenient, easier, etc.... OVP must reinforce core brand and clearly summarize what customers can get from ones online but not elsewhere. (Chaffey et al. 2008, 62-64.)
- Price: Price variable refers to an organization’s pricing policy that used to define pricing models and set prices for products and services (Chaffey 2006, 231). Pricing strategies have changed a lot in the Internet era. Baker (2003) suggested two approaches that commonly adopt for pricing on Internet: Low price for start-up company to attract customers with price-elasticity and transferred existing price for existing companies.
- Place: The place element refers to how the product is purchased, distributed and consumed. Marketers need to think of multi-channels for distribution to ensure their products and services easily available to as many ideal customers as possible. (Chaffey et al. 2008, 69-71; Chaffey 2006, 238).
- Promotion: The promotion element refers to how marketing communications are used to inform customers and other stakeholders about an organization and its products (Chaffey 2006, 243). The complete promotion mix can be used to

communicate with online world includes ten communication tools that are described in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Online execution of different communication tools (Chaffey et al. 2008, 72)

Promotion mix	Online executions
Advertising	Interactive display ads, Pay per click (PPC)
Selling	Virtual sales, chat, affiliate marketing
Sales promotion	Incentives, rewards, online loyalty schemes
PR	Online editorial, newsletters, social networks, links and viral
Sponsorship	Sponsoring an online event, site or service
Direct mail	Opt-in-email
Exhibitions	Virtual exhibition, white paper distribution
Merchandising	Promotional ad on retail sites, personalized recommendation
Packaging	Virtual tours, packaging in display online
Word-of-mouth	Viral, affiliate marketing, email, links

The detail of how to use internet marketing communication tools to drive online traffic will be discussed more clearly in the next chapter.

- People: People element refers to how organization's staff interacts with customers and other stakeholders during pre and post sales communication. The equally important variables of this element are happy staff, happy customer and happy shareholder. Baker (2003, 662) summarizes some automated self-service

options for customer online include: auto-responders, email notification, call-back facility, frequently asked questions, on-site search engine and virtual assistants.

- Process: It refers to the methods and procedures that companies use to achieve all marketing functions such as product development, promotion, sale and customer services. The process includes external and internal process. Well managed process will help to save costs and create competitive advantages. (Chaffey et al. 2008, 85-86; Chaffey 2006, 246.)
- Physical Evidence: The Physical Evidence refers to the tangible expression of a product and how it is purchased and used. In online marketing, “physical evidence” refers to the customers’ experience of the company through website characteristics such as: easy to use, information availability, site performance (Chaffey 2006, 246). Customers need company physical evident to have clues about the quality of product, service through site design and reassurance such as guarantees, refund policies, privacy policies, security icons, awards, customer lists, customer reviews.
- Partnership: According to Chaffey et al. (2008), Partnership is a new P in the mix which is becoming more and more popular. Partnership marketing is a smart collaboration of two or more organizations with the intent to develop a midterm or long-term marketing program to meet each of their respective business goals (Kunitzky 2009). Partnerships can help to have a better marketing strategy, however, they require skilled management.

2.2.5 Actions

While tactics give detailed information of strategy by the mix of the 8 Ps, actions go deeper into each tactic. Actions describe the detailed project plans which are required in order to implement the tactics (Smith 2004). Who is going to do what? When are they going to do it? The action stage may be the weakest link in the planning process. Good project management skills are vital during the implementation or action stage. (Baker 2003.) According to Chaffey et al. (2008), typical actions used to achieve objectives are:

- Traffics building action: It means to generate visitors or traffic to a website. For example, marketers may use links or banner on other sites, sponsoring other online activities. It requires creative input and budget.

- Action to achieve a customer response: To capture user inquiries and analyze customer needs, marketers need to create a space for customers to enter their data online and database logging.
- Action to gain sales: For collecting sale orders.
- Fulfillment actions: Efficient data transfer to the warehouse to get the product off the shelf and into the box of dispatch.
- E-CRM (Electronic Customer Relationship Management) actions: Build better relationships by creating dialogue with customers.

Good implementation of action only happens when it has been planned well and used resource well. Action stage also requires a prediction of what can go wrong that may fail the project (e.g.: hijack, hacker, wrong information on a website, lack of budget) and how to manage those risks. Risk management includes:

- Brain storming list of all things which can go wrong
- Assessing their impact and likelihood
- Creating contingency plans for the highest impact and most probable risks
- Continuous review, revising and refining during campaign execution.

(Chaffey et al. 2008, 471.)

2.2.6 Control

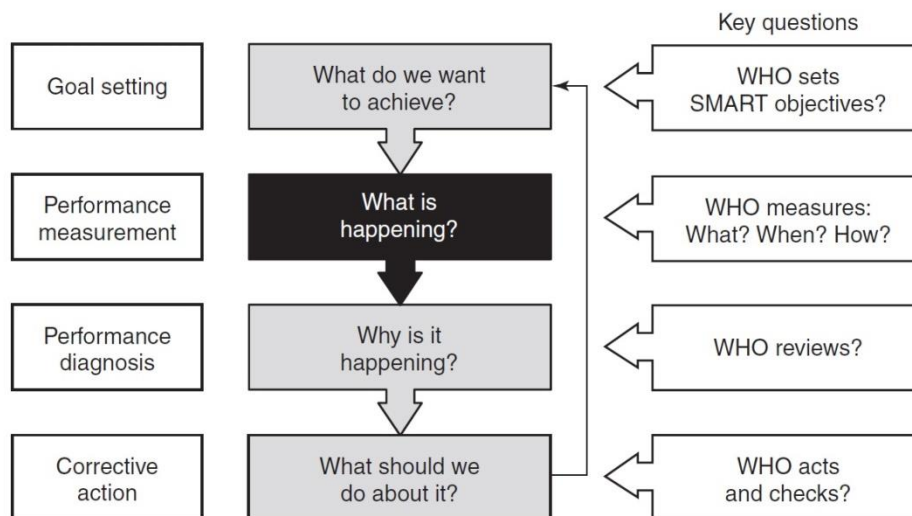


FIGURE 3. Summary of the control process of e-marketing planning (Chaffey et al. 2008, 472)

After the implementation of tactics into actions, marketers need to check if the process is on the right way and follow the SMART objects that have been decided (Chaffey et al. 2008, 472.) Baker (2003) has summarized that an e-marketing-performance measurement system includes:

- A performance measurement process: Defines the responsibilities for the measurement activities, such as object setting, metrics collection and reporting, analysis, diagnosis and changing tactics, or even strategy through corrective action if necessary. (Shown in Figure 3)
- A metrics framework: Determine what data will be looked at each day, week, month and quarter. Time has to be made for regular review of what's working and what's not. The KPIs that used for situation analysis is the metric for measurement.

There are several tools to help measure the performance of e-marketing planning. For examples, Google Analytics, Facebook insights, Klout, HootSuite are some popular and free tools used to measure marketing effectiveness (Vu, 2012). Marketers need to know which tools work effectively, and how much it does cost to use (Baker, 2003, 665).

2.2.7 Resources

Budgeting for the delicate balance of resources required is a complicated manner. Chaffey et al. (2008) indicated that the resource allocation decision is the choice of which products and market offer the best opportunities for investment. The resource allocation among different products, markets and e-marketing tools is split into three components. They are Men, Money and Minutes.

Men refer to the human resource that is required to accomplish marketing activities. There are some key questions in the area of human resource such as "How many people are required to do that activity" or "Can it be automated and personalized". Human resource allocation can be critical. If a business can find existing resources to fulfil some of the e-marketing requirement, then the costs can be kept down and reduces pressure on revenue. (Chaffey et al. 2008, 475.) However, what can the company do if it does not have enough human resource to build the website, to run the promotion or other marketing activities? Outsourcing is a good solution in case of lacking human resource. By outsourcing, the company can effectively complete the tasks through using expertise. It also helps business to concentrate on core process, shares the risks and

reduces operational and recruitment cost. However, the disadvantages of outsourcing are the risk of exposing confidential data, possibility of hidden cost and lacking of customer focus. (FlatworldSolutions 2014.) Therefore, the decision of outsourcing or insourcing is very important to consider.

Money refers to the budget covering the costs which will incur of marketing activities and the return of investment (Chaffey et al. 2008, 476). Marketing budgets ensure that the marketing plan is realistically cost. Some pre-budget research of the market, competitors and historical marketing metrics helps to make a more informed calculation. Failure to proper cost and budget may lead to problems and the failure of the plan. (Friesner 2014.) The opportunities to generate income (such as selling banner ads, getting sponsors, etc.) are also needed to be considered as it helps to reduce the cost of the e-marketing activities (Chaffey et al. 2008, 476-477).

The third component of resource that requires consideration is Minutes, or the time resource. They are the time scales, schedules and deadlines required to accomplish e-marketing tasks, for example: time to build the website, to run the campaign, etc. Time is often the tightest of the resources. If men and money is there when we don't use them, time still runs out every single moment. As all marketing activities take time to implement, it is necessary to carefully plan the time scales as effectively as possible. (Chaffey et al. 2008, 477.)

2.3 E-Marketing methods

In the previous part, we discussed about the six stages of SOSTAC model for developing a marketing plan. In this part, we will look at several methods used for online marketing purposes, including creating an online customer experience through website design and using interactive marketing communications.

2.3.1 Delivering an online customer experience through site design

Developing the capability to create and maintain an effective online presence through a website is a key part of Internet marketing. It means that the website and related communications must deliver relevance - useful information - to audiences and results for the company. Internet marketers have to work hard to develop consumer trust and deliver a great experience for their audience. (Chaffey 2006, 302.)

Which factors give influence to customer experience? Which characteristics of website encourage visitors to come back again? A survey by Forrester company which mentioned by Chaffey et al. (2008, 226) showed that web users believe four main factors lead them to return to the site:

- High quality content: It is not only means having the right information, but also requires putting that information in the right place at the right time that is helpful to site visitors. As Gary Vaynerchuk said, “If content is King, then Context is God” (Faeth, 2012).
- Ease of use: Easy-to-use sites mean good navigation. The site should be simple enough for visitors to see information and interact with.
- Quick to download or load: Visitors won’t wait for a long time to interact with the site. More than 40 % of people will abandon a site if it takes longer than three seconds to load (Kissmetrics 2012). Hence, the site needs to be optimized so that they can be quickly downloaded.
- Updated frequently: It is necessary for the content of the website to be updated regularly. It helps to increase search engine ranking, compete again competitors and attract repeat visitors (Cosmos 2013).

Alison Lancaster, head of marketing and catalogues of John Lewis, said that: “A good site should always begin with the user... Customers want the convenience and ease of ordering. They want a site that is quick to download, well-structured and easy to navigate”. (Chaffey 2006, 302.) Those factors are characteristics of a good site. However, creating a good site is not enough. In the online world, there are millions of “good sites”. The questions marketers should raise for themselves are “How will our site stand out of others?” or “What is the Online Value Proposition (OVP) of our site?” (Chaffey et al. 2008, 308-309.) To define OVP, Chaffey (2006,144) suggested 6Cs of customer motivation to be considered. They are: Content, Customization, Community, Convenience, Choice and Cost Reduction.

2.3.2 Interactive online marketing communications

Developing a great online customer experience is not the only thing that needs to be done to achieve successful Internet marketing outcomes. Internet marketers have to select the appropriate online and offline marketing communications techniques to

maximize quality visitors. Figure 4 summarizes several online and offline marketing communications that will be explained later (Chaffey 2006, 349).

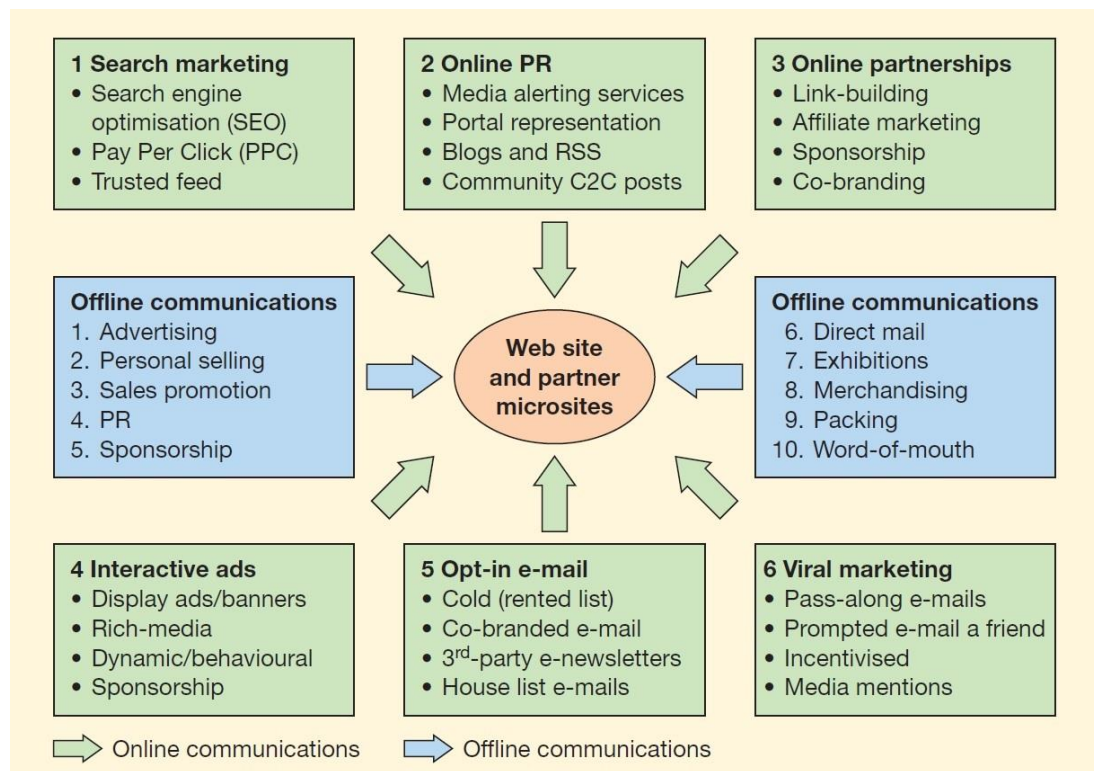


FIGURE 4. Options available in the communications mix for increasing visitors to a website (Chaffey 2006, 349)

Before focusing on the main part, online promotion techniques, it is necessary to understand about the offline promotion techniques. Offline promotion refers to the traditional communication tools such as advertising, PR, personal selling, word-of-mouth. Offline communication is effective at reaching an audience to encourage them to visit a site and explaining the online value proposition. However, it also has some disadvantages include: higher cost of using, poorer targeting, less detailed information, less personalized and less interactive experience. (Chaffey 2006, 371.)

On the other hand, online promotion techniques help to solve the main disadvantages of offline promotion techniques. In general, there are six approaches for online promotion to build site traffic showed in figure 4. They are search engine marketing, online PR, online partnerships, interactive ads, opt-in-email and viral marketing.

1) Search engine marketing

“Search” is an Internet user’s regular activity for finding information listed by search provider such as Google, Yahoo, Bing, etc. The research of iProspect group (2004) showed that over half of Internet users Search at least once a day and 81,7 % of them will start a new search if they cannot find a relevant answer in the first 3 pages. Hence, having site address on the top of the displayed information list is vital. Marketers achieve that through search engines (SE) marketing techniques include Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Pay-Per-Click (PPC).

SEO (Search Engine Optimized) is the process of improving traffic to a website by increasing the site’s visibility in search engine natural-results (BusinessDictionary, n.d.) There are several methods to improve search engine ranking, however, the most important things for marketers to do are analyzing relevant keywords for indexing and creating unique content with that. The advantage of SEO is that traffic can be gained with minimum or no cost. However, it takes long time and much effort to achieve results.

PPC (Pay Per Click) is a SE approach which marketer pays to search engine providers to get the site address display on “sponsor list”. Cost is count base on each time Internet users click on the link on the list and direct to the advertiser’s website (Chaffey et al. 2008). PPC cost more in comparison with SEO, however, it helps achieve site traffic improvement faster. Some popular PPC ad programs are “Google Adwords”, “Overture” and “MIVA”. (Chaffey 2006.)

Internet users get the search result by giving the search engine keywords that related to information they want to achieve. Hence, it is important to have the right keywords, keyphrases. Keywords can be found by using some popular keywords analyzed sites such as Google Keyword Planner, Google Analytics and WordStream. (SEOBOOK 2014.)

2) Online PR

Online PR involves activities geared towards influencing media, communities and audiences that exist solely on the Internet using online channels. That includes search engines, blogs, new search, forums, discussion threads, social network and other online communication tools. (Odden 2006.)

Chaffey et al. (2008) identifies four key differences between online PR (e-PR) and traditional PR. Firstly, in online PR, the audience is connected to organizations. Secondly, the members of the audience are connected to each other. Thirdly, in online PR, the audience has access to other information. And finally, there are the audiences who pull information toward themselves in e-PR.

Generally, there are four key areas of e-PR. They are search marketing activities, brand engagement activities, buzz-building activities and brand protection activities (Chaffey et al. 2008, 304.) Depending on the stage of site development, marketers plan for suitable activities as described in Figure 5.

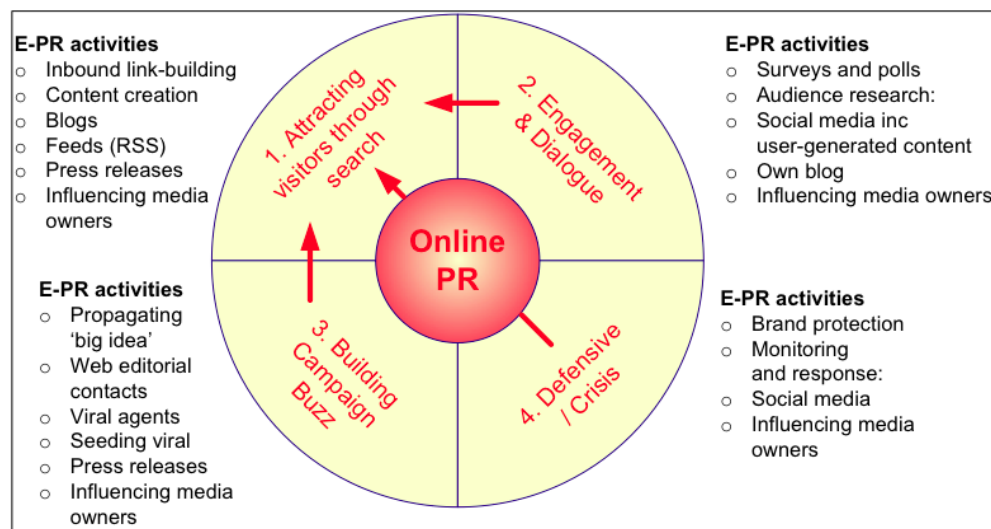


FIGURE 5. Online PR options (SmartInSights 2014)

3) Online Partnerships

As one P of the new marketing mix, Partnership is an important element of marketing strategy. There are three types in online partnership include: link building, affiliate marketing and online sponsorship.

Link building refers to the process of getting external pages to link to a page on your website. Link building is a difficult and time-consuming process which is hard to control. (Kim 2014.) McGaffin (2004) describes the main principle of link building as "Create great content, link to great content and great content will link to you".

Affiliate marketing is a way for a business to sell its products by signing up individuals or companies who market the company's product for a commission (Entrepreneur, n.d). Affiliate marketing is a low risk, high return approach with fixed cost. It is a pay-for-performance method, hence it is ideal for market expansion. (Prestige Marketing, n.d.) However, marketers shouldn't overestimate this method. False by using affiliate marketing may destroy the merchant's reputation and raise the total cost (Toletino 2012).

Online sponsorship is defined as the linking of a brand with related content or context for the purpose of creating brand awareness and strengthening brand appeal a form that is clearly distinguishable from a banner, button or other standardized ad unit (Ryan & Whiteman, 2000). According to Smith and Zook (2011, 349), the benefits of online sponsorship are cost effective, niche target groups reaching, wide ranging objectives and creative opportunities. However, it also has some disadvantages such as difficult to control, limited information in the message to audiences and possible to be misunderstood. Hence, sponsorship program should be carefully planned for successful deployment.

4) Interactive Advertising

Online advertising takes place when an advertiser pays to place advertising content on another website. Advertising is possible on a range of sites to drive traffic to an organization's destination site, micro site (Chaffey 2006).

Besides of traffic driving, Cartellieri (1997, 44-63) summarizes some other objectives of internet advertising including: deliver content, enable transaction, shape attitudes, solicit response and encourage retention. However, Internet advertising also has some weaknesses according to Chaffey et al. (2008, 320). Firstly, it is the poor and diminishing clickthrough rates. Due to several advertising displays on website banner, users get the habit of banner blindness – ignore information display in the banner. Secondly, online advertising has a relatively high cost compared to other online marketing tools. Lastly, the branding effectiveness is difficult to calculate and quantify. For successful interactive advertising, marketers need to choose a suitable target advertising network. The advertisement should be created to send informative message to audiences without annoying them. For example, one solution Facebook is using is displayed ad-not-look-like-ad. (InnovationPEI, n.d.)

5) Email Marketing

Email marketing is a form of direct marketing that uses electronic mail as a means of communicating commercials to target audiences. In general, every email sent to potential and current customers could be considered as email marketing. Email marketing is a powerful tool that is used popularly due to its advantages such as cheap cost, flexibility and measurability. (Hollier 2014.) However, in the minds of many Internet users, email is evil. It is SPAM (Sending Persistent Annoying eMail) sent by unscrupulous traders (Chaffey et al. 2008, 325). Therefore, they usually ignore watching this type of email.

To avoid this situation, marketers use opt-in-email system. This is the system that allows audiences to decide if they want to receive email from the site or not (Rouse, n.d). By giving options, marketers will reduce the possibility of being listed as SPAM. Using opt-in-email is just a half part to help marketer reach niche audiences. The design and content of the email should also be considered for a successful marketing campaign. Chaffey et al. (2008, 328) suggested the effective email should:

- Grab attention in the subject line and body
- Be brief and be relevant to target
- Be personalized. Even it is one email form for all recipients in email list, but each individual should be named.
- Provide opt-out, unsubscribe options.
- Hyperlink to website for more detail content.
- Have clear call-to-action at the start and end of the message.
- Be tested for effectiveness.
- Operate within legal and ethical constraints for a country.

6) Viral Marketing

According to Dr. Wilson (2012), viral marketing describes any strategies that encourage individuals to pass on a marketing message to others, creating the potential for exponential growth in the message's exposure and influence. Simply put, viral marketing (or also called buzz marketing) means creating messages that contain concepts within them that are absorbed by the people that come into contact with the message and making these messages compelling enough so that people pass them on (Graham 1999). An example of viral marketing is a video used to promote the re-imagining of the

movie Carrie. The marketing team created a “telekinetic coffee shop scenario” where an angry woman in a coffee shop was made to look like she had the powers of telekinesis. This YouTube video has more than 50 million views, and was a great example of creating experiences that people could remember and tell others about. (CarrieNYC 2013.)

Viral marketing is a useful tool for rapidly and effectively generated traffic to a website. The content has high credibility due to the method of sharing from people one knows. Furthermore, with the help of Internet technology, sharing is easier and preferable than ever. Secondly, viral marketing is cost effective. With the support of social networking such as Facebook, YouTube, the viral campaign can be low cost or even free of charge. Thirdly, viral marketing can reach a wide range of audiences; hence it helps to discover new hidden customers. However, buzz marketing also has some disadvantages. Firstly, even its wide range of audiences helps find new customers; however, it also creates a possibility of targeting the wrong group. The marketing message sent to wrong customers is a waste of time and resources. Moreover, viral marketing is hard to control and difficult to measure. The characteristic of information spreading by sharing make viral marketing is almost impossible to be controlled by the marketers. Hence it raises a risk of spreading negative effect on the marketing message that should be managed. (onlinemarketingin60minutes, n.d.)

How to have a successful viral marketing campaign? The research of Jonah Berger and Katherine Milkman (2012) showed that online content goes viral when: it was positive, dwelling on positive issues or topic; it evoked a strong emotion reaction (joy, fear, anger); it was practically useful. There are six elements of the effective viral marketing strategy include:

- Give away products or services
- Provides for effortless transfer to others
- Scales easily from small to very large
- Exploits common motivations and behaviors
- Utilizes existing communication networks
- Take advantage of other resources.

(Jonah et al. 2012, 192-205.)

3 RESEACH METHODOLOGY

The data used for analyzing the current situation is mainly secondary data which are conducted through the Internet, as well as from the other research resources. However, it is necessary to have a primary research to gather data of customer segmentation and some other aspects for a better marketing strategy.

This chapter is written to discuss about the marketing research used for the marketing plan. Some questions will be answered in this part are: What is the purpose of the research? How has it been created? How data is collected? What is the result?

3.1 The purpose of the research

According to Hague (2006), marketing research is the systematic and objective collection and interpretation of data to help reduce risk in marketing decisions.

In this thesis, the purpose of the research is to gather information on the tourist market to find answer to the Situation Analysis's question "Where are we now?" in the Marketing Plan. The data collected from this research is used to analyze several factors of the market such as the market demand, the customer behavior. Then, the research will help to find the niche market and suitable strategy.

3.2 Research methods

In marketing research, there are two types of research methods usually used. They are qualitative research and quantitative research. Qualitative research is used to find out about people's attitudes and feelings. It explores how people feel about products and services they use. Data collecting methods for qualitative research are in-depth interviews, observation interviews and focus group interviews. (Hague 2006, 75-93.) If qualitative research helps to answer the questions "What", "How" and "Why" of the phenomenon, then quantitative research answers the questions "How much", "How many". Aliaga and Gunderson (2003) describe quantitative research as "explaining phenomenon by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematical based methods". Quantitative research obtains three different classifications of numbers including market measurements, customer profiles and attitude data. In quantitative research, data is collected using direct measurement and self-completion surveys (questionnaires). (Hague 2006, 94-111.)

After understanding the definition of each research method, the next question that should be answered is: “What method should be used for this thesis?”. According to Qualitative Research Consultants Association (QRCA), qualitative research is used for: new product idea generation and development; exploring market segments such as demographic and customer group; understanding perceptions of a company, brand, category or product. (QRCA 2014.) On the other hand, quantitative research is most commonly used when marketers want to measure the amount of people think, feel or behave in certain change. Therefore, it is more useful for changing strategy of existing products, services. (tutor2u 2014.) As this thesis is a marketing plan for new ideas generation and finding suitable market segmentation, the qualitative research method should be used.

The qualitative research data, with the purpose of exploring the Vietnamese tourist information searching behavior was collected through interviews (semi structured). Targeted interviewees were foreign tourists in Vietnam. The interviews were conducted during the writer’s trip across Vietnam in 2013. Interviewees were picked with different ages and genders in different regions of Vietnam. Questions for interviewees are open-ended questions focusing mainly on what kind of Vietnam’s tourist information they were looking for and how do they find the answers (appendix A). Each interview took about 30 minutes. Total amount of interviewees are 20 peoples.

3.3 Research results and analysis

Question 2 “Where do you come from?” and Question 3: “How long will you stay in Vietnam?” were also excluded from the analysis due to the small amount of interviewees. The other questions provide in-depth information that is very useful for the marketing plan.

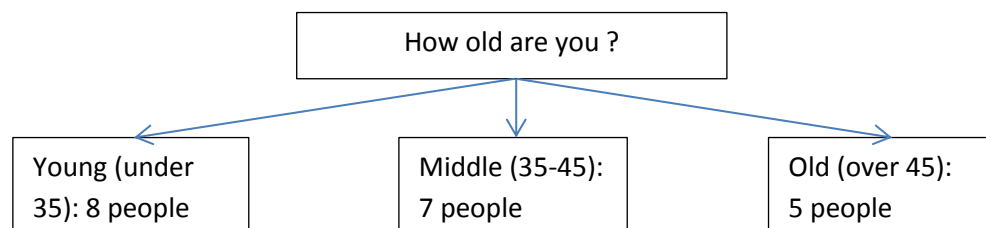


FIGURE 6. Age range of interviewees

Through the answers for question 1. “How old are you?”, the author classified interviewees into three different groups. The first group includes people below 35 years old (8 peoples). The writer defines them as “Young”. The second group includes people from 35 to 45 (7 peoples). They are called “Middle”. The last group includes foreign tourists who are more than 45 years old (5 peoples). They are called “Old”. With each group, there are several distinctive characteristics that will be described later.

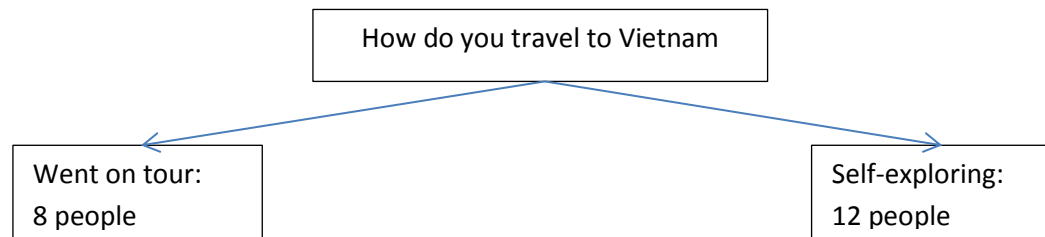


FIGURE 7. Type of travelers

For question 4. “How do you travel to Vietnam”, answers are divided into two groups. The first group includes people who went on a tour in the beginning, or fly to Vietnam and book a tour here. The second group includes people who travel by themselves without joining any tour. Obviously, people in “old” and “middle” catalogues mainly belong to the first group and the “young” catalogue includes people in the second group.

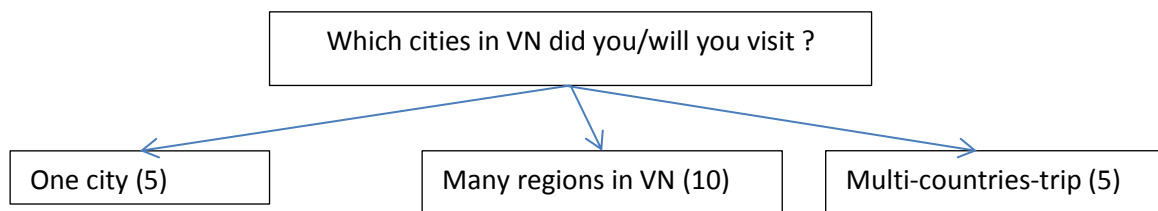


FIGURE 8. Traveler's choices of visited cities

There are many different answers for question 5. “Which cities in Vietnam did you visit and will visit?”. Some of them only visit the city where the interview was conducted. However, mostly interviewees chose to visit different cities in different regions of Vietnam. Three main cities: Hanoi, Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh cities are favorite places for them. For some tourists, Vietnam is one country in the multi-country-trip in Southeastern Asia.

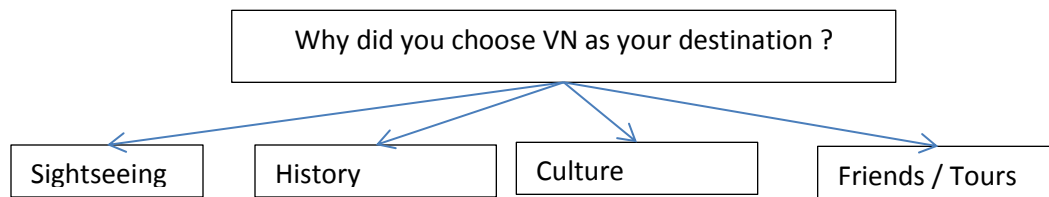


FIGURE 9. Reasons for choosing Vietnam

For question 6. “Why did you choose Vietnam as your destination?” there were several reasons including: Introduction from friends, discount tour, interesting in Vietnam history, culture, cuisine. Many chose Vietnam because they wanted to visit the UNESCO World Heritages in there (such as Ha Long Bay, Phong Nha – Ke Bang national park, Hoi An ancient town, etc.) Some young tourists fascinated with Vietnamese city life in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh cities. Some tourists firstly targeted Vietnam’s nearby countries like Thailand, China and then went to Vietnam.

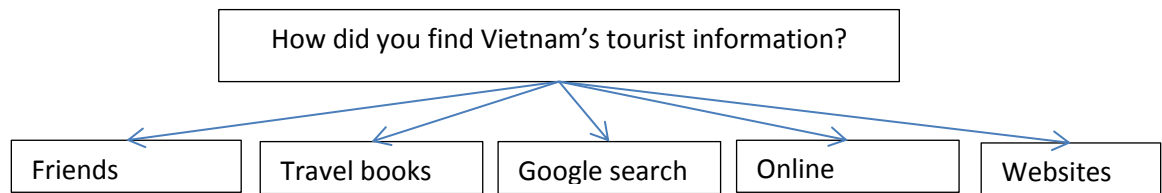


FIGURE 10. Sources of Vietnam's tourist information

Interviewees also have different answers for question 7. “How did you find Vietnam’s tourist information”. For “old” tourists, the trusted resources are friends. Many of them took information from the tour provider that they book the trip. Travel guide books are also their favorite resources. For “young” and “middle” groups, there are more people looking for information through the Internet. The first Internet resource they use is Google Search. Beside of using the search engine, there are some famous tourist sites used such as lonelyplanet.com or tripadvisor.com. Many of them found advices from online social network such as Facebook, Twitter or Google Plus. Surprisingly, none of them found any useful information from local tourist government sites.

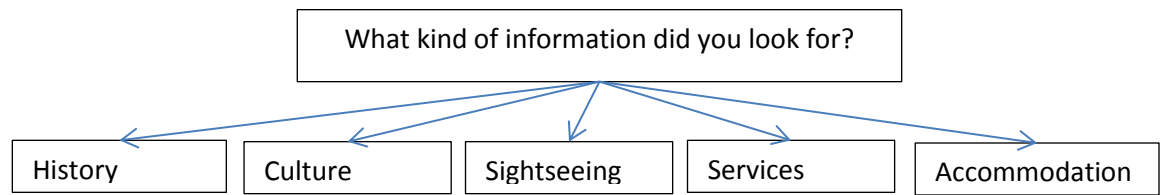


FIGURE 11. Vietnam's information which travelers look for

To answer question 8. "What kind of information did you look for?", interviewees gave a lot of information. Most of them look for the information on history, culture, cuisine and sightseeing places. For many people in "young" and "middle", they also find information about tourist adventure service, life style. For people who were not going on the tour, accommodation and travel tips are must-look-for information.

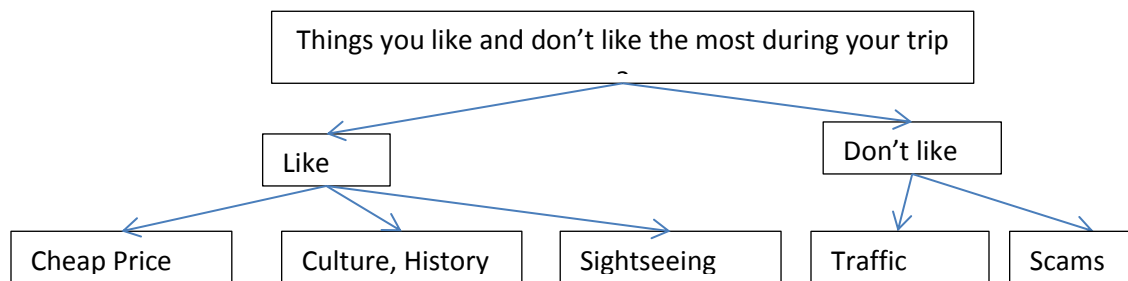


FIGURE 12. Things travellers like/don't like the most

For question 9. "Can you list the main things that you like and don't like the most during your trip?", there are more answers about what they like. Some of them didn't list anything they don't like. In general, things they like are cheap price, interesting culture and historical place, beautiful sightseeing, beach, mountain, national park and friendly local people. Things that tourists worry about include traffic, pick pocket and some local services trying to trick them (taxi drivers try to drive the long way for more money, shop sells products with expensive prices).

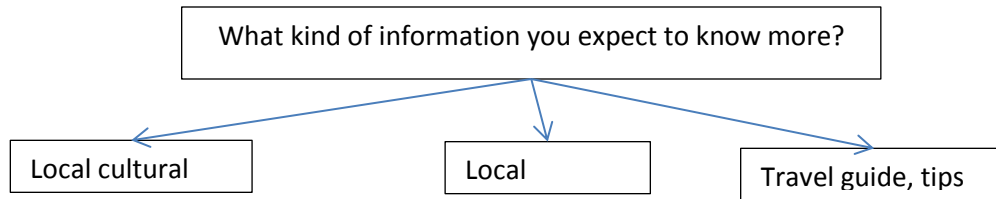


FIGURE 13. Information tourists want to know more

For the last question “What kind of information you expect to know more”, tourists want to know more information about local cultural events in the region they visit. The local experiences (for example: eating in the place local people eat) are also very important for them. They also want to have more details in travel guide, tips for using public transportation, buying famous local products such as handicrafts.

In conclusion, the result of the research gave some useful information. Firstly, we can see that promotion of Vietnam’s tourism on the Internet is very important when many people looking for information online. Mostly, people who use the Internet to search for information are young, below 35 years old. Also, people in this group prefer exploring the tourist place by themselves and are quite elastic with the price. They want to know the best way to enjoy local experiences with acceptable price. Foreign tourists are also quite afraid of being tricked when using services, or buying stuff. Hence, a website which provides a complete package of information that helps them to use less time preparing the trip will be very welcome.

3.4 Validity and reliability of the research

Validity and reliability are two terms on research design which help to reduce the possibility of getting wrong answers. Reliability refers to the extent to which data collection techniques or analysis procedures will yield consistent findings. Threats to reliability include subject or participant error and bias, observer error and bias. The reliability of the study is checked by three questions. Will the measures give the same result on other occasions, will similar observation be reached by other observers and is there transparency in how sense was made from the raw data. (Saunders et al. 2009, 156.) Validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about (Sanders et al. 2009, 157). The three main ways to characterize validity in

research studies are “face validity”, “construct validity” and “internal validity” (Greener 2008, 37).

The validity and reliability of the research were checked firstly through the process of interview. The interviewer had recorded all the interviews and sum up by text. Therefore, the accuracy of the answers is confirmed. Secondly, the writer had compared the research's result with the secondary data in similar topics. The secondary data are collected from prestigious organizations (such as Pew, University of Missouri) and books about similar topics (such as “Modeling tourist information search behavior” of Dogan, “Consumer Behavior in Tourism” of John Swarbrooke). With these approaches of checking data, the research validity and reliability is somehow affirmative. As the purpose of the research is to generate ideas for the project with qualitative research; therefore, the researcher focus more on the ideas are given by interviewees than the relationship between the age of each group and their ideas. The writer tried to confirm the validity and realibility of the research by several methods. However, the open-end questions that were given to interviewees lead to the low validity and realibility of the research. Therefore, in the future, it is necessary to have a quantitative research to check again the validity and realibility.

4 CASE VIETNAM101.INFO

This part is written to apply the SOSTAC marketing plan model into the project Vietnam101.info. This thesis will focus on analyzing the situation, showing the object and finding suitable strategies and tactics.

4.1 Situation analysis:

The secondary data and primary data collected by marketing research in the previous part is used to help analyze the current situation of the business and surrounding environment. The factors effecting to the development of Vietnam101.info will be discussed through PEST analysis, customer analysis, competitor analysis, intermediary analysis, internal analysis and SWOT analysis.

PEST analysis

The mission of Vietnam101.info is to provide Vietnamese tourist information. Therefore, the PEST factors for the project are Vietnam and global related factors that impact the demand of travelling to Vietnam or searching Vietnam's tourist information.

Socialist Republic of Vietnam is a single-party socialist republic country ruled by the Communist Party. The government decides all the policies and keeps the political stability. In 2014, the Government has several policies to support the tourism industry. It was proposed to extend the visa exemption for tourists from the EU, USA, Canada, Australia, Hong Kong and Taiwan (Ngamsangchaikit 2014). In the "strategy on Viet Nam's tourism development until 2020, vision to 2030" approved by Minister Nguyen Tan Dung (2011), the development of the infrastructure, technical facilities for tourism and the market development, tourism promotion are the key strategies (VietnamGovernment, 2011). In conclusion, Vietnam's government strongly supports for the development of tourism and tourist promotion online and offline.

Vietnam economy is affected by the global recession. However, it still shows some improvement in 2014. The GDP expanded 5.18 % in the period January – June. The country's economy, especially the tourism industry was heavily impacted by the conflict with China when China moved an oil rig into waters claim by Vietnam's government. The protest in Vietnam to against Chinese during this disputation decreased the amount of tourists from Asia in general. (AFP, 2014.) Vietnam exports continue to increase with

total revenue of 70.88 billion USD in first half of 2014, 14 % more compared to the same period of last year. Export still higher than import, made trade surplus continue to happen. Oil price keeps increasing, leading to the increase of tourist transportation. (Viettrade 2014.) Vietnam annual inflation rate slows in June to 4.94 % (Reuter 2014). In summary, Vietnam economy still affected by the global recession, but it is recovering. The tourist industry, which takes an important part of Vietnam economy, is also affected. The conflict with China strongly impact to the tourist industry, however, it is also a chance for Vietnam's tourism to focus more on the European market.

The population of Vietnam is about 93 million with a annual growth rate of 1 %. Vietnam has 54 distinctive ethnic groups with the main group is Kinh (85.7 %). The Buddhist is the main religion with 9.3 %. Other religions include Catholic, Hoa Hao, Cao Dai, Protestant, Muslin. The main language is Vietnamese while second preferable is English. (CIA 2014.) Vietnam traditional culture is influenced by Confucianism with the role of family and the concept of Face. Vietnam has many different national and regional cultural festivals, events which very attractive to foreign tourists such as the New Year festival, Lim festival, Hue festival (holidaysvietnam 2014). The diverse culture of different region is an impressive characteristic attracting foreign tourists to go to Vietnam.

The impact of technology in the tourist industry is based on the situation of e-commerce and the infrastructure. The e-commerce system of Vietnam is fast developing. Online booking is more and more popular in hotel and tourist industry. According to the report of Euromonitor International, online hotel room booking account for 35 % of total number of rooms sold during the previous 2 years. The main service providers are Agoda.com, Booking.com, Expedia.com. (Vietnam.com 2013.) Current transportation infrastructure is inadequate to meet Vietnam's growing needs. However, the Government has made improvements in the transportation sector is top priority. (WFW 2013.) The infrastructure development strategy of Vietnam also received interest of foreign investors. Australia is funding road infrastructure, with a focus of connecting Vietnam's Mekong delta to the mainland Southeast Asia region (DFAT 2014). And by 2020, a new international airport is expected to be opened in Dong Nai (Bowen 2011). The development of e-commerce and infrastructure make more convenient for foreign tourists to visit Vietnam. Therefore, it is one of the elements which help to improve Vietnam tourist industry.

In conclusion, the PEST analysis of Vietnam showed that Vietnam is an attractive place for foreign tourists. And with more people wanting to visit Vietnam, it is a chance to develop a site that provides Vietnam's tourist information.

Customer analysis

The customer analysis is a vital part of the marketing plan. It helps to identify customers, access the need of customers and then specify how the product satisfies these needs.

Firstly, it is necessary to identify the target customer. In this thesis, as the provided service is tourist information, hence the question is "Who is the person who will use the Internet to search tourist information?". Obviously, the target customer must be the people who use Internet the most as the service which Vietnam101 provides run in Internet environment. They are people who like to travel and have time to travel. They like to know about the culture of other countries culture, cuisine and beautiful sightseeing. They are educated and have good income. The research of PEW group in America (2014) showed that people who use Internet the most have an age range from 18 to 49. It's also similar to the research in previous part when the interviewees who use Internet search belong to "young" and "middle" group. Also from the research of PEW, people in this group mostly belong to a middle income class. The level of education is college or higher. In summary, the demographic of ideal customer are people who age average of 35, middle income and educated.

Next, the demand of customers will be analyzed by answering the question: "What information do they search?". According to the research in previous part, the information they searched are: sightseeing place, accommodation, culture, travel tips and tour-provide information. According to the research of Jansen, Ciamacca and Spink (2008, 15), the tourist information topic is skewed toward the edges, with some topics being "very focus" (specific hotels, website, car rental, and locations) and others being "very general" (travel information, countries).

To satisfy the need of the customers, the service must provide information they want. Of course, it will need the huge database of information and take a lot of resources. Therefore, it is needed to prioritize types of information that will help the site to be different. It is the online value proposition of the site.

Competitor analysis

Being different is the key for Vietnam101.info to survive in the market of thousands websites providing Vietnam's tourist information service. To be different, it is necessary to understand the main competitors in the market.

According to the result of the research, there are two main websites that Vietnam's foreign tourists used to search for tourist information beside the Google search engine. They are Lonelyplanet.com and Tripadvisor.com.

Lonely Planet is one of the world's most successful travel publisher created by the married couple Tony and Maureen Wheeler. In 2007, BBC Worldwide bought 75 % share of the company and became the owner. In 2013, BBC sold it to NC2 Media with a loss of nearly £80 million. Till now, Lonely Planet has more than 100 million books printed in nine different languages. It has offices in Melbourne, London and Oakland, with over 450 employees and over 200 authors. Lonelyplanet.com is the company's main website to provide travel advices and promote its books. (LonelyPlanet 2014.) Lonely Planet travel guide is famous for its accurate and practical information on different travel topics. As Tony Wheeler said, "at Lonely Planet, we like to say that our writers go to the end of the road. And they had damn well better. Because I go to the end of the road" (LonelyPlanet, 2014).

Tripadvisor is the world's largest travel community that enables travelers to plan and have the good trip. Tripadvisor offers trusted advice from real travelers and a wide variety of travel choices and planning features with seamless link to booking tools. Tripadvisor has nearly 280 million monthly visitors and more than 170 million reviews and opinions covering more than 4 million accommodations, restaurants and attractions. (Tripadvisor 2014.) Tripadvisor is most well-known for its review system which helps travelers to find a suitable accommodation on their trip. However, because of their huge database of reviews, it is difficult for Tripadvisor employees to manage and eliminate fake and virtual reviews.

Lonely Planet and Tripadvisor are two giants in the market of online tourist information service. It is impossible for any startup to directly compete again them. However, they also have weak points. As a publisher, Lonely Planet's strategy focuses on promoting and selling its paper books. However, because of the free information on the Internet,

the market of printed books is narrowed down. The rush deal of BBC to sell Lonely Planet to NC2 Media is the sign of the company's unclear future. For Tripadvisor, its strongest point is also its weakest point. The wide-community of reviewers built the brand of the company. However, it brought together the intended fake reviews which reduced the trust of travelers to the site. Vietnam101 needs to find a strategy to avoid direct compete with these two sites and build its own unique sign.

Despite local sites weren't mentioned by interviewees in the research, they are still worth to be considered. Local sites include official websites of local government and private organizations such as vietnamtourism.com, phuot.com. The local government websites are trustful and have multiple languages. However, they are slow to update information and lack of promotion to foreign tourists. On the other hand, websites developed by individual organizations are informative, helpful and up to date, as the guide is written by local people. However, they only support in Vietnamese language because their main visitors are domestic travelers. Local sites provide a huge amount of interesting information that foreign sites hasn't dug yet. Therefore, it will be an advantage if Vietnam101 can cooperate with those local sites.

Intermediary Analysis

Internet intermediaries are key drivers in the development of the Internet and in distributing creative contents. For website like Vietnam101, the two most popular intermediaries are Google and Facebook.

Google is a company founded in 1998 by Larry Page and Sergey Bin. Google provides many different Internet services (for examples News, Maps, Mail, etc.). However, the most well-known service is the Google Search. It is the world's most-used web search engine owned by Google, which handles more than three billion searches each day. (Google 2014.) Hence, it is critical for any website to appear in Google first page as these spots receive 58.4 percent of all clicks from users (Danny 2011).

Facebook is an online social networking service founded by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004. From a small online service for student in Havard to communicate, Facebook has had a fast development to become the most popular online social network with more than billion active users. According to SocialMediaToday (2014) 72 % of Internet users actively use online social network and 70 % of marketers get new customers through

Facebook. Therefore, it is vital for any companies to include Facebook in the intermediary list.

Google and Facebook are two most important intermediaries to be used in Vietnam101 marketing strategy. However, the list of intermediaries doesn't end there. With the development of the Internet, there are more and more websites, services that can be used to deliver the marketing message. For example, they are Twitter, Bing, Pinterest, and many more. Therefore, it is necessary to update and include new intermediaries in the marketing plan.

Internal Analysis

In this part, it is analyzed the current contribution of the Internet to Vietnam101, its capability and the current stage model. Currently, Vietnam101 is still an idea in the paper. The idea is to build a website to provide free Vietnam tourist information for foreign tourists. There is no website as well as any activity yet. It also doesn't have any contribution from the Internet. Only the domain Vietnam101.info is registered and the host is purchased. The financial resource is limited. The budget for Vietnam101 is too low for running high cost e-marketing campaigns. The project also lacks of human resource. Vietnam101 doesn't have a separated technology unit for maintaining the website. Basically, it is a one-person project with no financial support from any organization. Vietnam101 has many difficulties. However, its disadvantages can also be the advantages for Vietnam101's development. The SWOT analysis in the next part will discuss about this matter.

SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis helps to understand Vietnam101's Strengths and Weaknesses, as well as identify Opportunities and Threats. Project's SWOT is analyzed based on the study of Internal Factors and External Factors.

TABLE 3. Summary of Vietnam101's SWOT analysis

Internal Factors	
Weaknesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of finance and human resources as well as facilities • No brand awareness • Lack experience in the tourist • Lack of tourist information database 	Strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing to try new ideas • Simple decision making process
External Factors	
Threats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive market • Strong competitors • Downturn of economy 	Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tally with the tendency of Vietnam tourist development • Growing market • Cooperation with local site providers • Technology development

Vietnam101 has many weaknesses. As in the Internal Analysis, Vietnam101 lacks the financial resource and human resource. It limits the marketing channels used to promote the site. Furthermore, as a new service in the tourist information market, Vietnam101's brand has unawareness. Therefore, it requires more effort to build up the image of the site. In addition, the project creator lacks experience and knowledge on the tourist industry. It is the barrier for the project's implementation. With the deficiency in database of tourist information, Vietnam101 will require more time to build the useful information system.

In spite of its weaknesses, Vietnam101 also has some strengths. If it were a recognized brand, Vietnam101 would have to be very careful when choosing strategies, because one wrong movement can destroy the brand image. However, starting as a blank paper, Vietnam101 has nothing to lose and can try any possible strategy. The experiment of new things comes with many risks, but it also brings more chances to be successful. Lacking of human resource is a disadvantage. However, the organization's simple structure also helps to simplify the decision making process. It will reduce time transferring idea into action.

Vietnam101 has to face many threats from the business environment. The Internet environment is a competitive market. If one traveler goes to Google and searches with the keyword: "Vietnam tourist information", there are thousands of results returned. It isn't easy to survive in that environment. Moreover, the project has not only many competitors, but also strong competitors. Lonely Planet and Trip Advisor are two giants in the tourist information industry. Booking.com and Agoda.com are famous website for accommodation booking services. It is impossible to compete with them directly. Finally, the downturn of the global economy is also a threat because it affects the travel budget of everybody. As people earned less, they are more interesting in earning money than travelling.

Despite facing many threats, Vietnam101 also has many opportunities. Firstly, as Vietnam has become an attractive destination, there are more and more foreign travelers looking for Vietnam's tourist information. Therefore, the market in which Vietnam101 targets is a potentially growing market. Secondly, the development of the site tallies with the tendency of Vietnam's tourist development, when the government puts tourist promotion as one of the key strategies. Thus, it is possible for Vietnam101 to receive support from the Government. Thirdly, the rapid expansion of domestic tourist's community is also an opportunity for Vietnam101. This community includes people who share the passion of travelling. They have lots of travelling experience and willing to share it. Therefore, if Vietnam101 can associate with this community, it will have a useful and practical information resource. Lastly, the development of Internet services offers many free effective tools for developing and promoting the site. Years ago creating a website was expensive, took time and required a person who understands IT deeply. Now, with free tools such as Wordpress, Wix, anybody can have their own website in an

hour or less. Moreover, online social network, a unique product of Internet era, is a perfect environment to advertise the website with the minimum cost.

Conclusion

The analyses of macro-environmental factors (PEST analysis), the market, competitors, intermediaries and customers, as well as the study of Vietnam101's internal factors give a full context of the current situation. These analyses help to find out the strengths and weaknesses of Vietnam101 along with the threats and opportunities it faces. Based on the analysis of the current situation, we can conclude that Vietnam101 have good condition to start. And with good objectives and strategies, the sites will succeed.

4.2 Objective setting

The mission of Vietnam101.info is to become the first choice of foreign tourists when they want to find information about Vietnam's tourism. To obtain that mission, it is necessary to have clear marketing and marketing communication objectives which is SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-limited). The objectives of Vietnam101.info are analyzed using Five S model (Sell, Serve, Speak, Save and Sizzle). As a not-for-profit project, Vietnam101.info doesn't target to sell products. The amount of people who purchase product is converted into the amount of people who visit and revisit the website. To Serve, Vietnam101 is created with the purpose of helping tourists to find information about Vietnam, and the long term goal is to help customer purchase fly tickets and accommodation on-site. The website objective is also to speak with customer, providing advice and travel tips using the online social network. Vietnam101 mostly targeted to help visitors to save the time preparing for the trip to Vietnam, as well as the money they use for the trip. And finally, for sizzle, Vietnam101 targets to extend the brand through online network inside and outside of Vietnam. By using Five S model, the goal of Vietnam101 in the short term is divided into three main objectives. The first objective of Vietnam101 is to **have 1000 unique visitors / month after 6 months** launching the website. The second objective of Vietnam101 is to have **active present in online social network such as Facebook (1000 followers) after 6 months** launching the website. And the third objective of Vietnam101 is to **have the basis of content database about Vietnam's tourist information with 1000 articles that's helpful to visitor after 6 months** launching the website.

The objectives are checked if they are SMART after analyzing using 5S model. Firstly, the objectives are specific with three detail of getting visitors, presenting in online social network and building content database. Secondly, these objectives are measurable with clear number: 1000 visitors, 1000 followers and 1000 articles. Thirdly, the objectives are achievable when comparing to a normal start-up website. The objectives are realistic in context of the resource that are made available. And finally, the objectives of Vietnam101 are time-limited with the deadline of 6 months. However, Vietnam101's objectives are not fixed. It can be re-checked and changed to suit with the situation during the launching time.

4.3 Strategy defining (STP model)

After setting the objectives, the strategy for the marketing of Vietnam101.info is defined using the STP (Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning) model.

Segmentation

TABLE 4. Summary of variables for Vietnam's tourist information search segmentation

Age	Under 18 18 – 49 Above 49
Income	Low income Middle income High income
Education	Under college College College +
Lifestyle	Rarely use the Internet Use internet frequently
Travel type	Exploring travel Relaxing travel
Information search Behavior	Search information in Internet Depend on the tour providers Use travel book guidance Ask from friends

The segmentation of Vietnam's tourist information search is informed by the market research and customer analysis in previous parts. As summarized in table 4, the factors for segmentation are age, income, education, lifestyle, travel type and information search behavior. The age of foreign visitors is ranged from under 18 to over 49. The income is divided into low income, middle income and high income. The levels education of the searcher is under college, college or above college. Searchers can be people who rarely use the Internet or use internet frequently. They are people who like to take travel as an adventure with many surprises, or people who like to have some relaxing days. The resources of information they search are travel books, friends, tour providers and the Internet. As mentioned in the research, the writer divided the target customer into three segments. However, while segmenting the target customers, the writer decided to join the "young" and "middle" into one segment as they both use Internet actively compared to the "old" segment. By combining the findings of the research and secondary data, the writer decided to divide customers into two segments with characteristics as follows. The first segment includes people who age ranged from 18 to 49. They have middle income. Their education level is college or higher. They use the Internet frequently. And in case of searching tourist information, the Internet is their main resources. This segment includes people who are "explorers" which mean they prefer adventurous activities when traveling. They enjoy finding new things in the trip. The second segment includes people who older than 49. The income of people in this segment is high. As old people, they are less active to use the Internet than the previous segment. And they prefer relaxing on the beach or cruising on vacation. For this segmentation, the main information resources are travel books, friends and tour providers. Both defined market segments are growing and has potential for development. Vietnam101 needs to decide how to target its segments. Should Vietnam101 serve for all segments, or concentrate on one defined market. That issue will be discussed in the next part.

Targeting

Vietnam101 is a start-up project with limited resources and expertise. Therefore, the most suitable market targeting strategy for Vietnam101 is concentrated marketing. Vietnam101 should focus on the need of one defined niche market. The decision of the targeted segment for Vietnam101 relies on the abilities of using the Internet to search tourist information. As from the result of PEW's research (2014) and the decision of

segmentation in the previous part, the segment of people who age ranged from 18 to 49 uses Internet most frequently. People in this group know how to use Google to search for tourist information. They also actively use online social network for communication. And with them, the Internet is the main resource when looking for information. Therefore, this group is the most potential market segment for Vietnam101.

Positioning

As mentioned before, there are a lot of websites which provides Vietnam's tourist information. In the research, most interviewees who searched information from Internet know about Tripadvisor (tripadvisor.com) and Lonelyplanet (Lonelyplanet.com). These websites have tons of travel information, tips, tricks and review for every destination. The domestic websites (such as vietnamtourism.com, vietnamtourism.org.vn) are less popular. However, they also provide useful information for international travelers who want to visit Vietnam. While on the beginning stage, Vietnam101 with its limited resources and expertise cannot build the database as huge and wide as its competitors. Therefore, to compete with other sites, Vietnam101 has to concentrate on some tourist information areas which help to build its online value proposition. Vietnam101 needs to offer to its customers the value that they can't, or hardly can find on other websites. Based on the needs of targeted segment, the online value propositions of Vietnam101 are the budget travel information and the local experiences. The website will help visitors to plan their tour as low cost as possible and gain as much local experience as possible. Where to stay? What to do? What to eat? Where to go? How to do it cheaply and like local people? The website will focus on helping visitors to answer those questions. Moreover, having good content is not enough. Vietnam101 needs to choose suitable integrated marketing communication techniques to promote the website in different channels. Due to the limited resources, it is necessary for the website to choose the approaches that is low cost. And to maximize the effectiveness, the channels that Vietnam101 targets must suit with the main value it provides – budget travel with local experiences. In summary, the strategy Vietnam101 use to position the website includes two parts. The first part is to build the content of the website which focus on budget travel and enhance the local experiences. The second part is to promote the website in different online channels using low-cost integrated marketing communication techniques. The detail tactics for this strategy will be explained in the next section.

4.4 Tactics

The implementation of strategy for Vietnam101 uses the marketing mix of the 8 Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical Evidence and Partnership).

Product

The product of Vietnam101 is the content of the website. In the beginning, Vietnam101 will focus on providing budget travel information as the online value proposition. It includes information of the to-do things in cheap price, inexpensive place to stay, how to transport with acceptable price, what traditional food to eat and where to have it with good price in different location in Vietnam. Besides, the other travel information such as information about sightseeing place, culture, etc. will also be collected from other tourist information websites. The travel information is not only presented in the form of written text but also in the form of pictures and video clips. Vietnam101 will have one special column for Vietnamese and international tourists to write about their experiences and story during their trip. Then, when the database of travel information is big enough, Vietnam101 will start to publish travel eBooks in several topics such as “101 places you must see in Vietnam”, or “Vietnam’s travel pocket guide” for example. The eBooks can be downloaded and viewed in any devices so that travelers can read them anywhere and anytime.

Price

According to the competitor analysis, many websites such as Lonely Planet, Fodors use similar pricing strategies. They usually set the price from 10USD to 20 USD for their publication, such as guidebook, travel phrase application. To have the advantage of its competitors, Vietnam101 plans to offer all products for free. Visitors can look for information, register as members, and download eBooks completely free. This pricing strategy helps to attract more visitors to the website, which is the most important matter in the beginning stage. Whether pricing strategy can be changed in the future depends on the popularity of the website.

With this current pricing strategy, the website is financed by the project’s creator and investment of UN-Habitat. The budget for developing the site is limited. However, in the future, the website can finance itself by selling advertisement on the website, connecting

with tour providers, etc... There will be many solutions for Vietnam101 to earn money, the one and only requirement is having huge amount of visitors.

Place

Using the Internet as the main method to share information, Vietnam101 ensures that the information can be reached at anytime and anywhere. The website will also be optimized to support mobile web browser, so visitors can easily look for information with their mobile or any devices which connects to the Internet. Furthermore, Vietnam101 will have travel publications that can be downloaded and used without the requirement of Internet connection.

To ensure that the information on the website is easily available to as many ideal customers as possible, Vietnam101 uses online social networks as the multi-channel for distribution. Vietnam101 will set up an account on Facebook, Twitter, G+, Pinterest. And for every time when the website has a new post, content manager will also update status on online social networks with a link to the new post on the website. Therefore, visitors can notify just by following Vietnam101 on online social networks.

Promotion

Search engines such as Google, Yahoo are favorite tools for international tourists to search for information. Therefore, it is vital for Vietnam101 to be listed in top five pages in search engines when tourists search for Vietnam's tourist information. The website achieves that by using Search Engine Optimization (SEO). By using Google Keyword Planner, Vietnam101 finds most viewed keywords for Vietnam tourist information. And then, the website use on-page optimization while building the content of the website. The detail step by step on-page optimization is included in Appendix 2. Besides, Off-page optimization is also applied. The process of using SEO is quite complicated and requires a detail SEO plan which is separated from this thesis.

The second promotion technique for Vietnam101 is email marketing. Firstly, the website needs to build the email by asking visitors to register their email before they can download the website's free eBooks. Customer emails can also be collected from other tourist information websites. The email design and content needs to be interesting and avoid similar looking to SPAM mail.

Vietnam101 will focus on Facebook for online-PR campaign. By creating and actively using Facebook fan page to update information, the website targets to build the reputation in the community of travelers. Besides, Vietnam101 also uses forums of other tourist information websites (Tripadvisors, Virtual Tourist, Lonely Planet, etc.) as channels to advertise the website.

Finally, sponsorship for a competition is a good method to promote the website. Vietnam101 can sponsor for a competition such as creating video clips to introduce local tourism for local people to join. The clips can be used in the website to provide information for foreign tourists, and the competition helps to spread the brand of the website to Vietnamese citizens. However, this campaign can work only when Vietnam10's brand has some standing in the Internet.

People

Interacting with customers is very important to build traffic of re-visitors. On the website, there will be an area for visitors to comment under every post. They can comment using their Facebook's account and don't need to register. As Facebook is very popular among Internet users, this will make more convenient for website's visitors. Furthermore, the website will have a live chat module to help visitors directly communicate with employees of Vietnam101. It will also have a contact email for visitor to send emails if they have any problems and questions. Vietnam101 also use social networks such as Facebook, G+ and Twitter (which mostly focus on Facebook) for interacting with visitors. Users can post questions and feedbacks on Vietnam101's Facebook Fanpage and receive answers right on time. By providing multi-channel to communicate with customers, Vietnam101 want the customers to be convenient when interacting with the website.

Process

For Vietnam101, there are two processes that need to be optimized to have better performances. They are process of publishing information and process of answering customer's questions and feedback. There are several questions that employees need to ask themselves for successful deploying process. Is the published content attractive to visitors? If it is collected from other resources, is the post come from trusted resources and also including reference to the original post? Does the information duplicate from

previous post? Is the post optimized for SEO purpose? The procedure of publishing information need to be clearly defined and followed to ensure that the tourist information database is updated effectively, legally and support to the marketing purposes.

As mentioned, interacting with customers is very important to have re-visitors. When website's visitors give feedbacks and questions, they want it to be seriously considered and answered. The longer the time they have to wait for the answer, the more possibility they abandon the website. Therefore, the process of communicating with visitors need to be optimized so that the employees can answer questions and give feedback fast with helpful information and eliminate the possibility of missing questions from customers.

Physical Evidence

To attract viewers, the design of Vietnam101's website is an important element to consider. The website needs to be easy to navigate. The home page should provide many types of information, including newest news, most viewed news, photos and videos. The website will have a menu bar for fast navigation to different column such as information about sightseeing, cuisine, culture, tips and tricks, etc. When the visitors search information on the website, the searching function needs to be easy to use and the returned results are closest to what they plan to find. The website is required to be optimized for fast loading so that it can minimize the waiting time of viewers. However, the optimizing process takes time and money. One solution is to choose the pre-made website templates which were built by experts of the field. There are many templates in the Internet that suit to the requirements of Vietnam101 and have low cost or offer for free. After purchasing, the templates can be modified to fit with the requirements of Vietnam101. The example of Vietnam101's website layout can be viewed in Appendix 3.

Partnership

The communities of Vietnamese photographer such as vnphoto.net or xomnhiepanh.com are the treasure resources of beautiful sightseeing photos. Vietnam101 can make use of those resources by negotiating for affiliate marketing programs with these websites. By agreeing to use beautiful tourist photos on those websites as information on Vietnam101's website, Vietnam101 will have a rich photo database. On the reverse, the communities of Vietnamese photographer are also advertised. It is a win-win solution for both sides.

Vietnam101 also can offer link exchange programs with expat network (expat-blog.com, expat. Vn, xpat.life) and tour providers (vietnamtours.net, sinhcafe.com). This program helps Vietnam101 to have visitors from those sites. On reverse, by offering links to those websites, Vietnam101 helps international travelers to have more information about tours and expat communities in Vietnam.

4.5 Actions

TABLE 5. Action plan of marketing activities

Marketing activities	Date of expected completion	Success indicator
Stage 1		
Build website	15.11.14	Full function website
Collect tourist info from other websites	15.12.14	Have at least 500 articles on website
Stage 2		
Create social network accounts	15.11.14	Have accounts on Facebook, Google, Twitter, Youtube
Update tourist info database, focus on budget travel info	15.01.15	Have 500 more articles on website
Advertising on online social networks and forums (5 sites/day, repeatable)	15.01.15	Have about 80 unique visitors /week
PR on Facebook Fanpage (3 times /day on vietnam101's fanpage and other fanpages in similar topic)	15.02.15	Have 1000 followers on Facebook
Stage 3		
The email marketing program	15.04.15	Have 1000 email addresses
Link exchange program	15.03.15	Have link exchange with 6 other

		websites
Partnership program	15.04.15	Successfully negotiating with at least 1 website
Publish ebooks	15.04.15	Have 3 ebooks published

The marketing action plan is divided into three stages. The first stage is to prepare for the launching of Vietnam101's website. It includes creating the website and collecting tourist information in general. To build the website, it is necessary to purchase hosting, domain and buying website template. Time for this stage is two months. At the end of stage one, Vietnam101 needs to have a full function website with at least 500 travel's articles. The second stage is for promoting the website. The target locations for promoting are online social networks and forum for international travelers. Thus, Vietnam101 needs to have accounts on different online social networks such as Facebook, G+, Twitter and Pinterest and account on forum of travelers. The website is continued to have new posts every day which focus on budget travel information. And for every new post on the website, it is also updated in online network accounts of Vietnam101 (mostly focus on Facebook). The time scale of this stage is 3 months. And at the end of this stage, the website should have about 80 unique visitors per week. The database of the website at this time will have 1000 posts and the Facebook's fan page have about 1000 followers. Finally, the third stage is applied to boost up the visitor to Vietnam101's website. It includes link exchange programs with tour providers and expat communities in Vietnam, Partnership program with vnphoto.net and xomnhiepanh.com, email marketing and ebook-publishing program. After two months of applying this stage, it is possible to achieve the target objectives which were defined before. The second and third stage can be re-apply to gain more traffic for the website. And it will be the preparation to request investment in the future.

4.6 Control

The controlling process is to measure the success of the marketing campaign and to check if the marketing campaign needs to be changed or not. In online marketing, the success of the marketing campaign is reflected by the improvement of website traffic, or the rise of visitors. For this project, the writer uses two tools to measure the traffic on Vietnam101.info include Google Analytics and Facebook Insights.

Google Analytics is a service offered by Google that provide the statistic data of website's traffic. The Google Analytics service helps Vietnam101 to follow the activities of visitors on the website. In Google Analytics, there are some metrics that need to check including:

- Visitors: The amount of unique visitors (visitors who have activities) on the website and their demographic. It helps to check if the amount of visitors is increased or not.
- Bounce Rate: the percentage of visitors who leave the website right at the first page. The higher the Bounce Rate is, the more uninterested the website is.
- Traffic sources: How people got to the site. For example, it comes from google or other websites.
- Content: How people come and exit one page. It is used to learn visitors habit and need.

Facebook Insights is a service which is used to measure the traffic on the website. To measure the traffic of Facebook Fanpage, the Facebook Insight service is a useful tool. Facebook Insight is the service created by Facebook to help managing the statistic of ones Fan Page. Facebook Insight is used to measure the success of the created Fan Page. The metrics that fan page manager should pay attention includes:

- Monthly fan size growth: Amount of fan (people follow or like the page) in every month. The higher the number is, the more popular the fan page is
- The average number of "like" and "comment": It helps to identify the discussion, topics which fans are interested in
- Unlike and attrition rate: Helps to understand reason for fans to leave the page
- Demographics : It shows the gender, age and location of fans
- Page views: Amount of times the page is viewed. It helps to identify the number of the returning fans.

By using these two services, Vietnam101 can measure the traffic of the website as well as the Facebook Fan Page. Furthermore, Vietnam101 can use the statistics of those services to analysis the visitors. After that, the marketing strategy can be modified to effectively gain more traffic.

4.7 Budget plan

TABLE 6. Budget for online marketing activities for 6 months

	M1 (€)	M2 (€)	M3 (€)	M4 (€)	M5 (€)	M6 (€)	Total (€)
Website							
Host	15	15	15	15	15	15	90
Domain	15						15
Design template	25						25
Communications							
SEO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Google Ad					100	100	200
Facebook Ad					100	100	200
Sponsorship					100		100
Email marketing	0	0	0	50	0	0	0
Affiliate marketing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Personnel							
Staff (1-2 hours per day)	200	200	200	200	200	200	1200
Other							
Publish Ebook	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total budget	255	215	215	265	515	415	1830

To achieve the marketing objectives which were analyzed in previous part, the cost of all marketing activities is required to be carefully calculated. The budget for marketing plan is divided into four parts. They are budgets for building website, marketing campaign, human resource and other activities. As the marketing objectives are predicted to be achieved after 6 months of execution, therefore, the marketing budget is calculated for 6 months.

Because the project is to develop the website providing tourist information, therefore the first and most important visible cost is the cost for building the website. To run the website online, it is required to purchase hosting and domain. According to the price list on godaddy.com (a website providing hosting and domain service), the price for the domain is 15 euro/year and the host is 15 euro/month. However, the actual price can be lower if it is bought in package for the whole year. The cost of buying website template is about 25 euro (based on the list of Leo travel's template showed in Appendix C). However, when searching on the Internet, there are several templates which can be used for free.

The second group in the budget plan is the payment for marketing communication activities including SEO, Google ad, Facebook ad, sponsorship, email and affiliate marketing. The plan is written with the purpose of using free-cost marketing communication activities. However, the author also includes in the budget plan the options for low-cost campaigns to have more unique visitors in two last months. They are the Facebook ad, Google ad and sponsorship for travel's clip competition. The budget for the email marketing program is the option to buy the pre-collected email list. However the effectiveness of this solution is not committed due to the lacking of targeting niche segments.

To manage the website and run the marketing programs, it is required to have personnel in three areas. They are IT employee for matters related to the building and maintenance the website, employee for collecting and updating content (tourist information) in Vietnam101's website, online social network and employee for marketing activities (advertising in tourist's forums, promoting in social network, etc.) As described in the beginning of the plan, this is a one-person project; therefore the project creator will also work as IT employee, content employee and marketing employee. However, if there are too many works that one person can't fulfill, it is possible to hire staff. The predicted cost of hiring staff is about 200 euro/month. The payment for staffs is not calculated by the amount of hours per day. It is based on the amount of articles that staff put on the website and advertising content that will be spread on other sites. Therefore, staffs only need to work one or two hours per day, depends on the effectiveness of staff's work. And in Vietnam, with this payment, it is possible to have an employee to update website's content and work for advertising activities.

5 CONCLUSION

The study was set out to explore the concept of internet marketing plan in the case of a website providing Vietnam's tourist information service. Through doing marketing research and applying SOSTAC (Situation, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Actions and Control) model, the thesis was written to find the answer for the question: "How to attract visitors to the website Vietnam101.info"? To answer this question, firstly, a qualitative research was made by interviewing 20 foreign tourists in Vietnam. The empirical findings helped author to have a general view of tourist information searching behavior and the demographic of the searcher. According to the research, the main information that tourists look for included: "what to eat, where to stay, where to go and how to go". Depending on age, income and habit, tourists would have different choices about these things. Then, the empirical findings of the research were used for supporting the analysis of the current internal and external factors that affects the development of Vietnam101's website. Based on the analysis of PEST factors, competitors, intermediaries, customers and internal factors, the writer stated the strengths and weaknesses of Vietnam101 as well as the threats and opportunities for the project. With the information of situation analysis and clearly SMART objectives, the strategy for developing Vietnam101 was defined using the STP model. In the strategy, the online value proposition that Vietnam101 focuses on is the information of budget travel and the local experience. That value is transferred to visitors through the process of website building and the use of free or low-cost integrated online marketing communications. The implementation of the 8P's marketing mix was recommended to develop the website's content database and marketing communication techniques. The targeted objectives are achieved by offering free-cost service which focusing on budget travel, local experience information and using marketing techniques such as email marketing, affiliate marketing and promoting in online social networks and tourist's forum. Finally, the detail activities of marketing campaign were included with time for executing. Besides, the methods for controlling the outcome of marketing plan were included and the author also predicted the possible budget for the marketing plan.

The thesis helped to have a clear plan for developing a Vietnam's tourist information service. Currently, it is a vital service for supporting Vietnam's tourism promotion which still lack. Moreover, with the finding of this study, the author had demonstrated the possibility for the low-budget startup companies to use the Internet as an effective

marketing channel to increase the profit. However, there are some limitations in this thesis that can be developed in the future. Firstly, the writer only conducted the qualitative research. This research is helpful for generating new ideas and defining segments. However, the validity and reliability of the research is not clear. Therefore, in the future, it is necessary to have a quantitative research to measure the relationship between different characteristics of target segment and to check the validity and reliability of this research. Secondly, the low budget for marketing activities has limited the use of marketing communication to drag visitors to the website. Hence, more online marketing techniques can be investigated and used in the future if the project has more budgets. And finally, the main purpose of this thesis is only to find the way to have more visitors. There is no solution for getting income from Vietnam101's project. Therefore, in the future, investigations can be made to help Vietnam101 find the way for earning money to feed itself.

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Appendix 1: List of interview questions

Question 1: How old are you?

Question 2: Where do you come from?

Question 3: How long will you stay in Vietnam?

Question 4: How do you travel to Vietnam?

Question 5: Which cities in Vietnam did you visit and which cities will you visit?

Question 6: Why did you choose Vietnam as your destination?

Question 7: How did you find Vietnam's tourist information?

Question 8: What kind of information did you look for?

Question 9: Can you list the main things that you like and don't like the most during your trip?

Question 10: What kind of information you expect to know more?

Appendix 2: On Page Optimization (Hugspot)

9 Step On-Page Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Guide

This 9 Step On-Page Search Engine Optimization Guide will help you optimize your website pages, so they will have the best chance to get found by your target market. The Guide outlines the most important factors to consider when optimizing each page on your site. These steps are listed based on importance, so don't skip a step. Also, remember that creating new optimized content on a weekly basis is critical to achieving long-term success with SEO.

Step 1: Choose Keywords

Read the page's content and identify two (2) keywords that are most relevant to the overall page content. Choose one (1) primary keyword relevant to the page's content and one variation of that keyword (e.g. plural variation or two closely related keywords) per page. If you can't identify one primary keyword for a page, you'll need to create new website pages to separate the different content. If it's not clear to you what page is about, then your visitors and the search engines won't be able to understand the page either.

Step 2: Page Title

The page title appears as the blue, bolded, underlined text on a Google search results page, and also on the top left the browser bar. The page title should follow these guidelines:

Be under 70 characters with no more than two long-tail keywords per page title

The primary keyword should appear first

Each keyword phrase should be separated by pipes (|)

Each page title on your website should be unique

Except for your homepage and contact us page, each page title should NOT include your business name .

Step 3: Meta Description

The meta description appears on a Google search results page under the Page Title. The meta description helps people decide whether to click on your result, or a result above or below you. Think of it as a call to action. The meta description should follow these guidelines:

Be under 150 characters (but not under 100 characters; take advantage of the space you have)

Incorporate the primary keyword and at least one secondary keyword

Provide a valuable, compelling reason for why someone should visit the page

Include keywords in a conversational format; don't just cram in keywords for the sake of listing them.

Step 4: URL

The website page's URL should include the primary keyword. Each word in the URL should be separated using dashes (-). e.g. www.examplesite.com/inbound-marketing-software

Step 5: Heading Tags

The page should have one H1 heading tag that incorporates the primary keyword, and should align with the page title and the URL or the page. This H1 tag should appear at the top of the page and should be the first thing people see when they arrive on a page.

Step 6: Page Content

Use your primary keyword a few times throughout the page's content. Don't overthink keyword density or placement, you should mention them naturally. Try to bold or underline the keyword at least once. This has an effect on how relevant the keyword is to the page. Also mention the secondary keywords when you can.

Step 7: Add a Call to Action

Every website page, including your blog, should have at least one call to action above the page's fold (Don't make your website visitor scroll down to see the call to action). Calls to action can help SEO by creating an internal link on your website to a specific landing page. Most calls to action are images; therefore you can optimize the image filename and alt text for the primary keyword you're targeting on the page (see step 9).

Step 8: Internal Links

If you mention the primary keyword of this page on other pages within your site, then link to this page using the primary keyword as the anchor text. For example, you should link to a page about inbound marketing software using the anchor text "inbound marketing software." To make sure this is completed, take a moment to create one (1) or two (2) links on related pages that link back to the page you're optimizing.

Step 9: Images

Any images used on the page should be optimized so that search engines can "read" the image. Optimize the most prominent image on the page using the primary keyword, and then use the primary and secondary keywords for any other images. Images can be optimized in two ways:

File name: Each word should be separated with dashes (-), e.g. inbound-marketing-software.jpg

ALT text: The alt text should match the file name, without dashes, e.g. Inbound Marketing Software

If you are unable to change image file name or if it's too time consuming, then only change the most prominent images' alt text using the primary keyword.

Meta Keywords

They aren't part of Google's or Bing's search algorithm, so I'm not including them as a step. However, still use your primary and secondary keyword in the page's meta keywords. Smaller search engines still might use them in their algorithm, but major search engines do not use them. HubSpot does not recommend you optimize your meta keywords.

Repeat these 9 steps for each of your website pages.

(Hubspot 2011.)

Appendix 3: Sample of Vietnam101's website design

