

THE STRATEGY OF DIVERSIFYING THE SERVICES OFFERED BY THE TRIPADVISOR COMPANY

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Abstract:

TripAdvisor is a popular online travel platform that provides a range of services and resources for travelers and businesses in the travel and hospitality industry. TripAdvisor is best known for its vast collection of traveler-generated reviews and ratings for hotels, restaurants, attractions, and other travel-related businesses. Travelers can read these reviews to make informed decisions about their trips. For businesses, maintaining a strong online presence on TripAdvisor and providing excellent customer service is essential for attracting and retaining customers. Responding to reviews, both positive and negative, can help build a positive reputation. TripAdvisor also enforces policies to prevent fake reviews and maintain the integrity of the platform.

Keywords: *travel platform, online, information technology, e-tourism.*

JEL Classification: Z30.

Introduction

Tourism has been strongly influenced by the advent of the Internet and its integration into commerce and everyday life. One of the companies that evolved with the market was TripAdvisor, founded in 2000 to support tourists from all over the world in their search for the perfect place for accommodation, dining or leisure activities. Thus, a tourist guide was created, constantly updated, fed by the users themselves, in a virtual space optimized for all types of tourism and for all the needs of a traveler.

Based in Needham, Massachusetts, TripAdvisor is the world's largest social travel website, with approximately 315 million followers (active and inactive) and approximately 500 million reviews of hotels, restaurants, attractions and other business-related travels.

The importance of this type of platform is invaluable in today's era, when an instant response is expected at any time, under any conditions, when a tourist wants to plan a visit to a tourist location, be it closer or further away.

Platform functionality and customer registration

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The platform, since the beginning, has operated on the basis of advertisements, with customer accounts being free, their data being used to display advertisements and thus generating revenue for the company. At first it functioned like a forum, but it quickly grew to the appearance of the application for mobile phones, and now it offers various services for a fee that bring a considerable profit margin to the company.

TripAdvisor is a travel website that offers its users various payment options for services offered, such as hotel reservations, plane tickets or tour packages. Accepted payment methods may vary by travel provider and country of payment, but in general TripAdvisor accepts the following payment methods:

1. Credit/Debit Cards - This is one of the most common payment methods accepted by TripAdvisor. The site accepts most credit/debit cards, including Visa, Mastercard, American Express and Discover.
2. PayPal - TripAdvisor accepts payments through PayPal accounts. To pay with PayPal, users must log in to their PayPal account and complete the payment.
3. Payment via Bank Account - In some cases, TripAdvisor may accept payment via a bank account. This can be a popular option for those who don't want to use credit/debit cards or PayPal.
3. Bank Transfer - TripAdvisor may accept payments by bank transfer directly from the user's bank account. This option may be available for certain types of transactions or for users making large payments.

It is important to note that accepted payment methods may vary depending on the travel provider and the country where the payment is made. Users should check the accepted payment methods before making a reservation or purchasing a tour package on TripAdvisor.

These tourist services and products appeared as a consequence of the homogenization of the offer within the market, most sites (Booking.com, TripAdvisor, Google) now have search engines dedicated to each functionality, from the location of objectives, reviews and ratings to reservations and tour packages, regardless of their former specialization.

Now either platform contains most of the functionality found in the others. Registering a new user on the site or accessing the account is easy, similar to all other accounts on similar platforms. The user of the platform must log in to their personal account in order to make a reservation, and to facilitate the process, the customer can log in to the platform with their Google or Facebook account, for a faster connection.

The data relating to the customer's bank card are only necessary when he requests accommodation at a property where certain payment conditions are imposed or when purchasing a plane ticket or renting a car to the destination. Access to these facilities is only possible after paying them online, there is no

possibility to use cash through the application, with delivery at the location, to benefit from special prices, bonuses or promotions.

The main function of the platform is to discover international tourist attractions, share recommendations and rate visited locations. For any tourist, information is important, and those that come from some visitors offer an extra perspective on the experience. Reservations are made easily, by filling in the fields with the vacation period and the desired location. After that, the platform chooses the best matches for the desired service, taking into account the chosen filters and criteria, similar to Booking.com, Trivago or similar platforms.

The next steps to make a reservation are intuitive and easy to follow, and managing reservations is easy on the app. TripAdvisor has other platforms available to customers to purchase other services, such as JetSetter, The Fork, Viator, Cruise Critic, Seat Guru, each serving a different function and being an individual brand

TripAdvisor's applied business models

TA has built a portfolio of travel brands and companies, guiding visitors to destinations, activities, accommodation and travel and dining experiences in more than 40 international markets. Now there is the option to compare the available options on the site and reservations can be made directly from TripAdvisor, with the reviews and the competition at hand to find the perfect option. Their business model is to provide more options to customers, but also other customers' opinions about them. This type of presentation provides customer confidence and options for multiple customer categories.

Customer rating

Similar to the scoring mode offered by Google or Facebook, the platform offers its own service scoring solution, which differs from the others by: 1. Notes can only be given by users who have purchased the service in question 2. Not a single grade is given, but a set of grades that reflect the important details, the platform, displaying at the end the final average of these grades (the grading criteria are pre-set by Booking). Also, the client must make a brief description of their personal experience or in the form of a strengths, weaknesses scheme. 3. Service providers have the opportunity to respond to customer comments

Clients

People who visit the TripAdvisor website have access to comments, which allows them to view the provided mentions, descriptions, can compare prices with each other, access photo galleries. When the user has decided on the trip he wants to take or has chosen the right hotel where he wants to stay, by a simple click on a link on the website, they will be redirected to a travel agency online or to the website of the chosen hotel. The company acts independently of Expedia, it sends orders to a parent company, just as it happens in the case of all travel agencies. When users become members of this agency, they can express their opinion by simply logging into the site. No payment is required to become

a member on this platform, which is why in May 2020 the number of members reached the impressive figure of 20 million users Brand and software quality.

The company's logo is represented by its name itself, which gives it an important advantage: it remains more easily imprinted on the customer's mind. Green and black tones are presented, both in the company logo and in the design of the platform. The purpose of the logo is to draw attention to the name itself; The colors are also used because of their meaning: Green: nature, the privilege of living in areas with a lot of greenery, but also suggests the need to go on an adventure outside. Blue: success, satisfaction, trust. Emphasis is placed on the image portfolio of the properties or other services offered. The name of the platform is extremely suggestive. TripAdvisor, translated from English means "search advisor". The logo consists of a square with the classic symbol associated over time with the company, the face of an owl. It symbolizes experience, continuous search and learning, but also simplicity. The easy-to-follow design of the website and associated app provides a pleasant user experience for both tech-savvy users and those with limited knowledge, which is important for attracting and retaining customers.

TripAdvisor online presence

The company is active online and promotes current offers, platform capabilities and news. The official Facebook page focuses on the presentation of short articles, which have the role of proposing new tourist destinations to the reader and inspiring the feeling of vacation. Also, images are published on the page, which document the experiences that a tourist can experience in the respective tourist area; Online presence is important now, as a majority of customers and potential customers are active on social media platforms or for entertainment. Using them to present the company and its products covers several aspects of marketing, such as brand permanence, free advertising, PR, advertising, presenting the company's mission, vision and values, running promotions, accelerating sales and promoting new features. Customers receive information faster, information channels are improved to serve everyone's needs, and thus the market can be penetrated more effectively without investing heavily in mass advertising, and companies have been able to use these resources in other departments of the company.

Advantages and disadvantages of using TripAdvisor

TripAdvisor is one of the oldest and most used platforms dedicated to sharing tourism enthusiasm, with the information provided by users being essential in evaluating each objective. Although the ratings on these sites are important and reflect the level of customer satisfaction, they can be objective or subjective, depending on a wide range of factors. Thus, the platform has a number of important advantages and disadvantages that must be taken into account before establishing a tourist route based on it.

Advantages

- Accessibility: Any user can access the platform and search for reviews and ratings of hotels, restaurants or tourist attractions in a particular city or destination.

- Useful information: On the TripAdvisor platform there are reviews of tourists about their experiences, so they can provide useful information to other travelers who plan to visit those places. The platform also provides price details, photos and other relevant information.

- Ratings and recommendations: Users can express their ratings and offer recommendations to other travelers, so they can help in the decision to choose a particular tourist destination or service. Disadvantages:

- Quality of reviews: There are also fake or biased reviews on the TripAdvisor platform, so it can be difficult to separate the useful from the untrue.

- Failure to cover all areas: In certain areas or regions, the platform may be less developed or less used, so it may be difficult to find useful information about those destinations.

Disadvantages:

The TripAdvisor platform can be useful for users, but it can sometimes be harmful for tourism businesses, which can be affected by negative reviews or influenced by fake reviews.

Marketing Research

TA has relied heavily on search engine marketing and its affiliate program to drive customers to their site. Director of Revenue and Traffic Management, Dena Yahya, stated that managing search engine marketing is a real challenge for them. In 2010, the company planned to spend 10 million dollars on this marketing, by purchasing more than 100 million words from Yahoo, Google, or other search engines. Examples of words of this kind can be considered the following: hotels, accommodation, three-star hotels in. The number of keywords will increase considerably once all possible destinations around the world are included, but also if and when the translation of keywords into different languages is added. In terms of monetization, TripAdvisor has three main sources of revenue, namely: display advertising, subscription fees from partners and clicks on text links. To create traffic on its own website, the agency focused on three things: public relations (PR), social media, but also marketing research.

Public Relations

The agency's public relations capability leveraged a brand to stay current. At the moment, the number of members joining the TA collective has grown, and at the same time, the feedback obtained from completing the questionnaires.

Text Links

The agency charges hotels by online travel agencies on a cost-per-click basis. Costs are targeted somewhere between \$0.25 and \$1, they may differ depending on the language, country or location of the link. For most online travel agency businesses, the profitable part is the hotels. Visitors read hotel descriptions to decide where they will stay during their stay. Many people click on the check rate button to find out the hotel's rating and its availability in the desired period.

Business list

In January 2020, the agency incorporated business listings to approve business owners to put hotel contact details on the TA agency website. The image was initially based on small transactions, and this service allowed owners to manage their own account by adding their respective phone number, web address, email and consumer discount coupons. To add an extra touch, TA agency gave away free widgets and in this way the business was promoted with the help of TA business rankings, helping the owners. These business listings signify a service that observes an annual fee ranging from \$200-\$10,000, fluctuating depending on the size of the business. In May 2020, the service became part of TripAdvisor's newly launched business.

Social media

In 2010, the app had 5 million active members, and in the summer of 2010 it introduced Trip Advisor Trip Friends, with which users could ask their Facebook friends for travel advice. In the same year, the company launched a site for mobile phones that quickly grew significantly and became very popular. Since 2009, the company has been on the Twitter social network, reaching 92,199 users in less than a year. It helped TA to have a closer relationship with both travel influencers and travel bloggers.

Social media investment return

89% of global travelers say that they are influenced when they want to stay, and 96% of hoteliers say that reviews are influenced in generating reservations. 1. Guests visit TripAdvisor with more priority than booking. 2. Properties with strong reputations across all distribution channels perform better overall. 3. Higher review scores allow hotels to charge up to 11% more while maintaining occupancy rates.

Challenges

First of all, integration for any company in China market is first of all difficult challenge for any international company. Google has now pulled out of this struggling Chinese market, following the failure of Ebay and Yahoo. The local competition is scrambling very fast and replicating everything it sees that works, whether it works in the US or elsewhere. Local teams must do everything in their power to be successful. The challenge is to find ways to maintain coordination that meets the requirements with headquarters. Less than

10% of Chinese consumers decide to keep a travel reservation online. Second, the Chinese online population is generally low-income and young. Also, the manner but also the consumption behavior in China is distinct. Chinese people choose to travel only once a year, by choosing a nearby destination, and they lack the skills and experience of hotels in certain tourist destinations. Most of them choose to do so. The market needs to be educated and monetization is a challenge. In conclusion, the agency has a number of 15 full-time employees, but they want to increase their number to 60 employees or 70 by the end of 2010 and to 100 employees by 2011.

The future growth of the platform

Although TripAdvisor is a large company with a long history related to the young Internet, there are always opportunities to grow economically to secure a larger market share. Tourism is a dynamic, seasonal industry, full of trends and habits, and these variables make any investment a gamble. To be able to remain as competitive as well as innovative, TripAdvisor should invest in technology to be able to maintain its positions. The advance of artificial intelligence, the post-pandemic technological infrastructure capable of more functions and the increased interest in certain novelties are a way to become a market leader. ¶ In the period before the pandemic, the company had net profits of \$1 billion, this trend starting in 2014 (\$1.246 billion). The only decrease in profit was in 2019, when TripAdvisor made \$1.560 billion, \$55 million less than in 2018. The year 2022 brought a return of the tourism industry and the profits again reached over the threshold of \$1 billion, more precisely \$1.492 billion and bringing back new updates to the platform to bring new users and the return of others. The company may look for expansion opportunities in emerging markets where there is high potential for growth in internet users and interest in travel. This may involve adapting the platform to suit the specific needs of these markets and establishing partnerships with local tourism service providers. TripAdvisor may explore partnerships and collaborations with other companies in the travel industry, such as airlines, hotels, travel agencies and other booking platforms. These partnerships can create opportunities for profit and user growth through the integration and distribution of TripAdvisor content on other online platforms, such as specialized websites, YouTube channels, Instagram, etc.

1. TripAdvisor could also invest more in its digital marketing strategy. Collaborations with well-known brands from other industries, the organization of fairs and events online and offline, advertisements with well-known people in the field of tourism and travel in international markets are just a few ways in which the concept of the platform can become known to a large number of new customers, creating thus an influx of users. The travel industry is constantly changing and TripAdvisor should be responsive to these changes and adapt quickly. For example, tourism trends can change from one season to the next

and can be extremely different from country to country, and political conflicts, pandemics, temperatures and rainfall can also play a role in volatilizing market demand and supply. The company should regularly adjust its marketing tactics to be able to adapt quickly.

TripAdvisor is a popular online travel platform that provides a range of services and resources for travelers and businesses in the travel and hospitality industry. It was founded in 2000 and has since become one of the world's largest travel websites, offering information and tools for planning trips and vacations.

Here are some key aspects and features of TripAdvisor:

1. **Traveler Reviews and Ratings:** TripAdvisor is best known for its vast collection of traveler-generated reviews and ratings for hotels, restaurants, attractions, and other travel-related businesses. Travelers can read these reviews to make informed decisions about their trips.
2. **Accommodation and Restaurant Listings:** The platform includes detailed listings of hotels, vacation rentals, restaurants, and other businesses in various destinations. Users can search and compare options based on reviews, ratings, and pricing.
3. **Travel Forums:** TripAdvisor hosts discussion forums where travelers can ask questions, seek advice, and share their experiences with others. These forums cover a wide range of travel topics and destinations.
4. **Booking Capabilities:** TripAdvisor allows users to book accommodations, flights, and activities directly through its website or mobile app. It partners with various travel booking providers.
5. **Travel Guides:** TripAdvisor provides travel guides, including recommendations for things to do, places to visit, and itineraries for various destinations. Users can create personalized trip itineraries.
6. **Mobile App:** TripAdvisor offers a mobile app for travelers to access information, read reviews, and make bookings on the go.
7. **Management Tools for Businesses:** For businesses in the travel and hospitality industry, TripAdvisor offers management tools to claim their listings, respond to reviews, and promote their services to potential customers.
8. **TripAdvisor Plus:** This is a subscription service that offers benefits such as discounts on hotel bookings and access to premium features for a monthly or annual fee.
9. **Travel Deals and Discounts:** TripAdvisor provides information on travel deals and discounts, allowing users to find special offers and promotions from businesses on the platform.
10. **TripAdvisor for Restaurants:** A dedicated section for restaurant listings and reviews, helping users discover dining options and make reservations.

11. TripAdvisor for Attractions: A section focusing on attractions and activities, providing information and booking options for various tourist experiences.

It's important to note that the accuracy and credibility of reviews on TripAdvisor can vary, as they are user-generated. Travelers should read a range of reviews and consider the overall rating and trends in the feedback.

Traveler reviews and ratings are a core feature of websites and platforms like TripAdvisor. Here's a more detailed explanation of how this feature works:

1. User-Generated Reviews: Travelers who have visited hotels, restaurants, attractions, and other travel-related businesses can submit their reviews on the TripAdvisor platform. These reviews are written by ordinary travelers who share their personal experiences, opinions, and feedback.
2. Rating System: In addition to written reviews, travelers can rate businesses on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest rating. These ratings are typically used to provide an at-a-glance summary of a business's overall quality, with 5 stars representing excellent and 1 star indicating poor quality.
3. Review Categories: Travelers can often rate businesses based on specific categories, such as service, cleanliness, location, value, and more. These category ratings help provide a more detailed view of a business's strengths and weaknesses.
4. Pros and Cons: Reviewers often list the pros and cons of their experience, allowing potential customers to understand what they can expect. This can include information about the quality of food at a restaurant, the cleanliness of a hotel, the friendliness of staff, and more.
5. Helpful Votes: Other users can indicate that a review was helpful by clicking a "Helpful" button. Reviews with more helpful votes tend to appear higher in search results and are considered more reliable by other users.
6. Response from Businesses: Business owners can respond to reviews, which can provide additional context or address any concerns raised in the reviews. This interaction can help businesses manage their online reputation.
7. Review Trends: TripAdvisor often provides trends and insights based on reviews and ratings. This can include ranking businesses by category or highlighting trends in traveler preferences.
8. Filtering and Sorting: Users can filter and sort reviews to find the most relevant ones. For example, they can filter by traveler type (solo, family, business, etc.), time of year, and language.

9. **User Profiles:** Travelers who write reviews often have user profiles that show their past reviews, ratings, and contributions to the TripAdvisor community. This can help users assess the credibility of a reviewer's opinions.

Traveler reviews and ratings are valuable resources for individuals planning trips. They offer real-world insights into what to expect when visiting a business, which can help travelers make informed decisions. However, it's essential to read a range of reviews, consider the overall rating and trends, and be aware that individual experiences can vary. Additionally, businesses should pay attention to these reviews as they can significantly impact their online reputation and influence potential customers.

For businesses, maintaining a strong online presence on TripAdvisor and providing excellent customer service is essential for attracting and retaining customers. Responding to reviews, both positive and negative, can help build a positive reputation. TripAdvisor also enforces policies to prevent fake reviews and maintain the integrity of the platform.

Creating a strategy for TripAdvisor, whether you're a business owner or a traveler, can be beneficial. Here are strategies for both groups:

For Travelers:

1. **Research and Planning:** Use TripAdvisor to research destinations, accommodations, and activities. Read reviews and compare prices. Create a travel plan based on this information.
2. **Contributing:** Contribute by writing reviews, posting photos, and sharing your experiences. This helps fellow travelers and enhances your profile.
3. **Ask Questions:** Utilize the forums and Q&A sections to ask specific questions about your trip. Locals and experienced travelers can provide valuable insights.
4. **Engage with the Community:** Connect with other travelers by joining travel forums and discussion groups. Share your knowledge and seek advice.
5. **Use the Mobile App:** Download the TripAdvisor app for on-the-go access. You can find restaurants, attractions, and accommodations nearby.
6. **Save Favorites:** Use the "Save" feature to bookmark places and activities you're interested in. This can help you plan your trip efficiently.
7. **Get Deals:** Subscribe to TripAdvisor's email alerts to receive updates on deals and discounts from hotels and restaurants.
8. **Customized Trip Guides:** Use TripAdvisor's trip planner to create customized itineraries based on your interests.

For Business Owners:

1. **Claim Your Business:** Ensure that your business is listed on TripAdvisor, and claim ownership. This allows you to manage your listing and respond to reviews.
2. **Optimize Your Profile:** Make your business profile appealing with high-quality photos, accurate contact details, and descriptions. Use keywords relevant to your business.
3. **Monitor Reviews:** Regularly monitor and respond to customer reviews. Address negative reviews professionally and use positive feedback to your advantage.
4. **Engage with Customers:** Encourage customers to leave reviews and rate your business. Offering incentives for reviews (within TripAdvisor's guidelines) can be effective.
5. **Quality Customer Service:** Focus on delivering exceptional customer service. Satisfied customers are more likely to leave positive reviews.
6. **Special Offers:** Utilize TripAdvisor's features like Special Offers to attract travelers with discounts and promotions.
7. **Advertise:** Consider using TripAdvisor's advertising services to boost your business's visibility on the platform.
8. **Analyze Data:** Use TripAdvisor's analytics tools to understand how travelers find and interact with your business. This can help you make data-driven decisions.
9. **Engage with the Community:** Participate in TripAdvisor forums and discussions related to your industry or location. Be a valuable source of information.
10. **Stay Updated:** Keep up with TripAdvisor's policies, guidelines, and algorithm changes. These can impact your business's visibility and reputation.

Both travelers and business owners should remember the importance of honest and ethical use of the platform. Fake reviews, for instance, can harm both parties and the platform's credibility. TripAdvisor's policies should be followed to maintain trust and a positive experience for all users.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the TripAdvisor platform can be useful in planning a trip, but it should be used with caution and both its advantages and disadvantages should be considered. Its importance must be correctly evaluated by tourists, weighing all the possible sources of information online or from other sources, but also the possibility to reserve what is necessary for a trip by other methods, with a lower or higher cost, with another set of benefits or with greater involvement. Finally, experiences may differ from individual to individual, each having other interests or previous experiences, and the assessment may be

helpful in establishing a visit or may even be detrimental. The company has reached maturity and can no longer cover a larger percentage of the market without investments in technology. Without investments in the platform and the addition of new functionalities.

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